College consumerism

Getting green with groceries
Credit cards: we don't have money
CD clubs sweeten the deal on music

Also: From school to sidewalks — Bellingham's homeless youth
We worry about it constantly, wonder how we’ll pay our next bill, struggle to make ends meet. Strangely enough, though, we usually manage to find a way to buy the latest Soundgarden CD or a gorgeous new shirt from the Gap. Wolfish manufacturers often latch on to the Red-Riding-Hood innocence of college students, guiding us down a well-disguised path to poverty. In our special consumerism section, writers address the woes of credit, junk mail, the infamous lure of Columbia House and choosing cheap products over their “greener” competitors.

Though we can identify with such concerns, they pale in comparison to Heather Kimbrough’s poignant feature of the homeless youth of Bellingham. Many of these children of the night are slowly sucked into a downward spiral of drug use, neglect and heartbreak, spending the darker hours sleeping on a piece of cardboard or street corner. But volunteer Denver Du Pont and The Upper Room, an organization for these youth, provide a ray of hope with food, clothes and the company of others in similar situations. This story brings real faces out of an otherwise anonymous crowd of the abandoned, and you may discover why people like Du Pont work so hard to make a difference.

So the next time you swing by Cellophane Square for that music fix, take a minute to reach out to these kids with a handshake or a simple hello. Our education involves more than classrooms and books. We are learning about the challenge of life. Take a look — your best teachers are standing all around you.

Thanks for reading,

Mara Applebaum
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front and back cover photos: Reneé Yancey
A law professor at the University of Pennsylvania said in a lecture, “We have ex-slaves here who should know about the Thirteenth Amendment.” Consequently, the professor was suspended for one year, forced to apologize and encouraged to attend a “sensitivity and racial awareness” session. Was this a prejudiced professor? Maybe. Maybe not. But what he said was considered offensive and he was corrected.

University officials have tried for years to install speech codes in the hope of eradicating prejudiced, racist or offensive speech and behavior. One of the major targets of the speech codes is “hate speech.”

The definition of hate speech is difficult to chisel in stone. The Human Rights Watch organization defines it as “any form of expression regarded as offensive to racial, ethnic and religious groups and other discrete minorities, and to women.”

In general, speech codes at universities haven’t been successful. Codes at the University of Michigan (1989) and University of Wisconsin (1991) were the first to be shot down by the courts because they were too vague.

The problem is that in the attempt to eradicate hate speech, universities have been unable to define it. What is offensive to one person may not be offensive to another.

The question is not if racism exists. It does. But what do we do when people are offended, no matter what their race, sex, religion or ethnic background happens to be?

**YES.**

If you murder or rape someone, you will be punished, assuming you are caught. We learn not to commit certain acts because they are wrong and we know we will be punished for them. If the punishment did not exist, or if we did not realize a punishment existed, we may feel free to commit them.

Prejudice is a problem in this country. We who participate in higher education are not exempt from prejudiced ways of thinking.

When someone is attacked through hate speech, that person is assaulted and humiliated. It is not physical harm, but mental and emotional harms are no less painful. How do we make people understand that it is wrong to inflict this pain? The only way to show that hate speech is unacceptable is to punish the use of it.

Law professor Richard Delgado wrote that punishing hate speech would not eradicate hate speech or prejudice. But in many cases, the attitudes of white Americans follow, not precede, the changes in law.

Former UCLA law professor Mari Matsuda says racism is learned. “A law that makes racist speech a crime would be the incentive government could use to persuade people to change their behavior,” she wrote.

Children do not understand what is right and what is wrong. They learn these things from those who raise them. Prejudice is everywhere and sometimes children learn prejudice is OK. If parents, guardians, older siblings, family friends and strangers at the supermarket are allowed to use hate speech, it teaches a young child that this must be all right.

If prejudiced acts could be punished, it would be less likely that children would grow up hearing prejudiced comments.

What if someone does enter college thinking prejudice isn’t a good thing, only to be constantly confronted with hateful speech? Matsuda says this is not only a critical but stressful time as well.

For many, it’s the first time away from home, often causing loneliness and vulnerability. We look to fill voids created by the loss of our home environment.

“College students experiment with different passions, identities, and risks,” she writes. “A negative environmental response during this period of experimentation could mar for life an individual’s ability to remain open, creative, and risk taking.”

We come to college to learn, but we also come because we want to discover ourselves. We want to find out what our passions actually are. With the possibility of being influenced by someone’s ignorant ideas, our path is obstructed.

**NO.**

Speech codes targeted at university campuses, or anywhere else for that matter, simply aren’t an effective way of dealing with a very serious social problem in America. Journalist Nat Hentoff indicates problems will remain even if codes are implemented on campuses throughout the country. “Let us suppose these codes were in place on every campus in the country. Would racism go away? Racism would go underground in the dark, where it’s most comfortable. The language on campus could become as pure as country water, but racist attitudes would still fester.”

With possible punishment waiting in the wings, these codes might curb the use of hate speech on college campuses, but no code will ever change the way many people feel in their hearts and souls. That’s the real issue and the real problem.

Speech codes would prevent students from using hate speech on campus grounds, but the codes would not follow them home to the athletic club or to the local pub on a night out with buddies. Hate-speech users will always be thinking “hate thoughts.”

While the experts say speech codes are meant to help minorities on college campuses, they could actually end up hurting them. Statistics compiled last year by the Multicultural Services Center reveal only 12.5 percent of Western’s 10,598 students are minorities. If a speech code was implemented on our campus, the 1,324 minority students could easily find daily campus life more difficult. A speech code would not only limit them from speaking out against the majority, but it would diminish the learning process between different races and ethnic backgrounds.

The University of Wisconsin court decision said, “... the rule does as much to hurt diversity on university campuses as it does to help; the rule limits the diversity of ideas among students and thereby prevents the robust exchange of ideas that intellectually diverse campuses provide.”

Gwen Thomas, an African-American college administrator from Colorado, explained what she believes will happen if speech codes are enacted. “I have always felt as a minority person that we have to protect the rights of all because if we infringe on the rights of any one person, we’ll be next,” she said.

Similarly, speech codes often have the tendency to chill speech. In other words, if people don’t know what they can and cannot say, they may not say anything at all. Kaydee Culbertson, a Stanford student born on an American Indian reservation, said when “sensitivity stifles communication, it has gone too far.” And speech codes are doing just that — stifling communication.
This is not a nightmare. We will not wake up in eight hours and find ourselves in a paradise where society and nature live in perfect harmony. Every person on this planet wakes up every morning to an imperfect world. Every person wakes up with a varying view of the seriousness and the sources of the problems faced by the earth and its inhabitants.

The incredible growth in human population in the past century has forced people of diverse nationalities and religions to consider the long-term effects of population growth. Many people now consider population growth to be the root of many of the world’s problems.

The subject of population growth, and methods of containing growth, is a sticky one for people across the globe. Religious and cultural beliefs have played a major role in the history of human procreation, and many of those guiding beliefs are still functioning today. Discussions about the issues surrounding population growth tend to veer into the proverbial gray area. Every person approaches the issues with his or her own set of beliefs and morals. On a global level, it becomes difficult to find clear-cut, globally-acceptable solutions through such a cacophony of voices and opinions.

Since concern over population growth began to grow in the 1950s, the Catholic Church has been one of the loudest and most vehement voices in the discussions about population growth. Church officials have repeatedly questioned the validity of the conclusions drawn about population growth, saying that oftentimes not all aspects of population science are taken into account when analyzing the growth statistics.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II analyzed the trend in population-growth thought in his apostolic exhortation on the family, Familiaris Consortio. “One thinks, for example, of a certain panic deriving from the studies of ecologists and futurologists on population growth, which sometimes exaggerates the danger of demographic increase to the quality of life. But the church firmly believes that human life, even if weak and suffering, is always a splendid gift of God’s goodness.”

While the edict to “Go forth and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28) is still being interpreted and morally enforced by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, many of the rank and file members of the Church are discovering ways to live in harmony with their beliefs and with concerns about population growth.

Christina Heuser is a 54-year-old mother of four and has served six years as secretary for the Religious Education Office of the Assumption Catholic Church of Bellingham. Her brusque manners and appearance belie a sharp sense of humor. As she led me to an office for our interview, she commented to a co-worker, “I’m going to tell her about my past life as a stripper.” This was the last thing I expected to hear from a Catholic person working for the Assumption Church, and my shock lasted until she laughed and looked at me with a humorous twinkle in her eyes.

Although Heuser has a well-developed sense of humor, she has been involved with serious issues for much of her life. As she learned about the intricacies of childbirth, women’s cycles and Natural Family Planning, she began to teach other women about these issues. Natural Family Planning, a method of avoiding pregnancy by abstaining from sex during the most fertile time of a woman’s cycle, has been a central issue for Heuser.

Heuser joined the Catholic Church when she was 17 and married seven years later. She was asked at her pre-marital exam if she wanted to take the birth control pill, but followed the Church teachings and did not practice contraception. After her third child, Heuser read a book that had a large impact on her knowledge and awareness of her own body.

The book taught the Billing’s ovula-
Statistics can be used, really, to fight either side in most cases...

(a)woman's cycle is both fertile and infertile," Heuser said. "The purpose of genital sexual intercourse between members of the opposite sex is for union and for procreation. When one separates one from the other, one is not living a fully-human life. So to use Natural Family Planning is to respect the fertile cycle and to just let it go as you normally would if you were separated, ill or whatever and not to use it for union only, when at that time it could be used for procreation."

Heuser is well aware of the concerns of activist groups looking to slow population growth. She shares some of their concerns, but bristles when the conversation turns to overpopulation as one of the causes for escalating crime.

"When it comes to things like crime and 'we're all squashed up so we have to be like criminals,' I think the reason we have crime and all is because we don't love one another," Heuser said. "If you get 15 college kids squashed in a Volkswagen Bug, they're not going to kill one another. Of course that's simplistic, and I don't advocate that things be squished. But as Mother Theresa will often say, if we have crimes and abortions and broken marriages, it's because of a failure to love — bottom line."

Over the past 30 years, changes in attitudes and perceptions have helped people with diverse beliefs work together in finding solutions to many problems. While the plan is a 20-year blueprint dealing with abortion caused the most debate, snarling negotiations for six days.

The plan was fully endorsed by nations representing 95 percent of the world's population, but some detractors spoke out aggressively against the plan. The Roman Catholic hierarchy and some leaders within Islam were very visible in their objections to parts of the plan regarding abortion, adolescent sexual activity, family planning and contraception, and the relationship between population and development.

Despite these clashes between various agendas and beliefs, progress has been made over the years. The past century has seen many changes in religious attitudes among the rank-file members of religions around the world. These changes, along with the development of the global village, have allowed people of diverse religions and cultures to develop a dialogue about the course of the earth and its inhabitants.

Indeed, many of the issues spearheaded by environmental and population-growth groups are central to most religions. Social justice and protecting the well-being of the earth are goals that are found in both religious doctrines and the agendas of activist groups.

Groups such as Zero Population Growth (ZPG) are careful to maintain an agenda that is fairly acceptable to people of all beliefs. Laurie Yeager is secretary of the Board of Directors for the Seattle chapter of ZPG, a not-for-profit group.

"Our group advocates a two-child family — basically replacing the two adults in the family," Yeager said. "Really, all our organization does is try to educate people. The main focus of ZPG Seattle is a speakers group, and almost everything we do is to support this group. Those people go and speak at grade schools, high schools, Rotary meetings and churches about the population growth problem."

Members of ZPG attend meetings, conferences, rallies and try to create new dialogues about population growth.

ZPG attracts a variety of people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, perhaps...
because it uses numbers rather than rhetoric to argue its cause. In recent years, religious groups have shown an increasing interest in the group and its speakers. Last fall, students from Brigham Young University attended a yearly conference on population growth organized by ZPG, and the group gets requests for speakers from churches throughout the Northwest.

Although it is gaining the interest and support of some religious groups, ZPG still finds much resistance from the religious community. The resistance to ZPG and other activist groups is felt most keenly in the political arena. While the groups lobby for laws that will help provide more choices for more people, detractors lobby against them.

"There are still some very large religious factions out there who have a very big pull," Yeager said. "They say that God will provide for us no matter how big we become, no matter how many we become. Those people still have their say, and I think the politicians are still trying to keep those people happy. In some cases, those are more than the people who want funding to provide choices for people."

Detractors of ZPG and other activist groups often argue that the statistics used by the groups are invalid or not analyzed properly. The many facts printed in ZPG’s newsletters and fact sheets come from a variety of sources, from their own number crunchers to information from the United Nations.

"Statistics can be used, really, to fight either side in most cases," Yeager said. "But nobody can dispute how many people are really here in the world."

But as awareness grows around the world about the population problem, chances for finding solutions also grow. Cooperation and dialogue between people of all nationalities, religions and cultures has helped bring that awareness home.

POPULATION EXPLOSION
(Zero Population Growth Statistics)

It took from the beginning of time to about the year 1810 for the human population to reach 1 billion people. Just more than 100 years later, the next billion people were added. By 1987, Earth was home to 5 billion, and by the year 2000, it is projected that 6.3 billion people will inhabit the planet.

World population today is about 5.6 billion and growing by about 91 million each year. If the current growth rate continues, world population will double in approximately 39 years.

RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

Although the United States constitutes only 5 percent of the world’s population, we consume 24 percent of the world’s energy. Put in other terms, each American’s energy use is equivalent to the consumption of 3 Japanese, 6 Mexicans, 12 Chinese, 33 Indians, 147 Bangladeshis, 281 Tanzanians or 422 Ethiopians.

The United States also uses more fresh water per capita than any other industrialized country. In 1992, enough water was used to provide every American with the equivalent of 37 baths each day.

The average child born in the United States consumes 30 to 40 times the natural resources that a child does in the developing world.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Approximately 90 percent of Northwestern old-growth forests have been cleared and more than 100 million acres of wetland have been destroyed.

Mexico City and its metropolitan area, with more than 15 million residents, had only 31 days of safe, breathable air in 1993, according to government statistics.

Rainforests are being destroyed at an annual rate corresponding to an area the size of Pennsylvania. Forty percent of prescription drugs dispensed by U.S. pharmacies have active ingredients derived from plants, animals or microorganisms from the rainforest.

In his encyclical letter of 1987, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, Pope John Paul II wrote: "One cannot deny the existence, especially in the Southern Hemisphere, of a demographic problem which creates difficulties for development. One must immediately add that in the Northern Hemisphere the nature of this problem is reversed; here the cause for concern is the drop in the birth rate, with repercussions on the aging of the population, unable even to renew itself biologically. Just as it is incorrect to say that such difficulties stem solely from demographic growth, neither is it proved that all demographic growth is incompatible with orderly development."

In an address to the United Nations, Pope John Paul IV said, "You must strive to multiply bread so that it suffices for the tables of mankind, and not rather favor an artificial control of birth, which would be irrational, in order to diminish the number of guests at the banquet of life."

ROMAN CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVES
KLIPSUN MAGAZINE PRESENTS

MAGICAL MR. HORN

STARRING THOMAS HORN AS HIMSELF
SUPPORTING ACTRESSES LYNN COURAGE
& JESSA JAMES

SCREENPLAY BY D. ELIZABETH HOVDE
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY NANCY HAZZARD

RATED 'G' FOR GENEROUS
In movies today we often see dramatic stories about random acts of kindness over taking the lives of the less fortunate and hard-working.

Looking back over years of ticket stubs, movie-goers have seen a young girl given glass slippers that eventually led her to a prince, a small red-headed orphan given a life of love and riches, and, more recently, a waitress given lottery ticket winnings for a tip. We cheer, we cry, we love it when these people are treated to a better life via the hands of a caring individual who recognizes a diamond in the rough.

The late Thomas Horn, who died at age 101 on March 30 of this year, found his own diamonds near Western.

Higher education has been made possible for students Lynn Courage and Jessa James, among others, because Horn, a Bellingham resident, also loved to see the hard-working rewarded.

Lynn Courage, a 43-year-old woman with radiant eyes and brown hair that frames her young-looking face, which often breaks into a large smile when talking about Mr. Horn, was a waitress at the Sudden Valley Restaurant in Bellingham and an undergraduate student at Western when she met Horn in 1989. Horn was a long-time customer of the restaurant.

"Mr. Horn used to come out to Sudden Valley to have dinner on Sunday nights, and I worked Sunday nights for years. That's where I met him, bless his heart. He liked to come out there because he was worried he couldn't get what he wanted at another restaurant. So I told him, 'Mr. Horn,' — I knew him since he was about 95 — so I said, 'Well, when you're your age, you can have anything you want cooked any way you want. Just tell me and I'll handle it.' He'd laugh and he'd think that was great, and so that was our relationship," Courage reflected.

As the years went by, Courage said she became one of Horn's favorite people. "I used to wait on him and make sure he got what he wanted. I'd kind of spoil him because I thought it was a huge thing that he would come out to dinner at 101 years old," Courage said.

Horn was a very active man his whole life. Sonja Chorva of the Western Foundation and friend of Horn's described him as a dynamic man full of energy.

"He was amazing. He walked from his home at The Leopold to his office in the Herald building every day to work. He believed you had to stay active to be healthy," Chorva said.

Horn was born in 1894 on the border between Germany and Denmark. He left his family to travel with his uncle and ended up in Spokane at age 14. After leaving Spokane, Horn milked cows in Stanwood and moved on to a retail job at an Everett department store. He learned all he could about retail and eventually opened Horn's Department Store in Bellingham.

Horn also owned a chain of stores in other parts of Washington. After retiring from the retail business, Horn started Horn Incorporated, an investment management business that still works out of an office located in Bellingham at the Herald building.

In a 1994 interview with The Bellingham Herald, the Herald asked the 100-year-old Horn if he would ever retire. Horn said, "I've got to make a living. ... Some can hardly wait to retire, and then they retire and just fade away."

But Horn didn't fade away. Even up until the month he passed away, he continued doing business as usual.

Horn was a member of the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle. Chorva said he liked to go down there to work out often. When he wasn't exercising at the WAC, he was putting in some mileage on his exercise bike at home or was busy making other people's dreams come true.

Courage continued her memories of how Horn helped to make her dreams a reality. "We always chatted and I told him over the months about buying my home. One time he came in and asked me, 'How's your new home going?' and I said, 'I love it. I'm really glad I got to do
“HE WAS A REAL CHARACTER.”
JESSA JAMES

it, but the only thing that worries me is I spent the money I had saved up in a trust for my education on the down-payment for my house, so I don’t know how I’m going to finish my education.”

What started out as small talk turned into a business transaction.

“I was just chatting with him, you know,” Courage said. “At this time I had no idea he had any money or anything; I just knew he was a nice old man. Then he said, ‘Honey, you don’t worry about it. I’ll pay for your education.’”

Courage thought he must be kidding until Horn assured her he did not kid about things like that. “He said, ‘You come into my office and I’ll set it up,’” Courage remembered.

Horn did set Courage up. He arranged to have Courage’s credits toward a master’s degree at Western paid for with a fund he created for her.

“I was 36 when I went back to school because I was freaked out about being a waitress when I was 50,” Courage said. “Somebody said to me, ‘If you don’t do something about it, you will be.’”

“Having a person like Mr. Horn who has confidence and faith in you gives you so much inner strength. He gave me the ability to go beyond where I ever thought I could go because he believed in me and was willing to step out and help me. I wouldn’t know how I could do it without him; it was just too overwhelming,” Courage said.

Courage is still a waitress at Sudden Valley. She also works a three-quarter time job at Western's biofeedback center while earning her master's credits.

“Every paper that I do, every assignment I do, I think about him and I try to do my best because I know that's what he saw in me. He's a great inspiration. More important than financially supporting my credit load was that he believed in me,” Courage said. “Not a lot of people have done that in my life.”

Another person Horn believed in is Western freshman Jessa James.

James was a high school senior at Sehome High in Bellingham when Horn found her.

James was a hard-working student. She took honors classes at Sehome and graduated with an impressive 3.7 GPA. High school advisors encouraged James to apply for scholarships to attend Western, since her parents were unable to finance her education.

James did apply, but planned to attend Whatcom Community College as well because she didn't expect a movie ending to solve her problems.

“I had just received a letter saying that I didn’t get a scholarship I applied for at Western, but that I might be interested in a different one,” James said. The Western Foundation told her about the scholarship Horn was donating on his 100th birthday in honor of his late wife Martina.

“They called me to set up a luncheon between Mr. Horn and his secretary to talk to me. They said that I was one of their final people and I really didn’t know how I got there. It was a really, really big surprise,” James said.

James received a $10,000 scholarship from Horn. She would get $2,500 each year for four years. Horn's scholarship was much bigger than all of the others she applied for, she said.

The 18-year-old freshman was already used to working while in school, and is relieved that with Horn's money she doesn't have to work to survive, but can use her earnings for extra money instead.

After getting the scholarship from Horn, James said they became fast friends. She saw Horn on a regular basis, getting together to visit about once a week up until his death.

“He really liked to talk about his childhood, growing up and basically about how hard it was, which it really, really was. He had a complete right to be proud of all he had done. He really did it all himself,” said James, her golden hair blowing in the breeze.

“I think that that's the main reason why he helped people,” James continued, looking past the trees and into the distance. “On a number of occasions he said that he didn’t have a chance to do a lot of things, and so he wanted to give other people a chance.”

James and Horn's meetings became something they both relied on and treasured.

“I hadn't really ever visited with old people like him, besides my grandparents, and it really gives you a sense of satisfaction because it makes them so happy. At first I was really nervous because I wasn’t sure what I would say to him. I was surprised how little you have to do to make them so happy. You can go in for five minutes, drop by and say ‘hi,’” James said in a quiet tone.

“Toward the end, I tried to get there two times a week or so, as much as I could, as much as they would say I could.”

By the time Horn had birthday number 101 on
February 8 of 1995, James said Horn's health had undergone dramatic changes.

"He had gotten really thin and really frail. It's kind of funny. Before meeting him I tended to think I was going to see this old, old man that was just going to be this teeny, tiny, little man. It always seems like old people are really short," said James, who stands about 5 feet tall.

"He wasn't that way at all. You could almost picture him as a young man being really tall and sturdy because before he got sick, he was always walking around strong."

James enjoyed Horn's wit, his charm and his attention to fashion.

"He cared about his appearance very much. One time I came, he was wearing a suit coat that was black-and-white checkered and he had on a red tie. He really took great care in his appearance and always wanted to look right. He would love it if you told him how handsome he was. He was a real character," James said.

She went to his funeral about two months later.

"I know that he was really happy about the life he had lived. I remember he always wanted to be younger." James paused. "He'd always say to me, 'I'd give you a million dollars right now if I could have your youth.'"

"The saddest thing was that his body was dying, but his mind was completely intact. I think that was difficult. I think in a way it might be better if your mind goes first because then you don't quite realize what's going on," James said.

"The big reason why I'd go visit him was because he was such an inspiration. He had done so much that it really made you want to do that too," James said as she wiped away the tear on her cheek with her fingertips.

"It makes you feel really good to know that there really are people out there like him that are so generous they would do anything for anyone," James said.

Chorva said Horn always planned on giving away a scholarship after his death, but a friend suggested to Horn he should do it while he was still living so he would get the chance to meet the people his money would help.

"I was really lucky because I got to know him. I was glad they did it that way because I feel like I kind of lived up to their ideal. I think their purpose was for him to see how happy he made other people," James concluded.

Chorva, Courage and James all mentioned a “twinkle” in Horn's eye. He died at the ripe age of 101, but his twinkle still glows in their eyes. Ironically, Horn never had formal education himself but treated others to the opportunity in his place.

Chorva said, "Horn was a hardworking man. He liked to help people who help themselves." Chorva said she believes Horn saw that quality in Courage and James and that is the reason he was so eager to support them.

Courage said, "It makes me very sad that he's gone, but he did a good job in helping a lot of people along his way. It seems he spent his life making money and giving it away.

"It's amazing how much he gave me besides just a scholarship. He really showed me a love for life. He was enthusiastic about living and he cared about a lot of people."

Courage said she could never thank Horn enough for the role he has played in her life. She said the challenge now is to live up to a standard she would be proud for him to see.

"Trying to step up to the plate of responsibility that comes with the opportunity is hard," she finished.

You will not see a movie about the good works of Mr. Thomas Horn. A movie is not necessary because he was real. Horn lived for over a century and his investments continue on even longer inside the lives of people who cared for him—people who were taught lessons of love and generosity by a special man.

THE END

THIS HAS BEEN A KLIPSUN PRODUCTION.
Far From Home

It was Saturday and the shops on Railroad Ave. had closed for the evening. People were long gone to the comforts of their homes and a sunset streaked royal purple across the bay horizon when we drove the red truck full of macaroni and cheese and bologna sandwiches to where Bellingham's youth remained — sitting and standing together against an old building across the street from the bus station. Waiting — because it was Saturday.
Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, food, clothes and company arrive around 8:30 p.m., orchestrated by The Upper Room, an organization for homeless youths. This particular Saturday night, 10 or so people were waiting beside the curb. And as the sun disappeared and they delved into the food, streetlights cast a yellow glow on volunteer Denver Du Pont and several youths as he sent a hacky sack hurling into the air.

For several years, Du Pont, now 21, lived on the streets — sleeping on sidewalks, in pup tents and anywhere else he could eke out an existence. He first lived on the streets in Eureka, California. After leaving home at 18, he lived with friends, but was kicked out of the apartment they shared. "I started getting really bad into drugs like crank and speed, so my will power and my mental state and self-esteem was practically zero. So I ended up on the streets ... I made friends quickly because you follow the basic premise that misery loves company."

During his first few months on the streets in California, "I just pulled up a piece of cardboard and stayed directly off the concrete," Du Pont said. "I'd go places like St. Vincent de Paul's." There, he and other homeless persons could get a voucher for food. "The first part of living on the streets in Eureka I slept in a pup tent, which was given to me by a guy who had just recently gotten off the streets."

He continued his spiral into drug use and soon, "I started getting really comfortable being homeless. It scared me ... A friend of mine got killed." Then a little over six months after he moved to Bellingham, The Upper Room helped find him a job at the Humane Society with the Private Industry, a government-funded organization for homeless persons.

Du Pont's outgoing personality, in all probability, aids in his quick befriending. It also helps him when he works with youth through The Upper Room, the same organization that helped him get off the streets. His personality, coupled with his street knowledge, breaks down the barriers between himself and the 30 homeless kids in Bellingham he knows by name.

As the evening deepened and teens filtered in and out, Du Pont began to talk the talk of the youth — leaving any authoritative role behind. "It's the street kid coming out," Du Pont said after talking slang with some of the kids who were playing hacky sack. Moments later he continued his leadership by stopping one youth from giving rides around the parking lot to several other kids on top of his car. They stopped and listened.

Earlier in the evening, one of the youths secured a bag of chips under his jacket and another homeless young man, balancing a paper plate of macaroni precariously in one hand and a cup of Kool-Aid in another, chased him through the street, in and out of cars. "Give me some chips!" Both had huge smiles and their laughter echoed against the concrete building. "Hey, don't waste any of that," Denver warned them. They listened with respect.

THE YOUTH

Chris, 14, spent three months on the streets of Bellingham after running away from home. His mother filed a runaway report after he ran away, and he eventually went back home, but he periodically returns to the streets to what he considers freedom from rules and curfews. Chris said with a friend on a bench by the marina.

They lived on the streets together in tents, makeshift shelters in the woods and occasionally a hotel room. They stick together, Chris said.

Although Chris said living on the streets is attractive to him, he admitted the downside does exist. "It really depends. If you get on the bad side of someone, you get beat up. You learn how to survive," Chris said. "If you're on the streets, you meet gang people ... You can get raped or whatever. You can get kidnapped. You learn how to hide — from the cops or whoever."

The Upper Room makes money less of an issue, he said. "You have the Mission, Down Low; you have the food bank." Down Low is an organization that gives street kids a place to stay off the streets from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. every evening.

The allure of the streets is real for some youth, where curfews and rules are non-existent, Du Pont and others said. In adolescence, when kids tend to want freedom from structure, from parents, the streets become an alternative. Yet for others, the streets are an only option when they're running from abusive situations or when they get kicked out of the house for one reason or another. And, as Du Pont knows first-hand, being homeless isn't fun and games. At night, homeless kids sleep in abandoned warehouses, boxcars or heating grates in the backs of alleys.

"I sleep anywhere I can," said Steve, a frequenter of the Upper Room — in cars, in doorways. In the winter, it becomes a matter of wherever it's warm.

"My parents threw me out when I was 17," said Steve. This was after he got into drugs, alcohol — "you name it" — and started getting into trouble. Since becoming homeless, Steve has gotten to know the other homeless youth around town. He said they all pretty much know each other. One of his friends was recently beaten by a baseball-bat-wielding bunch in Bellingham, and for several days afterwards, his friend had trouble talking in full sentences.
When he first lived on the streets, it was hard for Steve to adjust. "I used to hang out downtown a lot." Sometimes, he said, the authorities would kick them out of their hangouts, the bus station, in front of stores, but "you wait until the cops are gone, then you come back," he said, his blue shirt and black pants hanging loosely on his body.

HELP

In Whatcom County, no shelter exists for runaways or other homeless youth without families who live on the streets, although one organization, called Whatcom Connection, mediates between runaways and their parents, and other organizations help homeless families with children. The Light House Mission on Holly Street feeds all ages, but only houses people over 18.

At Whatcom Connection, Tom Hart mediates between 15 and 20 runaways and families per week. Whatcom Connection is mostly a preventative program for kids before they reach the streets; after youth end up on the streets, they're out of his jurisdiction, yet he occasionally does outreach work in the community. Hart said his program is voluntary; youth are put in what he calls "Safe Homes" for up to three days, during which Hart or another social worker works with them and the parents.

"The older teens seem to have networks," he said. "The 16-, 17-year-olds go to friends. They don't need to use the Safe Homes, where the 12-year-olds use the Safe Homes. They don't have that network yet. They don't have cars to live in." At times, Hart takes out-of-town runaways to Greyhound, which offers runaways a free ride home, under a program called "Home Free."

With the passage of the Becca Bill on May 10, 1995, parents now have more power over their runaway children. This is what Hart called some of those "gray lines." The bill, which allows for authorities to hold runaways for up to five days while they and parents decide the fate of the child, is named after Rebecca Hedman, a 13-year-old runaway who was killed on the street. Hedman's father helped push the bill through Washington State legislature. The bill, at a cost of $2 million over two years, allows parents to commit their children to mental-health or substance-abuse facilities without their children's consent. Opponents of this bill said parents would have the ability to treat their children like property or force kids back to abusive situations. Proponents of the bill say parents need the ability to help their kids get off the streets.

"One of the things parents do is grab the kids. Because of state law, they kidnap them and take them out of state for treatment centers," Hart said. "So I guess that's the balance of what's going on with the laws," Hart said. "It's kids who run away for good reasons, for being abused or being beaten — their parents are alcoholics — so the kids run. And you also have the kids who run for things that are stable. Their parents aren't abusive or for whatever reason because they're into drugs or they're developing a mental-health issue, and then the kid runs and there's nothing the parents can do."

RUNWAY HAVEN, PARENT NIGHTMARE

One parent, Kristi Vanselow, "kidnapped" her child in Bellingham and brought her to a treatment center in Oregon two years ago. "As a parent, you're constantly being put on the defensive. People think that they wouldn't be running away unless they were abused." Vanselow said her daughter came from a structured, loving home and when she turned 13, she started developing behavioral problems. She has since been diagnosed with a mental-health problem and is doing well at a center in Utah. In Oregon, Vanselow's daughter's doctors advised her to not take her daughter back to Washington. "The police told us there was nothing we could do (in Washington) ... We should have had options in this state."

Vanselow, who is head of the Whatcom County Chapter of Runaway Alliance, has been a vocal advocate of the Becca Bill. She said she doesn't think abused teens will be forced back into their homes with the passage of the Becca Bill but will be funneled into Crisis Residential Centers. More than 120 parents have called asking advice, including how to kidnap their own children, since she's been involved in the Runaway Alliance, Vanselow said.

In 1994, the Bellingham Police Department received 386 runaway reports from parents. In 1993, 468 reports were filed. Lt. Rick Sucee said this number includes repeat runaways, who sometimes have up to 30 reports filed throughout the year.

In the United States, 1.5 million kids run away from home each year, according to an essayist in The Nation, June 1, 1992.

PUTTING FACES TO THE NUMBERS

"As I saw all those kids that are on the streets, I thought, 'This is a big problem for such a small town,'" said Rob Crawford, Upper Room organizer. "We know over 40 homeless kids by their first name right here in town — a lot of sad stories of kids that can't go home and a lot of kids who have been in and out of the system here." Whatcom Connection helps youth fill out applications for jobs, get clothing for the interview and other vital skills. So far, Crawford said they've helped 25 kids get jobs.

Usually The Upper Room has a building with showers, couches and a washer and dryer; however, its building at 902 N. State is under construction, so
they make do with cars. “Most every kid will tell you they want to get their GED (General Education Degree) at least, you know, but they talk about it as though it’s a distant goal. Like it can’t even be attainable,” Crawford said.

About 50 percent of the homeless he knows are runaways. “We’ve seen both sides. We’ve seen it where parents have said, ‘No, I don’t want my kid back,’ and we’ve seen the other part where the parents want their kids back and for whatever reason the kids are saying ‘no’... Every kid is so different. Every situation is so different,” Crawford said. After earning trust, the youth tell them their stories, their dreams.

“A lot of these kids are carrying around a lot of anger,” Crawford said. “A lot of these kids come from abusive home situations, whether it’s physical, sexual or even mental abuse.” Another factor is adolescent rebellion. But whatever the reason why these kids are on the streets, Crawford said, “I think communities need to be more supportive of families and of parents, especially (as) a smaller town I think we have the ability to do that... For example, there aren’t enough beds for these kids that are out on the streets anyway.”

Du Pont voiced concerns about the foster care system, saying that when the youths begin getting attached to the parents or vice versa, the state then transfers them to another home to prevent this. “It sort of defeats the purpose of the whole program,” he said. “It hinders, in fact, and it causes the kids on the streets to hate foster homes and it’s gotten to the point where if a kid gets in a foster home, they’re going to be affronting them at every possible turn.”

However, Marion Heath, who supervises the youth unit in the division of Children and Family Services in Bellingham, said these are some of the misunderstandings associated with the turnover rate in the foster care system. Foster care doesn’t switch the teens to prevent them from getting attached, a process that involves paper work, court hearings and other time-consuming bureaucracy, she said. It’s oftentimes the child’s own volition — previously learned behavior from dysfunctional homes and fear of intimacy — that causes the child to go from home to home.

“Close means pain” to children who back away for fear of getting hurt once again. And children who run away aren’t looking for substitute parents to tell them what to do. For foster care parents, “there’s only so much you can tolerate,” Heath said — especially without a previous close relationship between foster parents and troubled teens. “It just is difficult.”

Of the families and youth she works with, 85 percent find success, Heath said. The rest might be the ones who are impacted negatively by legislation such as the Becca Bill, she said. “It is going back to where we were 10 years ago,” when the state first started differentiating between youth who needed detention and those who didn’t. She said more money to preventive services is the way to go, and “parent right” legislation isn’t necessarily the right way to do things, although parents should have the right to acquire services for their children when they need them.

“You never have enough homes for teens,” Heath said. Licensed, short-term receiving homes are especially in demand right now, such as the ones Whatcom Connection has. Parents with kids already have a lot of work and adding a troubled teen can take a lot of energy; this adds to the lack of foster homes. And like Whatcom Connection, Child Protective Services placement is voluntary.

**TOMORROW**

After seven months in California, Du Pont made his way to Bellingham where he received help from The Upper Room. “Things are really looking up for me,” Du Pont said. He recently received his GED, and has his own apartment now.

What does he see in his future? “I don’t know. I still want to be a rock ‘n’ roll singer, but I’m putting that into the background... I’d like to be a graphic designer; I’d like to be an engineer; I’d like to be a school teacher. I’d really love to be a school teacher... There’s so many things I’d like to do. All of this is in the future; right now I’m just working. Just working and paying the bills.”

For Steve, who has lived on the streets for seven years, what tomorrow holds isn’t such a high priority when everyday needs are an uncertainty. Does he hope to get off the streets? “Eventually I will. I’ve never actually thought about it,” he said, then rubbed his eyes and forehead. As he crossed his arms, his eyes were watery and red. “Just hoping I don’t go insane,” he said half-heartily.

Chris decided to go home recently and had a “conference” with his mom where they decided it would be good for him to go to summer school in Utah. In September, however, Chris said he gets off probation and: “I know I’ll go back on the streets. I like it a lot.” His periodic stays on the street stem from fights with his parents, after which he said he occasionally gets kicked out of the house.

On Saturday, as the hacky sack zipped from foot to foot and knee to knee, the high risk and homeless teens were doing something often seen as a negative pastime, but which is important to their well-being as street kids. They were hanging out on the corner street, talking, laughing, eating, smoking, showing off. But most importantly, they were together with people who cared for them for a few hours of positive attention before some returned to an uncertain homelife or an abandoned warehouse.
CONSUMERISM

buying green
You're standing in the grocery store, in front of the laundry detergents. At least 10 different brands stare at you, their ultra-neon orange-and-yellow boxes screaming with nuclear red letters: TIDE, CHEER and ARM & HAMMER!

Then you notice Ecover, in a dark green box with a picture of a waterfall tumbling over rocks in a lush green meadow, with a dreamy blue sky in the background. The store's fluorescent lights part and sunshine beams in on the box. You are about to enter the "environmentally sound" product dilemma: pay $2 or $3 more for a laundry detergent that claims it is safe for the environment, or spend less on a generic or name-brand detergent.

As you reach for a "non-environmental" box, you remember a recent news story about another river polluted by chemicals that seeped into the water when an underground septic line carrying washing machine waste-water sprung a leak. The fish will die slow, agonizing deaths — all because YOU had to save three measly dollars to spend on Crunch 'n' Munch and Coke. You can feel the guilt inching its way through your body.

Choosing to spend more to protect the environment by buying what are called "green" products is a tough decision for students on a tight budget. Green products include products made from recycled materials, products that can be used more than once or products with little or no harmful chemicals in them. Green products also include those that use little or no packaging or packaging made from recycled materials.

Usually, green products cost more. So, instead of making decisions based on the environment, many people have to make decisions based on the dollar. Add to this the difficulty of determining which products are as environmentally sound as their labels claim and buying green gets complicated.

"I buy the cheapest, cheapest, cheapest toilet paper I can find," admitted Monica Walker, a Huxley student at Western, while wandering in front of an ominous-looking, 8-foot-high aisle of paper products in a local grocery store. Even though toilet paper made from recycled material is available, Melanie Barnes, also a Huxley student, agreed.

"I usually go for the cheap stuff," Barnes said, already looking guilty for failing to meet the credo she assigned herself when she put on her Birkenstocks.

The "college budget," Barnes said, prevents her from buying green products. Walker and Barnes agreed if they had the money, they would spend more to buy green. However, the choices are limited. Major grocery stores usually carry only one brand of recycled paper products or one type of "safe" laundry detergent or other household cleaner, and every store is likely to carry something different. Beyond that, most products have packaging made from recycled material (indicated by the universal recycle symbol of three arrows following each other in a triangle), but few have actually reduced the amount of packaging used.

At least for now, the burden to investigate the claims of environmental products rests squarely on the consumer's shoulders. Green advertising claims have not been regulated in the past; however, that is slowly changing as buying green becomes an important consumer issue.

Brad Smith, merchandising manager at the Community Food Co-op in Bellingham, suggests consumers learn how to read labels to determine if a product is helping to reduce harm to the environment instead of relying on advertising claims. For example, when it comes to cleaning agents, most products use very similar ingredients. Smith's advice is to learn what the ingredients mean.

"If you can understand the ingredient label, then it's probably a good sign that this is potentially a good product to have in terms of its environmental effect," Smith said. However, he added, "even if the label says it's environmentally sound, do the research and find out what those things (the ingredients) are."

Walker and Barnes tried this advice and got mixed results. Barnes, an environmental science major and chemistry minor, compared labels between Tide and Ecover laundry detergents. Tide had a compound called aluminum silicate in it, and she immediately recognized aluminum as toxic to fish — to any living organism, in fact. The Ecover box listed silicates on its label.

"So it could still be aluminum silicate — it's a compound," Barnes said. "If you say 'silicate,' you're generalizing so you don't have to say 'aluminum silicate.'"

Barnes admitted she had never actually looked at detergent labels before, so she didn't know if most detergents have the same ingredients. She did think she would be willing to learn about what is in products, under certain circumstances.

"It would depend on how well-organized the information is — whether it was something I would have to go spend hours and hours in the library, or whether it's just a matter of picking up a pamphlet and reading it," Barnes said.

Walker agreed. She also said that at this point, if something says it's recycled, for example, then she assumes it actually is when she buys it. However, "recycled" material comes from one of two very different types of waste: pre-consumer and post-consumer.

Pre-consumer waste is material that has never entered the use cycle — waste material produced during a manufacturing process. Pre-consumer waste is not a large reduction in the amount of resources used to produce products, because resources were used during the initial process that created it.

by michele anderson
photographs by shelley sharp
... instead of making decisions based on the environment, many people have to make decisions based on the dollar.

Post-consumer waste has been used before. No additional resources are used to create post-consumer waste, so fewer resources are used overall.

Consumers have to look closely before they grab a product that says it is recycled and then pay more for it. The Tide box said the packaging was made of 100 percent recycled material, but with a closer look, only 35 percent is post-consumer waste; Ecover's box is made of 100 percent post-consumer waste. Brawny prominently advertises that its paper towels are 100-percent recycled, but closer examination indicates only 10 percent is post-consumer waste.

Another example is on a package of Kleenex-brand toilet paper. To promote its new double-size rolls, Kleenex claims its product has the environmental benefit of less packaging because twice as much toilet paper is on each roll. However, because the rolls are bigger, more plastic is used on the outside to wrap them up — so the reduction in packaging is actually quite minimal. And no matter what size the roll, resources are used to produce it; the bigger the roll, the more resources used.

Are today's stores getting greener?

The success of green products depends heavily on consumers. Haggen Inc. publicist Vicki Calderhead said Haggen has brought in recycled products when customers requested them.

"They (green products) get in the store and then they don't move well. Customers don't realize they cost so much," Calderhead said, adding that customers often find the quality of recycled paper products unacceptable. For example, recycled toilet paper can be grainy and rough to the touch.

"Customers aren't willing to make the sacrifice," she said, and if the product isn't received well, then it won't be sold in stores.

Some green products have limited appeal. Take, for example, a reusable sanitary pad for women to use during their menstrual cycle that is sold at the Co-op. It is made from cotton fiber and can be rinsed out and used again. This is the type of green product that may be dropped from a store's shelves after a trial period.

Walking down the "feminine hygiene" aisle, Walker stopped suddenly.

"There's no way in hell I would use those," Walker said extremely bluntly as she grabbed one off the shelf and held it out for Barnes to see. She laughed as she saw Barnes' eyes open wide.

"Ugh, no — no, no, no," Barnes said, with a stunned expression on her face. After she regained her ability to speak, she paused for a moment to read the package.

"'The one you want to reuse.' Would you want to reuse this?" she asked, still stunned.

For those who don't think they would be willing to buy quite that green, Smith said it is not only a matter of buying recycled products. He said the biggest impact people can have on the environment is to buy less.

"Particularly in our consumer society, we want to relate to it as, 'How can I change my buying habits, what can I buy that will make me environmentally sound?'" Smith said. "It's not that simple."

"It's more a matter of people's practices. We tend to look at plastic as being bad, or Styrofoam as being bad," Smith said. "It's not inanimate products that are the problem, it's our practices that are the problem. Any product, any material, is recyclable."

When faced with the choice of choosing between an "enviro-pak" of laundry detergent in a plastic bag that claimed to have 80 percent less packaging than cardboard cartons of detergent, Barnes and Walker thought it was a tough choice.
"Paper bags come from trees, plastic bags aren't recyclable," Walker said, holding the pack of laundry soap in one hand and gesturing with the other hand.

But plastic is recyclable, Barnes said, just not in Whatcom County.

"I usually go with the plastic option because I know that sometime in the next 10 years they're going to make an efficient way to recycle plastic," Barnes said. "The turnover time for plastic is eventually going to be shorter than the turnover time for a tree."

Many products use plastic packaging, but both felt excess packaging has gone a little overboard. Given the choice, they would rather have messy store shelves and less attractive displays than unnecessary packaging.

"Like Cup-a-Soups: They've got the Styrofoam packaging, then they've got the paper around it, and then they've got the plastic around it — for one cup!" Walker said with a laugh. A box of Lawry's taco shells also has three layers: plastic around the shells, a cardboard box and more plastic around the box.

Both admitted, however, that they are likely to buy packaged foods, such as macaroni and cheese or other similar products, even though they use too much packaging.

"Time is a big factor for me," Barnes said, and packaged foods work well when she's cooking only for herself.

Calderhead said at this point most manufacturers aren't willing to go totally green, such as creating a whole new line of products that are environmentally safe.

"Not many manufacturers are getting into it until they can find a way to address the cost and quality issue," she said. In the meantime, "they are integrating (recycled material) in a way that's going to work in a product mix on a daily basis," Calderhead said, such as using recycled materials for packaging.

Before they left the store, Barnes and Walker said they think they would spend a few extra dollars for an environmentally safe laundry detergent — Walker already has. But, she said, if it doesn't work as well, she probably won't keep buying it.

"Why would you want to buy a product that doesn't work?" Walker said.

Both seemed a little discouraged by the fact that even their money talks, especially as environmental studies students.

They are well aware of the problems related to garbage and pollution — as many people are — and wish they had the money to support green products. They are somewhat surprised so few green products are available in general grocery stores.

"I think it should be an option, but I think that's the problem," Barnes said. "They have probably brought them (green products) in here before and nobody buys them. They can't compete well enough."

Concern for the environment is growing, though, and Smith and Calderhead agree if the customer buys more green products, more will be made and carried by all types of stores.

As Barnes and Walker passed the cash registers on their way out, amid the beeps of the automated price scanners, a checker could be overheard asking a customer, "Paper or plastic?"

The dilemma never ends.
Take it to the Limit

Opening the mailbox can be like opening Pandora’s box. Inside could be anxiously awaited packages, letters and news from home, or — something most people dread finding — bills. Phone bills, utility bills and, for many students, credit card bills. The flow can seem unending. It can also be the beginning of trouble. Big trouble.

The college years are when most people begin establishing their credit history, whether they realize it or not. Living away from home brings about many new responsibilities. Unfor-
fortunately, many students start off on the wrong foot where their credit is concerned. They overextend themselves and turn to credit cards to ease the financial strain.

Vivian McRae, education specialist for the Seattle Region Consumer Credit Counseling (CCC), said that out of the 7,500 people the company is currently helping out of debt, roughly 10 percent are under the age of 22. It takes an average of two to four years for a consumer to get out of debt. The CCC is a non-profit agency designed to educate the public about responsible use of credit. Figures from the Bellingham branch of the CCC are included in the above total.

Credit cards account for a large portion of debt problems in our society. College students are particularly susceptible to high credit card debts. They are often targeted by credit card companies because they are promising customers.

“They know students feel they live a somewhat ‘deprived’ lifestyle,” McRae said. Having a credit card gives them more buying power. In addition, it is expected that college students will get out of school and find a high-paying job. That’s attractive to credit card companies, which often alter their requirements for student applications.

For example, American Express has a minimum annual income requirement for non-students of $15,000 and charges an annual fee of $50 or more. A college student can obtain an American Express card by filling out an application and providing a student identification number and expected date of graduation. There is no set annual income requirement for a student American Express card. In addition to credit privileges, students often receive air travel discounts and a lower or nonexistent annual fee.

Incentives and bonuses are often used to persuade college students to apply for credit cards. Discount airfare vouchers, phone cards, free long distance — these are incentives that hold great appeal for the college student, yet cost credit card companies very little.

Some students become so tempted by these incentives they soon find themselves with a wallet full of credit cards. “All you need is one Visa or Mastercard,” McRae warned. “The store credit cards are asking for trouble.”

Most merchants accept Visa or Mastercard. Carrying only one card reduces the temptation to splurge on unnecessary items. Occasional splurges add up, and before they know it, students can be in over their heads in debt.

The warning signs are often ignored. Paying only the minimum due, missing payments altogether or “borrowing” from one card to pay another could be signs that a student is in trouble. Carrying a large balance on several cards and juggling the payments can be risky.

James Lupori, education specialist for Consumer Credit Counseling, gave the following example to demonstrate how this can be dangerous.

“Let’s say you have five credit cards with a balance of $2,000 on each one. Your monthly payment on each of them would be $35 with an annual percentage rate of 18 percent. At 1.5 percent per month, you’re paying $30 a month in interest and only $5 in principal. That’s a total of $150 a month just in interest. Most students don’t think about the interest when charging consumer goods.”

But Jennifer Thiel does think in terms of the interest when using her credit cards. “I pay more than the minimum every month, otherwise you’re not getting anywhere. You’re not moving forward.”

Thiel sits on her living room floor, legs crossed, tracing patterns in the carpet. She carries a balance on her Visa, although she admits that’s not the way she wants it.

“I almost always use it for gifts because I
CONSUMERISM

IF YOU DON’T HAVE THE MONEY,
YOU SHOULD NOT BE CHARGING IT ON A CREDIT CARD.

rarely have the money in my checking account for those surprise things,” she said. “Even if I don’t have the money, I still feel like I can afford it. There’s the bad credit card thing.”

Some students would prefer to charge purchases than see their checking account balance depleted. Their checking account is usually reserved for rent, groceries and phone bills. Credit cards are used for gifts, clothes and occasionally eating out.

Colleen Mohl, 21, does not have a Visa or Mastercard but uses her store cards liberally. “It makes me feel less broke when I can come home with nice new things and not have any less money in my checking account,” Mohl said, pushing sandy-brown hair off her face with a grin. “I don’t feel like I’m actually spending money at that moment. I think the monthly payment has something to do with it. You can charge up a credit card and still pay the same monthly payment.”

Wearing a stylish denim dress, Mohl seems to take pride in her appearance. “I mean, I know it’s not like getting something for nothing, but in a sense it kind of feels that way,” she admitted. “If I had to pay for it out of my checking account, then the money wouldn’t be there, so I wouldn’t buy it. I keep close track of my checking account,” she added with a serious look.

Keeping track of spending is one of the keys to using credit cards responsibly. Riad Youssef, a student at Western, watches his credit card spending very closely.

“They’re the devil,” Youssef said with a shudder. “I only keep them for emergency situations, like if I get towed, and I pay my balance off every month.” Youssef sounded confident as he continued, “I don’t spend more than I think I’ll be bringing home in a pay period.”

As with any issue, awareness is another key to keeping out of credit card trouble. “If you don’t have the money, you should not be charging it on a credit card,” McRae advised. “You should decide your credit limit. A $500 limit could cover emergency costs or a plane ticket home.”

Students should start slowly and take good care of their credit. Any late payments or items turned over for collection can show up on credit reports. “Many young adults are surprised when they find unpaid traffic tickets, charges from CD clubs and pager bills on their credit report,” McRae said.

Once a late payment or collection shows up on a credit report, it stays there for up to seven years. A “credit ding” can have far-reaching effects. Apartment managers pull credit reports when determining whether or not they should sign a lease with someone. Home ownership often requires an in-depth look at the borrowers’ credit history. Credit history may even determine whether a student gets a job after graduation.

According to McRae, more and more employers are looking at applicants’ credit reports as one determining factor in the hiring process. If the position entails handling large amounts of money or classified information, a credit report can be very telling.

Because credit reports can give so much information about a person, it’s important for students to know their rights as they pertain to credit histories and reporting.

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), credit granters, insurers and government agencies may use a credit report for credit considerations, collection of an account, or employment or insurance purposes. Otherwise, the consumer should provide written instructions for a report to be issued. One exception is if a report is ordered by the court. In this case, more information about the FCRA can be obtained from a credit reporting agency.

All in all, establishing responsible credit habits in college can help prevent financial problems in the future and keep bills to a minimum.
A Marriage Made in Mail-Order Heaven

by Jamie Kline

It seemed so friendly at first. You were flattered by its interest in you. It knew what it wanted, and asked for so little in return. If only you knew then what you know now. Its slogan, after all, is, “A great deal now ... a great deal more later!”

Columbia House, everyone’s favorite music-by-mail club, offers an attractive package: Ten compact discs or cassettes for one thin penny. If you’ve taken economics, you might recognize this as a very good deal. Ten CDs at ordinary prices, even those by bargain-bin bands like Whitesnake, will run you upwards of $100. As a bonus, Columbia House features your favorite artists (including Whitesnake) in categories spanning the musical spectrum.

Established in 1955, the Columbia House division is an offshoot of CBS Records. It draws its catalog from various labels besides CBS, including Atlantic, Geffen and Motown. As an advertising supplement in Billboard so succinctly states, “Even a heavy metalist has the opportunity to buy Yo Yo Ma’s latest album, and a jazz buff can add AC/DC to his or her collection.”

You get your selections a few weeks later and you couldn’t be happier with your new buddy Columbia House. Gradually, however, the truth comes out: Columbia House wants to be more than friends. It wants a commitment.
Columbia House ...

By ordering the first CDs or cassettes, you enter into an agreement with the club, promising to purchase at least six additional selections at regular club prices. These prices currently range from $8 to $11 for cassettes and $13 to $17 for CDs, plus shipping and handling.

Columbia House starts to get pushy, sending an order form every month. It commands attention by threatening to send the “Special Selection” unless you reply in a specified amount of time.

It introduces you to its family. Separate divisions of Columbia House offer a video library, clothing and jewelry, and a variety of CD, cassette or video storage systems.

Columbia House wants to meet your friends. It offers you more free selections if you get someone else to join.

You start to get scared. Every time you open a magazine, a Columbia House insert lurks amid the perfume and cologne samples, reminding you of what you owe. You picked the most appealing albums when you ordered the first ten, and now you’re reduced to buying the complete works of Yes just to fulfill the club’s terms.

You worry that your reply card got lost in the mail and, at this very moment, cackling Columbia House minions are packaging up the “Special Selection,” probably Ozzy Osbourne's “The Blizzard of Oz,” to send your way. This relationship just isn't healthy. You want out.

Assuming you have purchased the required six selections, you are officially a member. At this point you have the freedom to cancel your membership at any time. You send Columbia House a polite farewell letter: "Welcome to Dumpsville, baby; population: you!" Like most relationships, however, this one doesn’t end so easily. It tries to woo you all over again, offering even more free selections.

Why does the club go to such lengths to keep you? Toss aside all romantic notions, because you are not its one-and-only.


With that firm grasp of the vastness of the club, you might question your place within it. You might wonder about the size of the bucket in which you’re just a drop. Only Columbia House and the IRS know for sure, and they aren’t telling.

Richard Wolter, president of the Columbia House Division, said the company spends $50 million annually on postage alone, mailing 93 million magazines and 30 million customer shipments. Its advertising budget is around $120 million per year, which the company uses to produce 47,000 miles of printed material. One might assume that this reflects a hefty annual profit. McAndrews, ever anxious to help, replied to this assumption with a hearty "we don’t give out financial information."

No matter; this relationship isn’t based on communication anyway. It is purely a surface attraction: you want Columbia House’s music, it wants your money. Strings are attached, and in the end you’ve probably paid way too much for music you wouldn’t otherwise have purchased.

But relationships, even bad ones, bring growth. You’re older now, wiser and probably the only one on your block with the complete Yes collection. So if you must end it, be firm. If the letter doesn’t get your point across, call the customer service center in Terra Haute, Indiana, and have it out with one of the division’s 2,000 employees. Quote from your newly acquired "Best of Twisted Sister" album: "We’re not gonna take it anymore!"

Breaking up is hard to do. You’ll curse the inconvenience of actually having to leave your home to buy music, but it will get easier with time. Columbia House will be sorry to see you go, but its roving eye will ease its pain. In the poetic words of Neil Keating, senior vice president of direct marketing for CBS Records, "Certainly, we see no signs that the current growth in direct marketing is going to slow down any time soon."

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND.

According to a leaflet from the Stop Junk Mail Association (available through the Recycling Hotline), 7.4 billion pounds of junk mail are produced annually. In 1990, 63.7 billion direct mail pieces were sent domestically. In 1992, 62 million trees were cut for promotional mail paper. This wastefulness destroys entire ecosystems, it reads, "not just forests."

WHO CAN YOU THANK FOR JUNK MAIL?

Companies make lists of their buyers and sell them to others who deal solely in names. A single magazine subscription can invite a bi-annual surprise of mail from 25 companies or more courtesy of the Kleid Company, a New York-based name brokerage, alone.

The dozen or more companies involved in name sales have at least one most reliable source: the United States Postal Service.

We literally handed it everything it needed when we moved to college. The Post Office innocently asks for the completion of that harmless little forwarding card, telling it where we will be for the next four to 15 years. At the same time, we give them a salable item that brings quite a good profit for those like the Kleid Company.

STopping IT AT THE SOURCE.

Several organizations already exist to reduce junk mail.

The Stop Junk Mail Association will delete an address and up to five names from the Direct Marketing Association’s list for $14.50. 1-800-827-5549.

The Direct Mail Association: Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008 Farmingdale, NY, 11735. (It’s free.)

The Privacy Rights Clearinghouse at the University of San Diego, 1-800-773-7748, will offer free advice on how to avoid lists, as will the Recycling Hotline: (360) 676-5723.
By Jennifer Schwantes

"It had always been my dream to go to France. I didn't want to regret not going," said Western junior Yvonne Wheeler, who went to France winter quarter of 1995 through the American Heritage Association program at Western.

"Money is not an excuse not to go," she stated adamantly.

But how can one, especially one who is a student, afford to travel internationally? It seems so unaffordable and impossible. However, it is not beyond the means of a student to see the wide world. Some students go through exchange programs on campus and get credit for studying abroad for a quarter while paying about the same amount as they would for a quarter at Western. Others prefer to take time off and go for an indefinite period of time with only a backpack.

For Wheeler to go to Avignon, France, last winter, it was "somewhat expensive." She spent $700 on airfare, the tuition cost was the same as at Western, and there was an extra $1,500 in expenses. "It was more than a quarter here," Wheeler said.

This may seem like a lot, but to Wheeler it was worth it. She was able to get her minor in French while studying abroad.

Western student Lisa Davidson traveled to Morelia, Mexico, during winter quarter in 1994. "I loved it, and I would've stayed longer if I would've had the money," Davidson said. She described Morelia as "colonial," like those cities found in Europe. The buildings are old and cannot be demolished. Billboards are not allowed to be put up either. The city contains many universities and most of the people in the city are students and professionals, Davidson said. The main street was blocked off a good deal of the time for political protests while she was there.

Davidson's reason for going to Mexico was to earn credits for her Spanish major. "I went in to talk to my professor one day and he said, 'So when are you going to study abroad?' He told me to go to Morelia the next fall or spring," Davidson said. So she did.

"Morelia is a beautiful city and a good place to study," she added. "They (the student exchange program) encourage people to go there the most."

Both Wheeler and Davidson said the program was relatively easy to get into and financial aid was available. Wheeler had to apply and have an interview, but said, "If you're going to pay, they'll take you, unless they're overcrowded."

Dr. Arthur Kimmel of Western's student exchange
was eating dinner with her host family every night. The French definitely value good food, she said. Every night, dinner was a two-hour event, which started around 8 or 9 p.m. There were three or four courses with a wide variety of food such as quiche Lorraine, vegetables and cheese and fruit for dessert.

"I also liked getting to experience their family values," Wheeler said. "Family and friends are important to them."

In France, Wheeler went to an American school and rode her bicycle there every day. She also traveled every weekend to different cities in southern France and went to Paris, too.

Wheeler described Avignon as small, but with a lot of people condensed into the town, which was surrounded by a wall with a five-mile radius. The town wasn't very green and there weren't many trees. "Walking around, you'd see the same people," she said with a laugh.

Traveling to a foreign country gives students insight into American culture as well as the culture of the country students visit.

"I learned a lot about the culture up here (United States)," Davidson said. "You don't think about life here because you're in it." But after living in another country for a while, Davidson started questioning American values and lifestyles.

For Wheeler, living in France also changed the way she looked at things in America. It was hard for her to come home again. "There was lots of stuff I didn't like about Americans when I came back. They're always trying to impress people. The French are lovely people," she reminisced. "They love to sit and talk and people here don't."

Davidson said culture shock was part of the learning experience, and she emphasized being open-minded was important. "You have to be willing to accept the culture and the way things are," she said.

Many students want a less-structured experience when traveling abroad. They just want to take off and see the world.

Nicole Halabisky, a psychology major at Western, started out in the study-abroad program in Avignon, like Wheeler. From there, she found a job at a ski area in Grenoble, France, where she worked for three months. After that, she traveled for two months.

Halabisky, who just returned this spring when her money ran out, was more than eager to talk about her travels. Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Scotland and England were some of the places she saw.

Halabisky found traveling around Europe much less expensive than going through a program. She found that youth hostels ranged from $5 to $10 a night depending on the country. (This sometimes can reach $20 a night.) She recommended getting a Eurailpass for going long distances too. She had the youth flexipass.

The experience was very affordable for Halabisky. "I wasn't stingy with my money," she said. "It's also easy to go over and find a job. People are accepting of hiring foreign travelers for a few months."

She worked in youth hostels in a ski area in Grenoble serving five-course dinners. She served the mayor and other important people. "My most humilitating moment was when I had all this food balanced and I spilled it on the mayor," she said, laughing.

Halabisky described Grenoble as "a lot like here, but with steeper mountains." The city is in the center of three mountain ranges at the bottom of this triangle, she explained. "Skiing is a way of life there. The town is centered on skiing."

Halabisky saw a different side to things in Europe. "I was taking things for granted here," she said. "It's frustrating that people here aren't aware of how easy they have it and how many things they have."

A typical day of travel for Halabisky started in the morning when she left the youth hostel. "I would catch an early train,
find a place to stay in the next city and then explore the city," she said. "I hooked up with other young people in the hostels at night."

Mario Rodriguez, a recent graduate of Western, backpacked around Europe two summers ago for two-and-a-half months. He started in London and made it over to eastern Europe and Turkey. He threw out his itinerary right away.

Rodriguez flew to Europe for $800 and spent about $1,000 on a Eurailpass. He stayed on a rooftop in Turkey for 50 cents a night, while the hostels in Germany were in castles and more expensive. "Meals varied too," he explained. "Everything was cheaper in the Eastern countries."

Rodriguez laughed and said, "I could've spent more money and not regretted it." He stayed in a Belgium hospital for four days where hardly anyone spoke English. On one of the Eurail trips, the train was raided for passports by people with machine guns.

Rodriguez said sometimes the trains had goats in the aisles and whole families moving on them. "I had this flute that I played so no one would want to be in the compartment with me on the train," he said, laughing. "Then I got it all to myself."

Rodriguez also said don't try to save money by not eating. "Spend money; eat a lot; try new things. You're a lot happier when you eat," he said with a voice of experience.

Both Rodriguez and Halabisky wanted to bring only backpacks on their trips and found that they could bring more than enough stuff this way. "It's amazing how long you can wear one pair of jeans," Rodriguez commented.

Travel agencies are also an option to help students plan for backpacking in Europe and other places. Students usually go to travel agencies for advice on air fares and rail passes. "Most students who come in already know how much they have to spend and just need air fares," explained Lorri Swanson, who works for a local travel agency in Fairhaven. "We have a research library where students can map out their journey and get information packets. But most just wing it."

She recommended youth hostels as an affordable alternative to hotels. She also recommended that students fly into London or some other major city and just go from there by rail, because it's cheaper than trying to go to a smaller, more specific place. Air fares to London in June ranged from $350 to $400 one-way and $650 to $700 round trip. She said a lot of students just buy one way tickets because they don't know when they will return. However, that means the student has to have enough money left over to get back home.

The rail system is a highly affordable way to get from country to country in Europe. A wide variety of Eurail passes are available. Either a first- or second-class pass can be purchased for someone under 26 years old.

A flexipass or consecutive day pass may be purchased. For covering a lot of ground and traveling everyday, a consecutive day pass is recommended. It allows students to travel as many days as needed in a specific period of time. A flexipass is good for stopping a few days in various places. It allows people to travel up to 15 days out of two or three months. The flexipass is a popular budget option.

A youth flexipass in second class starts at $225 for five days of travel within two months and for first class it is $740 for 15 days of travel in two months.

A consecutive day pass starts at $398 for 15 days of second class travel and is $1,098 for two months of travel in first class. The longer rail passes get cheaper per day. Students can check out all the options in Europe by Eurail, available at book stores.

Swanson said the most popular time to travel is in the summer, even though it's slightly more expensive to travel then.

No matter

1. Barcelona
2. Rodriguez and friend Jeff in Switzerland
3. Rodriguez near Eiffel Tower
4. Windmill in Amsterdam
5. Hostel in Grenoble where Halabisky worked
Seldom is heard a discouraging word from trainers who believe whales in captivity are in healthy conditions. Others are fighting for the return of whales to the ocean.

Story and photographs by Tina Jo Koontz

Rays of sunlight filter through the glassy, rippling marble to reflect off the tall dorsal fin and wispy saddle patches as the graceful, gentle giant performs an underwater ballet — gliding, twisting and jumping. It rhythmically surfaces every few minutes, exhaling a rush of explosive breath. With high-pitched squeaks, melodious trills and ratchety clicks and honks, the orca talks, sings and listens as it travels its route on the paths and highways of the waters in a blue-hued, mystical world.

Suddenly, the whale is stopped by nets. Members of its family communicate with the trapped mammal by a series of whistles and cries. In response, the whale moves its dorsal fin, but it does not try to escape. The orca, the killer whale, will spend the rest of its existence circling inside the concrete walls of a 22-foot-deep, 1-million-gallon artificial world, watching spectators just as closely as they watch it.

Questions regarding whales in captivity range from happiness of the animals and humane and ethical issues as well as the issue of releasing them back into the wild.

Many people, including conservation and activist groups, believe marine parks and aquariums use these animals solely for financial benefit and amusement. The sight of an animal the size and beauty of the killer whale in captivity may be saddening, and seeing them in their natural habitat in coves of the San Juan Islands or traveling around Bellingham Bay is much more awe-inspiring — but there is more than one side to this debate.

Even though keeping whales in captivity may tell us little about their behavior in their natural environment, the fact remains that one of the few ways humans presently have of familiarizing themselves with killer whales and other cetaceans, such as belugas, dolphins and porpoises, is to observe them in aquariums.

In the past two decades, about 40 killer whales have been captured from the waters off Iceland and placed in aquariums in Seattle, San Diego and Vancouver, B.C. Only one killer whale caught from the Puget Sound, Lolita, remains at the Sea Aquarium in Orlando, Florida.

The first killer whale to be exhibited in captivity, named Moby Doll, was at the Vancouver Aquarium in March 1965. This sparked the first protest of Greenpeace for animals in captivity.

"It's been 30 years people have been telling them not to (capture whales). The aquariums live in a cocoon saying everybody likes to see the whales," said Annelise Sorg, director of the Coalition for No Whales in Captivity, Period.

Repeatedly referring to aquariums as marine mammal 'abusement' parks, Sorg adamantly claimed such parks and aquariums are worthless in terms of educating the public.

"They claim they are educating the public. That's not based on anything but wishful thinking," Sorg said. "It is anti-educational to keep whales in captivity. They teach visitors and children it's OK to take a species as beautiful as this and put them in a fishbowl for fun. What do visitors get from it? Nothing, no scientific data, no conservation message. The education they teach is Mickey Mouse-ish ... If aquar-
ums were into education, the exhibits would be free."

Although officials at these marine mammal parks and aquariums sincerely believe in the educational value of whales in captivity, Assistant Regional Director of Greenpeace Denise Joines said, "Orcas are an essential part of the ocean's ecosystem. Removing a predator that is essential in the interplay of the species is damaging. It's damaging not only to the ecosystem, but to their families and their own livelihood — it's taken away."

In 1976, whale capturing in the Puget Sound was halted. "In the late '60s, people took a whole generation of whales. There was such a drop in breeding and low population, for a long time there were only 100 killer whales in the Puget Sound," said Lori Rash, marine biologist and researcher at Seattle's Marine Mammal Resource Center.

Jeff Foster, senior staff biologist and whale handler at Tacoma's Pt. Defiance Zoo and Aquarium (who incidentally caught the famous Shamu and Namu), said since the ban in Puget Sound, Iceland has been the source for aquariums' captive whales. Killer whales in Iceland are neither endangered nor scarce. "It's not like it is over here. There's 5,000 killer whales around Iceland alone," Foster said.

Western biology graduate student Jeremy Davies, who is currently researching bowhead whales, agrees with captivity of whales solely for rehabilitation purposes. "Ultimately I disagree with capturing wild cetaceans for captivity. When rehabilitating them, it's fine. It depends on how they respond and how long they are in captivity... Aquariums could do the same work with an animal in rehab as they could with a wild, healthy animal," Davies said.

Vancouver Aquarium's killer whales Finna and Bjossa, both about 19, were brought in 1980 — both young and healthy — when they were about four years old. Keiko, the famous "Free Willy" star, was captured at the same time and is also surrounded with debate about his poor captive situation in Mexico City.

Marisa Nichini, communications manager and marine biologist of the Vancouver Aquarium at Stanley Park, says the public makes a lot of assumptions about what is and is not happening or what is and is not right in terms of captivity.

Nichini says the aquarium staff does not believe that whales in aquariums should be released simply for the sake of releasing them, primarily because of emotional investment.

"Right now, the information that we have indicates a negative outcome as opposed to a positive outcome — there's just a few more things that need to be determined before anyone would feel comfortable releasing them," Nichini said. Releasing captive whales to the wild may not be in the best interest of the animals.

Many valid explanations given by biologists and researchers include the loss of social and hunting skills after 15 years of captivity, not being accepted into a pod and the possibility of infections. Yet, Sorg believes the only way to conserve the animals is to set them free.
Aquarium personnel have a greatly differing view of captivity. "It depends on your animals and depends on what you can do... They're like kids. We try to keep them as stimulated as possible — the size of the enclosure is not as important as the kind or amount of care," Foster said. "I don't think they miss a thing... Whales in the wild spend half their day and travel over 50 miles a day looking for food. Now they have to focus that energy in a different way. There's a fine balance... It's always something different... In a way, it's the first stage of killer whale domestication."

"They're missing everything," Sorg said. "There's absolutely nothing in the tank that's natural and their behavior shows that. They have stereotypical behavior, which is common in all animals in captivity — they do the same thing over and over again, they become neurotic. It looks nice for people, but there's nothing for the killer whales... To quote Dr. Jim Darling of the Whale Research Foundation, 'They are not killer whales, but caricatures of killer whales.'"

Joines said, "To say an animal is happy that is moved to an extremely artificial, isolated environment is nonsensical. If you think about it with compassion, think about being a whale with your mother and your brothers and sisters in the beauty of the ocean and then to be swimming in a corrugated pool, and when it speaks, it can only hear the echo of its own voice — my sense as a fellow creature on the planet is that they're happy in the wild."

Nichini said she knows the animals feel emotions, but cannot determine what those emotions are. "It's not unheard of for a killer whale calf to live up to 80 years in the wild." Rash said. The average age in captivity is about 30 years, she added.

But Nichini says nothing is conclusive. "No one has studied killer whales for an entire generation and life-span studies have not yet been thoroughly examined... There's a lot of theories and a lot of supposition," she said.

On the other hand, Sorg says aquariums cannot apply research done in captivity to the wild because the whales do not partake in the same activities, eat the same foods, and so on.

Recently, Bjossa, the killer whale in Vancouver, gave a third unsuccessful birth. Nichini explained, "There was literally nothing that could be done." The most recent calf's death was caused by a premature break of the umbilical cord, causing the baby to bleed through the cord while still inside the mother. "There is no blood supply for killer whales and you cannot do an emergency c-section on a female killer whale," Nichini said.

In the case of the previous two babies, in 1991, the second calf died at 97 days old of a fungal infection of the brain and the first, in 1988, died of lack of nutrition because of lack of milk produced by Bjossa. Nichini said the aquarium personnel had no control over these events.

"The fact of the matter is, being a killer whale calf in the wild or in an aquarium is no easy task; it's not an easy
thing to be. They’re like us in that they’re air-breathing mammals, and if you stop and think about the challenge of that, to be born into a water environment but to be an air-breathing animal, there’s one big problem. In fact, the statistics are marginally better of a calf surviving in an aquarium than they are in the wild, usually as a result of better general health, better food conditions, protective environment and living conditions — all of those are valid arguments,” Nichini said.

According to the Marine Mammal Census Database at Portland State University, there have been a total of 24 killer whale calves born in aquariums in Canada and the United States between 1985 and January 1995. Of the 24, 13 of these calves are alive.

“It’s taken us 30 years to learn what their needs are and what it takes to achieve a successful birth... We’re getting closer,” Foster said. “The only way we can justify animals in captivity is to have a strong educational and research program — entertainment is last. The only way we can really reach people is through zoos and aquariums... The bottom line is that we have the best interest of these animals at heart... It’s kind of like the old cliché ‘sacrifice a few to save the many.’ It’s going to take activist groups to work together — the pendulum needs to be somewhere in the middle.”

The biggest pro is the fact that there are cons,” Nichini said. “People wouldn’t be as activated about the whales as they are today. If you talk to most people who have an opinion about whales, where they first learned and saw whales, almost invariably it goes back to ‘I saw them in an aquarium.’

Stark contrasts lie between the different sides of the captivity debate. Undoubtedly, the arguments will continue. Until the day all conservation organizations and aquariums find a happy medium and a better understanding, education, research and direct action will give people a chance to really figure out what is best for all captive animals.

**Back Home on the Range?**

**BY NANCY HAZZARD**

I knelt on one knee to steady my camera. Squinting through one eye, I slowly rotated the outer ring to focus, but my concentration was disrupted by the green glow of intense eyes on the other side of the chainlink fence. Destiny lay in tall grass, 20 feet away. Her bib spread across her chest below a large head of glossy gray, white, brown and black fur. The warm sun of early spring beat down on the two of us, our gazes locked, even if separated by lens and fence. For a moment, it seemed we shared a small part of each other’s world and I wondered if she understood how different her captive lifestyle was from that of her distant relatives in the wild.

That was Earth Day 1995 at Wolf Haven International, located in Tenino, southeast of Olympia. Wolf Haven serves as a secure habitat for wolves, primarily those born in captivity, to live out their lives in as close to a natural environment as captivity allows. The property is set up to allow much-needed socialization among various wolves in several large pen areas.

Wolf Haven’s largely volunteer staff educates thousands of visitors each year. In addition to serving as tour guides at the sanctuary, volunteers are regularly recruited and trained to participate in “howling surveys” conducted in the field to determine the presence of wolves. This type of survey involves training researchers to howl as wolves do. Research teams then spend about two weeks of the summer in wilderness areas of Washington, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, equipped with highly sensitive recording equipment to document responses.

But locating wolves is extremely rare. Of numerous howling surveys conducted in conjunction with Wolf Haven last year within those four states, only one wolf pack and one free-ranging wolf were detected. Most responses were from coyotes.

Wolf Haven’s role in wolf conservation appears to extend well beyond the sanctuary and howling survey programs. The nonprofit corporation works cooperatively with many agencies concerned with wolf conservation from Alaska to Mexico.

Cindy Hobbs, a Western senior, is a member and frequent visitor of Wolf Haven. The Huxley major is keeping a close watch on recovery plans for grizzly bears in the North Cascades. She said the success of the grizzly recovery plan could be an indicator of the future of wolves in the Cascades.

“I think, eventually, if the grizzly bear recovery goes through and there’s not too much opposition to that, there’s a good chance for the wolves,” Hobbs said. “I think a lot depends on what happens politically next year.”

Hobbs is highly involved in political issues surrounding the fate of the Endangered Species Act. She continually writes letters to Congress and recently attended a Congressional hearing in Vancouver, Wash. Hobbs also monitors the success of the wolf reintroduction projects begun early this year in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho.

Wolf reintroduction, while critical to areas such as Yellowstone and Idaho, may not have much bearing on the future of wolves in Washington. Wolf Haven biologist Jack Laufer said that while he hopes to see wolves return to the Cascades, a reintroduction program in Washington is unlikely.

“Unless plans change dramatically, there are no plans to reintroduce wolves in this state,” Laufer said. “We had wolves in ’91 or ’92, when we had the sighting and photograph taken at Ross Lake.

“A year or two after that, we had some sightings and stuff down towards Ellensburg,” Laufer said. “But to my knowledge, over the past couple of years, we really haven’t had any kind of sightings in this state.”

For some, this isn’t bad news. Many people are optimistic that wolves, albeit few, already inhabit the North Cascades. If no reintroduction program is initiated, those wolves will enjoy ESA protection — at least temporarily.
Helping the Homeless

Denver Du Pont