Winter 2014


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The Balance issue of Klipsun is aptly named. Hopefully by now you have read through our Impression issue, in which we pushed the magazine forward. We wanted to lift up our stories through design and photography in such a way that the reader could connect with stories and recognize the work of our writers and staff. Impression was created out of chaos. Many people came together as a team and figured out how to make a better magazine that was both sustainable and interesting. We wanted to bring the reader the best we had to offer and stories that would fascinate and inform. This issue saw the chaos organized and focused into something we are all very proud of. Klipsun achieved balance in its use of photographs and design. Our staff found balance in how we operate and how to best foster our writers while delivering the best stories to our readers. This issue includes stories of both physical and mental balance. One writer tells a story about ice skating and how the physics of the human body propels skaters across the glistening ice. Another writer wrote about student entrepreneurs who realize balancing work and school is a small part of balancing the elements of a startup business. One writer tells the story of people who live with vertigo and work every day to find balance in their lives. Another writer profiles a student whose love of music and supporting friends helps him overcome having bipolar disorder. At one point or another we have all tried to achieve some degree of balance in our lives. Whether we are balancing time, resources or our minds, most people seek to find balance in their lives in an otherwise unbalanced world. We live in a society of advancement and discovery. We always strive to progress forward as a people — that is nature of our nation and of humankind. The staff and writers of Klipsun hope readers will be inspired by the work in this issue and will seek to achieve balance in their lives. Together we can make the world a better and more balanced place for everyone.
Many people prefer symmetry in their lives, from home décor to fashion. People are consistently drawn to balanced objects and designs, especially when it comes to physical attraction to another person. Research shows the more symmetrical and balanced a face looks, the more likely it is to be attractive to another person.

A person's face shape not only conveys how sexually attractive he or she is, but also affects others' perceptions of the person as trustworthy, dominant and in good health, writes social psychologist Ronald Riggio in a 2012 Psychology Today article. Facial symmetry is a measure of how identical the right and left sides of a face are to one another. The more similar the two sides of a face are, the more positive qualities are likely to be attributed to the person.

One way researchers are able to create symmetry is by averaging several people's faces together to create a new, more symmetrical face. The more average a face is, the more symmetrical it will be.

"We have a beauty bias," says Dr. Jim Graham, psychology professor at Western. "We attribute positive qualities to more attractive people. We assume they are more outgoing, friendly and successful."

Many positive attributes are associated with physical attraction. Because facial asymmetry can be related to illness and disease, people are less likely to be attracted to those faces, according to a 2007 study from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

"Most of the things we find physically attractive are markers for health, reproductive fitness and low mutation rate," Graham says. "We like symmetry and average features."

Facial symmetry may be an accurate indicator of reproductive health when the face's appearance has not been altered, but a visage can be manipulated in many ways. Entire industries dedicate resources to changing the symmetry of one's face, from minor beauty tricks, such as makeup, to major procedures, such as plastic surgery.

Darla Chiles, education director at Toni & Guy Hairdressing Academy in Bellingham, finds balance is often replicated when people are doing hair or makeup professionally. Most people do not actually have symmetrical features, but makeup can give the effect that they do. Makeup artists can use lip liner to fill out the smaller side of the lips on mouths that are not perfectly symmetrical, she says.

"There are definitely some tricks you can use to enhance or bring balance to a person's face shape," Chiles says. Cosmetologists can use makeup to bring balance to a face with contouring, in which different shades of makeup are used to either highlight or downplay different areas of the face. Justine Ward, a cosmetology student at Toni & Guy Academy, says contouring is one of the most important aspects of makeup artistry. It can be done dramatically by using bronzer and highlighter, or more subtly by using different shades of foundation.

"There's a lot of geometry and science to it, and art as well," Ward says. On common professor rating sites, attractive professors, or those with more symmetrical and average features, earn higher student ratings, even in categories completely unrelated to attractiveness, according to a study in the Journal of Psychiatry, Psychology and Mental Health. In all cultures, attractive people have advantages and are rated as having more desirable traits than their less attractive counterparts, Graham says.

Researchers in a Harvard University study found attractive people were consistently rated as more competent, likable and trustworthy. However, the personality traits deemed desirable differ between cultures, Graham says. Collectivist cultures value different things than individualistic ones. In the U.S., traits such as dominance and independence are considered most important and are linked with physical attractiveness, Graham says.

Attractiveness can be researched by averaging faces using composite face technology online. Face Research, a center and website dedicated to researching how faces affect perception of people's personalities, created an online composite face averager. Using the company's software, people can upload multiple headshots to compile faces together and come up with an "average" face. This practice has allowed users to generate approximations of what the average man or woman in the world, or in a specific country, might look like, according to the Face Research website.

People are naturally drawn to the symmetry of average faces. Participants rated averaged faces as the most attractive. When asked to compare a face that averaged 10 faces to one that averaged 100 people as attractive, participants rated the average face of 100 people as more attractive. Because of this result, scientists believe the more average-looking a person is, the more attractive he or she is, according to the Face Research website.

MUCH IS STILL UNKNOWN ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF ATTRACTION, BUT RESEARCHERS ARE MAKING PROGRESS, AND THE FIELD IS GROWING. MANY DIFFERING METHODS EXIST FOR CREATING A SYMMETRICAL FACE, FROM COMPOSITE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE-UP. SCIENCE AND ART CAN AGREE ON AT LEAST ONE THING: IN THE WORLD OF ATTRACTION, BALANCE IS BETTER.
MOMENTUM VERSUS GRACE
How climbers ascend the wall

NIGHT FALLS AT HORSE PENS 40, a historic nature park in Steele, Ala. Western graduate student Blake Bishop and his friends prepare to climb some of the rock formations — in the dark.

Bishop sits on the ground and positions himself for the route’s sit start, a technique in which climbers begin seated on the ground and must pull themselves up. The start is easy for Bishop. He lunges high to the right, trusting his muscle memory to find the hold he cannot see on the other side of the rock. As his hand grabs the hold, Bishop uses momentum to swing his legs up to continue the route.

“[Climbing in the dark] is a little more of an adrenaline rush,” Bishop says.

Climbers at Western do not need to go far to find rocks to climb. Bellingham is a community hub for climbing, says Ryan Wapnowski, youth team coach at Vital Climbing Gym.
Tea meditation can also serve as a form of alternative medication, Ogle says. “The tea itself is healing,” he says. “[Tea] leaves are from the earth, making them, by nature, more organic and good for your body.”

Daniel Soloff, a Western senior, says our culture only uses about 10 percent plant-based medicine. So much is unknown about herbal medicine, and that everybody should respect the qualities of different herbs, such as tea, he says.

Tea meditation’s main goal is to cleanse people’s respiratory systems and improve their coronary system’s functions, according to the website LiveandFeel.com. A tea for meditation needs to contain a certain amount of volatile oils, nutrients, enzymes and minerals, such as manganese, magnesium and iron.

College campuses are one of the most hectic places, Ogle says. A student’s life is about the future and the past, and learning to balance those two notions and enjoy the present is key.

Matt Ogle took off to France

For a four-week adventure in 2012. Without modern technology, and with no knowledge of the language, he headed to a monastery in Bordeaux, France, in hopes of finding himself. Little did he know he was about to discover his love for tea meditation.

“That was one of the most unbalanced parts of my life,” Ogle says. “I needed a change.”

Ogle, a Western senior, founded the only tea meditation club on campus later that year to share his love of tea and knowledge about meditation.

Tea meditation — the process of boiling water, brewing leaves and sipping the infusion — allows people to slow down and enjoy what they are doing. Taking an hour out of a busy day seems like a lot, but the benefits add up, especially when it comes to herbal medication.

Tea meditation can also serve as a form of meditation. Ogle, a Western senior, founded the only tea meditation club, pouring steaming tea for club members. Tea meditation teaches people to slow down and enjoy their lives a little more.

MATT OGLE TOOK OFF TO FRANCE

The essence of climbing is a personal journey — an inner quest to develop and succeed,” Wapnowski says. About a year ago, Ball, a recreation major, got into traditional climbing, called “trad” for short. Traditional climbers set their own safety gear in place of clipping into bolts on the rock face. Trad climbing adds an additional element of adrenaline and challenge.

“You get this sense of escaping from the rest of the world when you’re up on the wall,” Bishop says.

Many longer, outdoor climbs are a time of silence and calm, Ball says. But mixed in with the peace is the adrenaline of the mental game. “It’s pushing myself to not fear what the next move is, or what the fall is,” Ball says.

The challenge of the climb and the success when a climber reaches the top makes it a personal sport.
A PLACE CALLED VERTIGO
Students living with dizzying disorders

WESTERN SOPHOMORE JESS BOYNTON was reading “Dance Lexi We All Fall Down,” an anthropology ethnography for a class, when the letters on the page seemed to pull away.

A wave of nausea and intense motion sickness hit her as the words shifted back and forth. Boynton re-read the same sentence over and over again, unable to make sense of the phrases. Fighting dizziness, she was forced to close her eyes and focus on her own deep breathing. Boynton was experiencing vertigo, a condition she has had since she was 17.

“It’s incredibly difficult to settle on words,” Boynton says. “I can’t go on Facebook or Tumblr; I need to just talk to someone so I can centralize my focus on their voice, rather than the sheer amount of visual distractions.”

Vertigo is a type of dizziness in which a person perceives motion at inappropriate times. Caused by inner ear problems or calcium deposits in the ear canal, vertigo is associated with balance disorders, and can cause difficulty standing and walking. These tubes and deposits make up the vestibular system. Approximately 69 million Americans have experienced some form of vestibular dysfunction, according to the Vestibular Disorders Association.

Emily Gibson, the director of Western’s Student Health Center, says these feelings come and go and can last seconds, hours or days. People might feel worse if they move their head, cough or sneeze, making vertigo important to diagnose. Vertigo can be both debilitating and concerning, Gibson says. The condition is surprisingly common, she says.

“We see general dizziness complaints very frequently — at least eight patients a day,” Gibson says. “[Vertigo] is not a simple lightheaded feeling that people tend to brush off.”

Boynton went to a physician to alleviate her vertigo symptoms. Her solid support system was a major help, she says. The first time she experienced vertigo, her technical theater manager called her mother to come take her home, and her friends walked her out to the car, she says. Her parents helped her find doctors and get medication for her symptoms.

“We dealt with [my vertigo] pretty quickly. But if you get it here at the college and don’t realize what it is, you’ll go through whole classes without knowing what’s going on,” Boynton says.

Western junior Anna, who wishes to withhold her last name, had to go to an emergency clinic after collapsing in a friend’s dorm room due to vertigo.

“I couldn’t stand up,” she says. “It was really scary. Like a sprained ankle, if it happens once, it’s more likely to happen again.”

Seventy percent of U.S. citizens will experience vertigo, dizziness or other balance problems at some time in their lives, according to Neuro Kinetics Inc., an eye-tracking and neuro-otologic diagnostic testing company. These problems are the second most common type of complaints heard in doctors’ offices.

Boynton likes the feeling of vertigo to seasickness.

Her vertigo is usually triggered by changes in air pressure, she says. For Boynton, traveling by plane or driving home to Spokane over Snoqualmie Pass can be extremely difficult.

“Once, a tree fell over and we were stuck in the pass for 45 minutes,” Boynton says. “Just being in the pressure up there triggered something. Now I have to load up on Sudafed. Otherwise, I have issues when I get to my destination.”

Boynton’s vertigo is also triggered by prolonged periods of staring at computer screens, which sometimes interferes with homework. This is particularly difficult in a college student’s technology-based lifestyle, she says.

The worst part about vertigo is the feeling of being immobilized, Boynton says. For her, walking, sitting and standing all become hard to do. Socialization was tough when Anna experienced vertigo because she could not drive anywhere, she says.

“It definitely affected both school and social life for me,” Anna says. “I was a dance major at the time, and I wasn’t able to go to my classes because I was a hot mess, falling all over the place at random intervals.”

Treatment for vertigo varies depending on what is causing it, but everybody has ways of dealing with it that work for them, Boynton says.

“If I make everything dark and call someone and listen to them on the phone, that helps,” she says.

Boynton usually experiences vertigo symptoms at least a few times a year.

“The scary part is that you look OK from the outside, but your vision is so impaired,” she says. “If you lie down it gets infinitely worse, so there’s no easy escape.”

Vertigo, while relatively common, can be incapacitating and dangerous, particularly for college students without a conveniently located support system. The Vestibular Disorder Association recommends anyone dealing with dizziness, vertigo or other balance disorders seek advice from a healthcare professional.
DANCING ON A FINE LINE
Finding equilibrium within a group

STORY BY CHARMAINE RILEY
photo by Keegan Strandness

“Hit! Step, step and step,” yells Lisa Harrison, a Western Hip Hop Dance Team choreographer, as her feet pound against the hardwood floors. Fourteen eager dancers stand behind her, mimicking every move she makes.

Members of the Western Hip Hop Dance Team must work together, both for performances and to balance their different personalities. At times it can be difficult, but the team has developed methods to handle the personalities of each dancer.

Hannah Thomas is one of three captains, who take turns as choreographer. Although personalities vary, the team strives to find ways to weigh everybody’s opinions, Thomas says. All dancers have different ideas for choreography, and the group allows each choreographer to teach their routines as they wish, Thomas says. As for the rest of the group, anybody can suggest choreography, but the captains must ensure it works well for the rest of the group.

Group communication is not always easy between so many different personalities. Jennifer Hays, a Western communications professor, says if some people go into a group or team set in their ways and unwilling to accept other personalities, they hinder the team’s ability to effectively work together and communicate.

Western’s dance team members make their expectations known early, in order to avoid surprises and personality conflicts like ones they had in the past.

“We set expectations in the beginning, and that helped a lot,” captain Tiarah Desatoff says.

This year, the captains picked dancers whose personalities would complement one another, Thomas says. The tryout process was not just about dancing skills, but also about the dancers’ attitudes and how they would fit within the team.

Working together as a team and balancing personalities is not always as relaxed as it is for the Western Hip Hop Dance Team. Groups curious about how to communicate effectively as a team with different personalities can try the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Hays says. The indicator is used to interpret the psychological types, as described by Carl Jung, and can be very useful in teams, according to the Myers & Briggs Foundation website.

The indicator identifies four categories of personalities: introvert or extravert, intuitive or sensing, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. If some people go into a group set in their ways, “part of the problem is that we can get really set in our ways,” Hays says. “But those personality differences [within a group] can help us see the world in a different way.”

Because all of the personalities complement one another instead of causing issues within the dance team, Harrison enjoys going to practice, appreciative of the connections all the dancers have among themselves.

“I get to come do something that is fun and that I love,” Harrison says. “I get off of work and I cheer, ‘I get to go to practice!’”

“We set expectations in the beginning, and that helped a lot,” captain Tiarah Desatoff says.

“Now from the beginning,” the dancers shout, staring intently into the wall-length mirrors adjacent to them.

Moments before the music begins to play, Harrison pauses to face the group.

“If you mess up, mess up hard,” Harrison jokes. As the music roars through the speakers, the dancers begin moving in unison. At this moment, the team is one.
THREE BAYS OF LARGE METAL SHELVES

Three bays of large metal shelves act as the stock room for Disidual Clothing. The room’s resemblance to a kitchen, with countertops, cupboards, a stove and an oven, hint the Disidual warehouse was once the site of Erin Baker’s Wholesome Baked Goods.

Western alumni Brendan Page, 24, and Christian Harkson, 23, started Disidual clothing line in 2010 in Bellingham.

Young entrepreneurs, such as Page and Harkson, are on the rise. People younger than 29 are trying to reach the “American dream” more quickly and succeed earlier than past generations, according to a November 2013 article from the Telegraph. Owning a business comes with triumphs and challenges; balancing both can be difficult with inexperience, but motivation and drive go a long way.

Page is inspired seeing people his age or younger start their own businesses, he says.

“People doubted us at first,” Pape says. “The hardest part is being the underdog and not having shops give you the time of day.”

A NEW PATH

For many, climbing the corporate ladder is not a goal anymore. Sixty percent of people are turning their backs on traditional career paths and instead consider themselves entrepreneurs, with ideas, capital and plans for startup endeavors, according to the website Entrepreneur. Of those still at a "regular" job, 71 percent are planning to quit and work for themselves, and 60 percent stated they would leave within the next two years.

People most often decide to go the entrepreneurial route in pursuit of more freedom, the ability to choose their own projects and unlimited income potential, according to Entrepreneur.

John Sands, a senior instructor in Western’s managing department, urges people not to let the perks of owning their own business deceive them. Sands teaches a course on small businesses and entrepreneurship. Starting a business is one of the hardest things to do, and can be challenging and lonely, he says.

“If you have a passion, follow it, but [starting your own business] is not for the faint of heart,” Sands says.

In the first three years of a business, about 50 percent fail, and restaurants have one of the highest failure rates, he says.

One Bellingham restaurant, AB Crepes, is on its way to being on the positive side of that statistic. Alberto Avilar and Bayly Peterson, both recent Western graduates, co-own the business.

STARTING UP

AB Crepes started as an idea in 2011, after Avilar and Peterson took trips to Canada and California, Peterson says. The duo noticed the popularity of creperies, and the social and interactive atmosphere they provide.

At first, the business met a lot of negative feedback, Peterson says.

While the men thought of AB Crepes during road trips, Disidual came about in an academic setting.

Pape and Harkson met in a communications class at Western, in which they both realized they wanted to design clothes as more than just a hobby. The partners bought cheap screen printing equipment on Craigslist and set up shop in Pape’s bedroom after they were denied access to equipment in Western’s fine arts department.

Social entrepreneurship is also on the rise. Social entrepreneurs identify and solve social problems on a large scale, according to PBS.

Sacks of Love, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness about testicular cancer and men’s health, was founded in 2012. Two Western students, Ryan Berg and Ryan Krohn, both 22, are members of the board of directors.

At the moment, the organization focuses primarily on fundraising and promoting brand awareness by handing out fliers, self-test pamphlets and education tools, as well as furthering its social media presence.
"We would have everything planned out to the hour, including time to sleep, work out, do homework and eat," Peterson says. Although starting a business presents its own challenges, a strong community can help it thrive. "Having a business in Bellingham is the best," Peterson says. "If people in Bellingham support something, they really support it." Although Pape and Harkson do not plan to keep Disidual exclusive to Bellingham, they acknowledge what Western and the Bellingham community have done for them. "[They have] been way too good to us," Pape says.

Both owners of Disidual realize Bellingham is a great place to run a business but predict a move to Seattle in the future. Becoming a more universal brand is important to them, as is maintaining the Bellingham and Pacific Northwest vibe. Connections and networking can help entrepreneurs manage resources as well. Disidual is partners with, and has printed merchandise for, AB Crepes and Sacks of Love, Pape says. Because Pape and Harkson do not see other companies as competitors, they try to help out when and where they can, giving advice to other startups, just as they wish others had done for them.

"If you have a passion, follow it, but [starting your own business] is not for the faint of heart.

Earning money in the nonprofit and business industries is difficult. "We didn’t make any money when we first started," Pape says. Disidual has seen an increase in revenue since then. The company’s gross revenue has doubled each year, and the partners often work more than 40 hours a week. Pape and Harkson are most proud of the fact that they did not have to take out bank loans.

“We reinvested in ourselves," Pape says. Instead of taking the profit from a sale, they put it back into the company for the first year. In subsequent years, they started paying taxes themselves. Pape and Harkson still reinvest 50 percent of their profits in order to continue growing the company.

To save money, Avilar and Peterson built, painted and designed the AB Crepes shop themselves, Peterson says.

BALANCING ACT

Although Berg and Krohn dedicate much of their time to working on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says. 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An entrepreneur needs to be flexible, whether that means staying up late to work on Sacks of Love, school is a priority, Berg says.
STORY BY CHELSEA MURPHY

Photos by Ian Koppe

(above) Megan Gezelius practices tracing a tight loop on the ice with her skate. This exercise demonstrates her balance and control.

BLADES IN BALANCE

MANIPULATING ICE TO MASTER TECHNIQUE
ON A WEDNESDAY NIGHT AT THE Bellingham Sportsplex, the rink is full of figure skaters weaving effortlessly around each other. Skating director Katrina Stewart stands at the rink’s center, coaching a young skater, while Megan Gezelius glides around them.

The blades of Gezelius’ skating boots, barely thicker than two stacked quarters, create circular carvings on the slippery surface beneath her as she prepares to execute a slide. She has been practicing for a year — all in preparation for her next U.S. Figure Skating levels test. Her iPhone leans against the plastic barrier separating the rink from the spectators, evaluating every detail. If she passes this test, she will only have two levels to pass — junior and senior levels — before obtaining gold medalist status. As the crowning achievement of her figure skating career, becoming a gold medalist would be a symbol for why she put so much time and hard work into mastering the ice to the point of becoming more anxious.

To keep balance and control over her body during spins, Gezelius uses the red lines on the ice for hockey games as markers. Every time she sees a red blue go by, she counts another revolution. When her spins are complete, she straightens her legs out of the rotation and extends her arms. "We say, 'You're going to need to apply more pressure, jump through and get up off that toe pick.'” When preparing for a jump, skaters must know how each body part should be positioned if they want to complete the jump effectively, Gezelius says. After building momentum, the skaters bend their knees and push hard off the ice to gain as much time in the air as possible for their rotations. "You'll feel like you have a little bit of hang time, even if it is really fast," Gezelius says.

The key to landing is allowing the momentum to carry fluidly through the jump, which is why jumps end with the skater’s body in the shape of a “T.” Gezelius says. The right leg is the support, while the left leg extends behind the body, propelling the skater into their next move. To execute flawless, difficult tricks, figure skaters must be masters of the cold element beneath them. For this reason, the sport requires a dedication to training that consumes the lives of athletes such as Gezelius, a Western freshman from Tacoma who has devoted her life to figure skating since she was 6 years old. During training, skaters learn to manipulate their body’s center of gravity to produce exquisite results, practicing the balance of a glide, the momentum required to jump and how to stay upright on the slippery surface.

Tassie Kowal, Bellingham Figure Skating Club president and mother of Savannah Kowal, a 9-year-old Olympic figure skating hopeful, says her daughter spends at least seven hours a week practicing for a year — all in preparation for her next U.S. Figure Skating levels test. She does spins, jumps and practices routines she will perform in front of a panel of U.S. Figure Skating judges.

"She understands that by putting in the work and practicing, she’s going to get what she’s trying to achieve," Kowal says. At the rink, the low level of friction between ice and a skate is a figure skater’s best friend. Friction is the resistance between two objects moving against each other. Because ice is slippery, it allows a skater to smoothly glide across its surface for long periods of time without being stopped by the resistance of friction. However, lack of friction is an inexperienced skater’s worst nightmare. Falling is the first skill taught in beginning lessons at the Sportsplex, so skaters can overcome their fears of hurting themselves.

"If the skater is really scared, we’ll do it off the ice,” Stewart says. “We will fall down on the floor, and work on just getting up and down in the skates.” After that, skating is “just like learning how to walk,” Stewart says. Skaters learn how to march in small steps, and then to glide forward across the ice. Creation and conservation of momentum become essential to developing a routine that includes a jump — in which figure skaters propel off the ice and into the air. Momentum — the amount of motion a moving body has — is created by the moment their skates push off the ice.

“We do a lot of videotaping the kids,” Stewart says. “We say, 'You're going to need to apply more pressure, jump through and get up off that toe pick.’” When preparing for a jump, skaters must know how each body part should be positioned if they want to complete the jump effectively, Gezelius says. After building momentum, the skaters bend their knees and push hard off the ice to gain as much time in the air as possible for their rotations. "You'll feel like you have a little bit of hang time, even if it is really fast,” Gezelius says.

The key to landing is allowing the momentum to carry fluidly through the jump, which is why jumps end with the skater’s body in the shape of a “T.” Gezelius says. The right leg is the support, while the left leg extends behind the body, propelling the skater into their next move. To execute flawless, difficult tricks, figure skaters must be masters of the cold element beneath them. For this reason, the sport requires a dedication to training that consumes the lives of athletes such as Gezelius, a Western freshman from Tacoma who has devoted her life to figure skating since she was 6 years old. During training, skaters learn to manipulate their body’s center of gravity to produce exquisite results, practicing the balance of a glide, the momentum required to jump and how to stay upright on the slippery surface.

Tassie Kowal, Bellingham Figure Skating Club president and mother of Savannah Kowal, a 9-year-old Olympic figure skating hopeful, says her daughter spends at least seven hours a week practicing for a year — all in preparation for her next U.S. Figure Skating levels test. She does spins, jumps and practices routines she will perform in front of a panel of U.S. Figure Skating judges.

"She understands that by putting in the work and practicing, she’s going to get what she’s trying to achieve," Kowal says. At the rink, the low level of friction between ice and a skate is a figure skater’s best friend. Friction is the resistance between two objects moving against each other. Because ice is slippery, it allows a skater to smoothly glide across its surface during spins, Gezelius uses the red lines on the ice for hockey games as markers. Every time she sees a red blue go by, she counts another revolution. When her spins are complete, she straightens her arms out of the rotation and extends her arms. "We say, 'You’re going to need to apply more pressure, jump through and get up off that toe pick.’” When preparing for a jump, skaters must know how each body part should be positioned if they want to complete the jump effectively, Gezelius says. After building momentum, the skaters bend their knees and push hard off the ice to gain as much time in the air as possible for their rotations. "You’ll feel like you have a little bit of hang time, even if it is really fast,” Gezelius says.

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Haley O’Connor sprints toward the 3-foot bar blocking her way during steeplechase practice. She jumps, plants her foot on top of the bar and launches herself into the air, trying to clear a large water pit on the other side. She extends her left leg to land. Her foot breaks the surface of the water, hits the sloped bottom of the pit and gives way to the full weight of her body, causing her to collapse in the calf-deep water.

She comes away with a sprained left ankle and does not think much of it. It is April 2011, conference is in a week and she is going to keep running. Rest comes afterward.

“I thought if I just gave it a few weeks off, then it would be okay, so I didn’t see anyone at first,” O’Connor says.

She resumed training for Western’s track team in the summer and noticed her lower left leg felt tight every time she landed on it. Gradually, it became more painful and she decided to see a doctor. In July 2012, O’Connor was diagnosed with tendonitis, inflammation of the tendons connecting her muscles to bone.

An ankle sprain, one of the most common sports injuries, can be incurred during everyday activities as well, according to the International Society of Clinical Rehabilitation Specialists. Long-term problems do not usually occur if the injury is treated properly, but if ignored it can decrease strength, balance and flexibility.

O’Connor kept running through the pain, pressured by the drive to carry her team. Her tendonitis resulted in shin splints, pain in the bone caused by tendon inflammation.

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O’Connor started seeing a physical therapist and doing balance and strength exercises to stabilize her ankle.

“It all started from that ankle sprain,” she says, “just because I didn’t take care of it.”

People with a recurring ankle injury run the risk of developing chronic ankle instability and early ankle osteoarthritis, a condition in which the cartilage between joints breaks down, causing swelling and pain, according to an August 2013 position statement from the National Athletic Trainers’ Association. An estimated 28,000 ankle injuries happen each day in the United States and account for almost half of all sports injuries, according to the association’s statement.

Lori deKubber, a clinical athletic trainer at Western, says ankles are vulnerable to re-injury if people don’t take proper precautions. When somebody sprains an ankle, the muscles and tendons in the ankle and foot lose the ability to respond quickly, which is called proprioception. Proprioception helps people stabilize after landing awkwardly on an uneven surface, like stepping off a curb. Proprioception takes time to return, but doing any kind of challenging balance exercises, such as standing on one foot, will help build the ankle’s quick muscle response.

DeKubber would prefer to see more ankle injuries come through her office because so many go untreated, she says. She understands people may not always have access to professional treatment. Simple balance exercises, as long as they feel challenging, can be a good home remedy, she says.

One common rehabilitation method involves rest, ice, compression and elevation: R.I.C.E. is often used to immediately address an injury and help limit swelling. The two most important factors in recovering from an injury are getting back the full range of motion without pain and building back proprioception, deKubber says.

Western soccer player Katherine Miccile was playing right back in her U-17 club match when the ball was deflected her way. Before the ball got to her, a girl from the other team slid hard, plowing her cleat into the side of Miccile’s ankle, folding it in while Miccile could feel it popping.

Her ankle was already swollen and heavily bruised when her sock was pulled down. Taking off her cleat was out of the question and far too painful.

“I knew I didn’t break [my ankle], but I knew I was out for an extremely long time,” Miccile says.

Miccile took her swollen, black-and-blue ankle to the doctor the next day, and found out she had torn and pulled multiple tendons and ligaments in her ankle.
Because she has played soccer and basketball for most of her life, Miccile has a hard time remembering all that has happened to each ankle. She has been to physical therapy multiple times and advises getting injuries checked out right away. Trainers treat even the smallest wounds immediately to prevent ingering problems, she says. O’Connor still wants to land on her left foot while coming off the steeplechase barrier, but doing so is difficult because of the extra force she exerts by propelling off the bar. She has to practice landing on her right foot, altering her natural stride to accommodate her injury. This alteration from what her body naturally wants to do is distracting, she says. It is also detrimental to her run, because she often has to stutter step, throwing away her momentum and making it harder to run an efficient race.

O’Connor wants to do everything she can to rejuvenate her health. After a summer of rehabilitation, she says her ankle is more of a mental barrier than a physical ailment for her. She continues to do strengthening exercises, because her ankle still hurts occasionally after working on uneven ground. She says she is close to fully recovering, after taking more than a year to repair what happened in an instant.

HE THOUGHT THE COOKIE WAS SAFE.
But as soon as he took the first bite, Aaron Clarke realized he was wrong. His lips and tongue started to swell. He broke out in hives, felt an intense pain in his stomach and knew he needed to get to the hospital.

Clarke, a Western senior, is allergic to dairy, peanuts, legumes, seafood, tree nuts, soy, asparagus and carrots. The most severe of his allergies trigger anaphylactic shock, a sometimes-fatal allergic reaction.

Allergies occur when the immune system mistakes normal foods for dangerous germs or toxins. Emily Gibson, director of Western’s Student Health Center, describes anaphylactic shock as “an overwhelming immune system reaction that causes cardiovascular crisis, shock and collapse.”

Clarke has to carefully consider every food choice he makes, scanning labels for dangerous ingredients and avoiding places where cross-contamination may occur, such as restaurants. He also has to find creative solutions to get the nutrients he needs. As a child, he drank raw calcium to make up for his inability to consume dairy. As an adult, he crafts his diet around good sources of protein.

Having allergies to two or more food groups can be challenging, but people with allergies can get the nutrients they need from substitute foods, says Sarah Richey, Western’s registered dietician. “Luckily, there is more awareness about food allergies [today], and food companies are responding,” Richey says. “Eating gluten- or dairy-free is a lot easier than it was 10 years ago.”

Clarke agrees that food companies and restaurants have gotten better at catering to people with allergies.

“I think people are finally starting to understand that it really is like poison,” Clarke says.
DELECTABLY DELICATE
The tender touch of refining chocolate

KEVIN BUCK YEARNED FOR WHAT WAS atop the 7-foot cupboards in his father’s kitchen. At the age of 5, Buck constructed a monument of cans, stools, chairs and other fixtures to reach what his father thought was a secret. Buck remembers scaling the structure with the ease of a seasoned mountain climber, never once questioning his blind willingness to put himself in harm’s way.

Once at the top, there it was: his father’s “secret” Hershey’s milk chocolate candy bar.

“I learned to nibble just enough so he wouldn’t know any was missing,” says Buck, who is now 59 and the owner of Chocolate Necessities in Bellingham. “It was a spy job, putting it back just like it was, but an inch shorter.”

Buck’s consuming love for chocolate has always been present in his life. His fondness for its texture, flavor and uniqueness is what led him to begin his endeavor of starting his own chocolate company 27 years ago, just on the outskirts of Bellingham, beyond Bellis Fair Mall.

What struck him then, just as it does now, was the complex balance of creating something perfect — a piece of chocolate unlike any he had ever tasted. The ratio of sugar to cocoa butter, and the presence of ingredients such as coconut or almond, fascinated him. It became his dream to enlighten palates to the true taste of chocolate.

At 9:55 a.m. on a Wednesday in early November, exactly 1.8 miles south of Chocolate Necessities’ factory, Andrew Horgen lifts the gate of his store, Mount Baker Candy Co., at Bellis Fair Mall. The 26-year-old Western alumnaus’ thin build, wire-framed glasses and casual jeans and Vans look may not be typical attire for a candy store owner. He didn’t start out as one either.

When Horgen graduated in 2009 with a degree in history, he envisioned examining artifacts in museums, beholding how the preserved pieces of the past affect the future. On this particular Wednesday he stood surveying not the history, but his future: a store full of candy.

SOMETIMES I’LL LOOK AROUND AND SAY, “REALLY? THIS IS WHAT I AM DOING?” ALL RIGHT, THIS WORKS. IT SURE IS A HELL OF A LOT MORE FUN THAN [WORKING] AT A HARDWARE STORE OR SOMEWHERE BORING.
“Sometimes I’ll look around and say, ‘Really? This is what I am doing?’” he says, perched against the back counter of his store, flanked on each side by a chocolate mixer and a fudge cooker worth more than his car. “All right, this works. It sure is a hell of a lot more fun than [working] at a hardware store or somewhere boring.”

He has come to understand the complexity of chocolate through working at the store for the better part of four years. Candy-making requires a tender touch and a close, watchful eye, he explains. Otherwise, the chocolate will be rough and fatty with a pale complexion. Cooling is the most important key to good chocolate, Horgen says. If chocolate is not cooled in a specific two-stage process after the 15-pound slab has been melted, the consistency, texture and the flavor will be off. “[The chocolate] can be crumbly, chalky and dry,” Horgen says. “Or it can be greasy and never really set. It can also be kind of soft. There are a lot of different ways it can go wrong.”

He stands behind a see-through case, adorned with an array of guilty pleasures — from cookie-dough fudge to a square caramel bar of 4 square inches, coated in a layer of milk chocolate and dusted with salt crystals. "Sometimes I’ll look around and say, ‘Really? This is what I am doing?’” he says, perched against the back counter of his store, flanked on each side by a chocolate mixer and a fudge cooker worth more than his car. “All right, this works. It sure is a hell of a lot more fun than [working] at a hardware store or somewhere boring.”

"Kings and queens don’t eat better chocolate."
They twirl and shuffle around the room to the music, almost in unison—they are still a little rusty.

The Glee Club’s rehearsals illuminate the otherwise dull and unremarkable auditorium with its rendition of Rihanna’s “Umbrella.” In the familial atmosphere, any missed lines or goofed dance moves do not meet scornful remarks, but rather laughter and playful sword fights with prop umbrellas.

The team is led by Austin Masters, who has a lot on his plate. In addition to performing his duties as president of the club, which rehearses twice a week for group and ensemble numbers, he goes to Western full-time, double majoring in political science and economics, and works up to 55 hours per week as a wholesale manager at EcigExpress. Making an already difficult schedule even more complicated, Masters was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in December 2012, a mental illness that affects his mood by causing him to experience alternating phases of depression and euphoria.

“It’s a balance between trying to maintain a positive mental attitude and falling into a hole,” he says.

The hole Masters describes is his analogy for his depressive state. The hole is dark and lonely; he pictures it as the well from “The Silence of the Lambs.” When experiencing his depressive state, he often feels broken.

“People use the analogy, ‘Look in the mirror and what do you see?’” he says. “Well, I just saw ash and broken shards.”

The triggers that send him into depression can vary. They usually involve being told he is broken and needs to be fixed, feelings of not being accepted, fear of lack of control, and feelings of low self-worth. Sometimes he is completely unaware of the causes. Once he falls into his hole, he will remain there for an unknown length of time—sometimes hours, sometimes days.

To stay on top of every aspect of his busy life, Masters will write down a weekly schedule while he is in his euphoric state. This way, when he experiences his depressed state, which sometimes causes his homework and job to suffer, he has a schedule to give him guidance, he says.

Monica Taylor, vice president of the Glee Club and Masters’ girlfriend, says his choice of double majors yields a constant flow of papers and studying, and that his job is a major source of stress.

Truxtun McCoy, member and publicity officer for the Glee Club, describes Masters’ schedule as extremely hectic.

“I’m not sure I could do it,” he says. “It takes a certain level of determination and will to keep going that I admire in his abilities.”

Last fall, a pumpkin sat outside of Masters’ apartment with the Phantom from “The Phantom of the Opera” carved into it.
This is more than just a decorative squash; Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “The Phantom of the Opera” and its sequel, “Love Never Dies,” hold a deeper symbolic meaning for Masters.

When Masters is experiencing a depressive state while working, attending classes or practicing with Glee Club, he puts on a metaphorical mask to act as a buffer between reality and the dark hole in his mind.

“Basically, you take the elements of who you are that people like, that people really want to see, and you make that the face you wear every day,” he says.

The character of the Phantom wears a mask to cover his disfigured face and feels like he is not accepted. Masters says his own disfigurement is not physical, but internal. He often feels like his soul is broken and something is wrong with him.

Taylor, who met Masters through Glee Club, says he is always cheery and goofy during rehearsals, she says.

THE SHOULDER TO CRY ON

Masters has created strong personal relationships with many of his friends by helping them through a hard time or their own mental illnesses, says Taylor, who was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder in October 2013.

“Oh my god, you get me!” Taylor says. “A lot of the time, it feels like it’s impossible someone could understand you.”

McCoy has been struggling with depression for the last few quarters, and Masters has been there to offer advice and suggestions, McCoy says.

“With everything he’s got going on, [Masters] doesn’t have to do that,” McCoy says.

Masters feels it is his duty to offer a shoulder to cry on for people who seem to be going down a similar path of depression, he says. He feels this way because he does not want to see people go through the same struggles.

“No one should have to go through the type of stuff we go through... Masters says.

“...Alone,” Taylor adds.

THE GLEE

Glee Club is working on its choreographed dance routine to “Umbrella,” a song about extending a helping hand to someone going through a hard time, Taylor says.

Some people who understand Masters’ intense schedule, including his mother, have urged him to drop Glee Club in order to have more time to himself. But Masters sees the club as an important part of his life that acts as a form of musical therapy.

“Glee is my time to myself,” Masters says. “It’s my creative outlet that keeps me sane.”

IN THE KITCHEN AT BELLINGHAM’S Dashi Noodle Bar, chef Andrew Clarke tends to a 10-gallon pot of dashi, a Japanese soup stock, which has been simmering for 30 minutes. James Brown plays in the background as the scents of ginger, garlic and soy sauce waft through the air.

The main ingredients for Dash’s most popular broth, komba and bonito, contain glutamate, an amino acid responsible for umami, the fifth taste. “You can find it in everything from ketchup, parmesan cheese and anchovies to our dashi broths, which contain a couple of ingredients that have very high levels of the umami compounds,” says Josh Silverman, owner of Dashi Noodle Bar in Bellingham. “Two of those things are kombu seaweed [a type of kelp] and bonito, which is a dried and cured tuna. Both of those things, when combined, have a synergistic effect and build that umami level.”

Umami directly translates into English as “delicious taste,” and can be found naturally in ingredients like mushrooms and tomatoes.

Clarke describes umami as a “tongue-based sensory perception of savory flavor.”

Japanese scientist Dr. Kikunae Ikeda first extracted glutamate from seaweed in 1908. He established glutamate as the main active ingredient in kombu, giving it the savory taste, and named it “umami.”

As a simpler and often cheaper way to achieve the same flavor profile, restaurants sometimes use the monosodium glutamate (MSG) substitute.

According to the Food and Drug Administration website, MSG is extracted using a process similar to making vinegar or wine. It is produced by fermenting starch, sugar cane or molasses, rather than crystallizing the salt from seaweed broth, as it was done in the past.

Western student Daniel Corbett says he’s allergic to MSG and quickly gets headaches when he eats it. He says his favorite food is the Vietnamese noodle soup pho. Many restaurants that offer the soup utilize MSG as a way of keeping their costs down.

“It can be a long process to make pho,” he says. “But when restaurants make it for large groups of people, they sometimes just throw MSG and spices in a pot and it’s done in 30 minutes.”

While it may be more cost-effective to use flavor enhancers, Silverman believes they are unnecessary as long as good-quality ingredients are used.

Since its discovery, umami has been present in cuisines all over the world, from the use of black truffles and sea bream fish in Europe to soybeans and oyster sauce in Asia. While the word umami is associated with the Japanese culture, the savory taste is recognized everywhere.
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