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DRAG: Dressed As a Girl

Local UFO Club

Alternative body art Branding and Scarring

APRIL 1996

Wilson Library Archives
During the last production of *Klipsun*, one of our editors brought in what was then the newest issue of *Rolling Stone*. To say the least, we were disappointed. We weren't shocked that Jennifer Aniston was featured nude on the cover. We weren't shocked that *Rolling Stone* would use sex appeal to draw in readers. We all were, however, disappointed in *Rolling Stone*’s blatant portrayal of women as sex objects. This time it was just too obvious and too extreme.

We discussed the trend of *Rolling Stone* placing scantily-clad women on the front cover, while showing men in T-shirts and jeans. True, the magazine has featured nude men on the cover, such as the group Blind Melon. But the accompanying articles usually discuss talents and achievements in the case of men, and physical appearance and sexual appeal in the case of women.

*Rolling Stone* is a successful and popular magazine. Both men and women read the magazine, and such portrayal of women is getting it nowhere.

Aniston is attractive. The American public has been running to hair salons to imitate her ‘do. Her waitress character on *Friends*, Rachel, can get away with wearing tight half-shirts and hip-hugging mini-skirts.

Aniston is popular, however, because of her acting and not her ability to undress. She agreed to be portrayed in such a manner, and in doing so, has chosen to be seen as a sexual object. Inside the magazine, she poses for a centerfold, wearing only underwear and covering each nipple with two fingers. The article focuses on her body and her sexuality, not her achievements.

So, while our cover pokes fun at *Rolling Stone*’s cover, the problem is a serious one. As long as the media continues to portray women as objects, successful only in their sexuality, women will not be recognized for their talents and their minds.

Some may think we’re just a bunch of feminists who are overreacting. What we are is a group of editors, soon to be graduating and entering the field of journalism. We are concerned about the media’s portrayal of women, and are working to change it.
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Front cover illustration by Kelly Jackson
Back cover photo by Loc Nguyen
The force is with you ... even on the Net

“A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away ...”

How can anyone forget the first time they heard Darth Vader breathe?
Or the first time they saw the Millennium Falcon go into lightspeed and zoom into outer space?

Some way or another, everyone has Star Wars memories. My first memory in life is seeing Star Wars in the theater in 1977, when I was 4 years old. Now all those memories can be relived.

Nearly 20 years after it hit theaters, Star Wars remains a large part of America’s popular culture.

One day while playing around on the Internet, I came across hundreds of Star Wars websites, everything from “The Hall of Greedo” to “Star Wars scripts.” I was in Star Wars heaven.

Before I discuss Star Wars on the Net, it’s probably best that you refresh your general Star Wars knowledge.

Please keep in mind, many Bothan spies died to bring you this information.

Who’s Who in the Star Wars Universe

The Heroes

Luke Skywalker - Farm boy turned Jedi Knight and leader of the Rebel Alliance. I hope I’m not giving anything away by saying this, but Darth Vader is his father.

Han Solo - Pirate and smuggler — later became part of the Rebel Alliance. A lot hipper than Luke and looks like Indiana Jones for some reason. Minus that stupid vest he wears, I wanted to be Han when I grew up.

Chewbacca the Wookie - Han’s side-kick. Described best by Leia as a “walking carpet.” Wookies have been known to rip arms out of sockets, so let him win if you play him in any kind of board game.

Princess Leia - Rebel leader. Tough, has weird hair styles and kisses her brother.

Yoda - Jedi Master. Short, green, 900 years old, sounds like Fozzie Bear and talks backwards.

The Villains

Darth Vader - Dark Lord of the Sith, and the best movie villain ever. Obi-Wan put it best, “He’s more machine now than man. Twisted and evil.” He wears black, has a big cape and sounds like James Earl Jones. What more could you want?

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Sure Barry - you write the songs but now they’re stuck in my head

It’s 8:45 a.m. and I’m sitting in class, struggling to keep awake.

The lull of my instructor’s voice invites my body to revert to sleep while my brain is working double time to be entertained. Then out of nowhere “Copacabana” pops into my head and I get the urge to dance like Lola the Showgirl.

Three hours later, however, I’m ready to take the yellow feather out of my hair and pound my head against a brick wall. What can a person do to get an annoying tune out of his or her mind?

The following is a list of helpful suggestions for removing annoying tunes from your memory.

“Thats the way Uh-huh, Uh-huh I like it.”

1. Ask someone else what song is currently running through his or her mind.

Although it may not seem wise to erase one tune by sticking another tune in, at least the ditty will be different.

“Stop, collaborate and listen ... Ice is back with a brand new edition”

2. Concentrate on your favorite song; sing it out loud if you must.

If you’ve been paying tribute to Barry Manilow all week and are about to go out of your skull from his feel-good lyrics, concentrate him out. Think of a song that drives you insanely happy every time you hear it, and run the words through your head.

Sometimes this turns into a battle of brain waves, and of Barry just won’t give up. At this point, it’s time to enlist the vocal chords. Start singing really loud, and soon you’ll forget what Mr. Manilow had the whole world singing about.

“Do do doo do, Do-do doo do, Do do doo do do doo do”

3. Turn on the radio.

An annoying tune will be lost from consciousness as a plethora of others command the immediate attention of the few spare brain cells not already destroyed from the previous attempts to be rid of the original ditty.
Page (http://www.once.net/~dreid/starwars.html); click on it.

This page lists all 233 Star Wars Net sites you can access from this page.

Most sites are similar. You can pull up information about the movies and their characters, download pictures and audio ... the usual World Wide Web attractions. Here are two of the more unusual web sites that true Star Wars fans will appreciate:

"The Star Wars top ten list"

This is a small, amusing home page. It's just various top ten lists. "Top ten ways all movies would be better if patterned after Star Wars," "Top ten ways Michael Jackson would be cooler if he lived in the Star Wars universe," things like that. Here's one of the funnier ones:

"Top Ten Reasons Anakin Skywalker went to the Dark Side"

1. Generous Dark Lords of the Sith pension plan.
2. Sick and tired of mentor Obi-Wan Kenobi reciting lines from "Bridge Over the River Kwai."
3. To escape cruel taunting over dorky name.
4. Kicked in the head by Bantha.
5. Misunderstood name. Thought the "Dirk Side" was a fan club for pretty-boy actor Dirk Benedict.
6. Charmed by Emperor Palpatine's seductive after-shave.
7. Wanted to use the Force to prop up Chrysler stock.
8. Owed money to Jabba the Hutt — could refinance debt through the Empire.
10. Generous Dark Lords of the Sith pension plan.

You can also create your own list and E-mail it to the page's creator.

The E-mail address is: admjarok@aol.com

"The Star Wars humor page"

Extremely funny site. One section that deserves special attention is, "Everything I've learned, I've learned from Star Wars." The list includes 333 examples of how this is true. Some of the funnier ones are, "If you want to keep your friends warm, shove them into a dead animal." "Before kissing anyone, make sure they're not related to you;" "No matter how tasty that hunk of meat looks on that pole on that forest moon, don't grab it; it's a trap;" "Don't shoot out the controls to a bridge before you cross the bridge (stupid farm boy)," and lastly, "Even if it's a great shot, don't get cocky!"

After you've gone through the Net and read tons of Star Wars info, you can test all that you've learned with this short quiz — keep in mind, "You're on your own. Obi-Wan can no longer help you." Good luck. May the force be with you.

Quiz

1. Who is Echo Seven?
2. What was Chewbacca's home planet?
3. What are two things a Jedi craves not?
4. Han Solo thought what smelled bad on the outside?
5. How many Academy Awards did Star Wars win?

Answers:

Scoring:

1. You're "as clumsy as you are stupid!"
2. "Perhaps you are not as strong as the Emperor thought."
3. You're "strong enough to pull the ears off a Gundark."
4. "Impressive ... most impressive."
5. "No more training do you require. Already know that which you need."

PHOTOS BY LOC NGUYEN

Top 10 most annoying songs to get stuck in your head:

10. "Oh I wish I were an Oscar Meyer Wiener."
7. Any song by Ace of Base.
6. Alka Seltzer's plop-plop, fizz-fizz, oh what a relief it is ... NOT! It causes more upset stomachs than it cures.
4. "Blame It On Rain," by Milli Vanilli (or the three people nobody knows).
3. The O.B. song
2. "Tom's Diner" by Suzanne Vega (the only memorable lyric is the word "DO." Try singing one word over and over and over the entire day).
1. "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice, enough said.

"O.B., it's the way you should be. Keep it simple and set yourself free."

4. Give up, give in.

Some songs are simply impossible to get out of your head, no matter what attempts are made. Give a hand to the composer; their work is successful. Although it can be a bit embarrassing walking along realizing you're singing a song about feminine hygiene products, you can't deny it's a snappy little tune. If you quit trying to fight the urge to sing along and give into it, you may just find yourself skipping just like the woman in the O.B. ad.

"At the Copa, Copacabana ... music and passion are always in fashion."

5. If all else fails, try a lobotomy.

PHOTOS BY LOC NGUYEN

APRIL 1996
Chuck Crider, before the transformation.

Joy Rider, sitting pretty
pink satin mini-skirt and lace blouse? No. Baby blue knee length cocktail dress? No. A black, floor-length evening gown with an off-the-shoulder gold bodice? Perfect. The gown is taken from the rack and excitedly carried to the fitting room. It falls awkwardly over the stocky, less than curvaceous body. With a deep suck of the belly and a quick tight zip, it is on.

Out of the dressing room in the men's department of Sears strutted Chuck Crider with a triumphant smile on his face and a black and gold dress over his manly body. With his clean-cut short black hair, pudgy face and dark unshaven chin, the picture of the 22-year-old man in a dress was more than his friends could handle as they burst out laughing.

He spun slowly in front of the double-mirror examining every angle. His muscular hairy left leg was revealed sexily out of a high slit that almost reached his thigh.

"Well, how do I look?" he asked his friends as his eyebrow raised and a mischievous grin broadened on his face.

"You look great except for the hairy chest," they replied with more laughter.

Crider, a resident advisor for Buchanan Towers, is preparing for his debut performance in a drag show.

The first time he dressed in drag was on Halloween. His residents at Buchanan Towers were so impressed that they asked him to perform in a drag show on campus last month.

He agreed to do it if they raised $350 to donate to Camp Rising Shine, a camp for children affected by AIDS. The residents were persistent in raising more than $600 through various dances, auctions and raffles throughout the year.

"I am ready to do it again," he said with a captivating smile. "It is something I never thought that I would do, but it was so much fun spending all that time on my nails, wig, make-up," he paused, rubbing his chin gently with his right hand, "and trying to hide my five o'clock shadow."

It takes two to three hours to get ready for one show, not to mention the time spent shaving or waxing one's legs.

"I refuse to shave my legs," Crider said with a slight cringe in his voice. "I am going to wear black tights, but I will have to shave my chest because my dress is low-cut."

"A lot of drag queens do a full-body shave or wax, but I won't go that far," he said, wrinkling his nose and squinting his dark eyes.

Crider shook his crossed leg habitually as he leaned back in a black swivel chair with his hands supporting his neck. Seeing Crider in his black jeans and a blue, green, white and red striped shirt, it was hard to imagine him in a dress, let alone with make-
up on his round, jovial face and a wig covering his short black hair. With the help of the campus Lesbian Gay Bisexual Alliance, Crider had professional drag queens and divas from Canada come to Western to perform.

“All drag is are gay men who dress in exotic women’s clothing. They lip sync and do comical acts. Female impersonators are called divas,” Crider explained.

The two most frequently asked questions about drag queens are: how do they hide it, and how do they make cleavage?

“They will tell you some awful story of using a hair dryer and an ice-pack.” Crider lowered his voice and blushed as he explained further, “You blow-dry the testicles until they hang down, then tuck them up inside and ice-pack them to make them stay, but there are less painful ways.”

His voice raised again as he perkily blurted out, “You use duct-tape to make cleavage and stockings and rice for breasts.” He explained how stuffing nylons with rice makes a nice, firm imitation breast.

Anything other than that is a drag secret.

Dressing in drag goes back to Shakespearean times when women were not allowed to perform on stage, so men played the women’s roles.

“Drag is as old as dirt,” said Myria LeNoir, a world-known diva from Canada. “It means dressed as girls.”

Most drag queens are men during the day and only dress in drag when they go out at night or are performing. If they dress in women’s clothing all the time then they would be considered cross-dressers.

The etiquette of how to refer to a drag queen or diva is a mystery to most people. Crider put it simply, “Refer to them as ‘she’ when in drag and as ‘he’ when dressed as a man.”

What to expect when attending a drag show? First, it is not politically correct. They will be offensive and will make fun of people in the first rows. Second, the performers usually come out into the audience during the show. Third, the performers expect to be tipped. Half their tips are usually given to their favorite charities.

The Show

Over the crowded audience a spotlight appeared. Amidst the cheers, music began to play. Wearing a sparkling green full-length evening gown, spiked heels and reddish-blond curls, 7-foot Myria LeNoir strutted onto stage mouthing the words to a song. Tall, blond Richelle followed, wearing a blue-sequined gown and a rhinestone necklace. The two kicked up their legs through the revealing slits in their skirts to several cat-calls, whoops, yelps and howls from the wide variety of men and women in the audience.

When the song was over, Richelle left the stage to Myria, who automatically captured the attention of the audience with her flirtatious moves, outspoken sayings and impersonations of Katherine Hepburn.

“I’m not always the sweetest person,” she said with a grin after teasing one man in the audience about being straight, “but my heart’s in the right place.”
The Canadian performer began dressing in drag 14 years ago. Since then, she has become known throughout the world and has appeared on various television programs and in four movies. Myria does most of her performing in Vancouver with Polly Esther, Richelle and Pearl d-Abilonia.

A drag show does not only consist of lip syncing and dancing; much of it is improvising and interacting with the audience.

She strutted back and forth on the stage with a hand on her hip. Someone from the audience shouted a compliment about her hair. She turned, tossing the long curls to one side, cocked her head slightly, smiled a large, toothy grin and replied in a deep masculine voice with a slight drawl, “That’s detachable, just like my tits. It all sleeps in a drawer, honey.”

The audience roared with laughter, shocked to hear such a strong voice expelled from a feminine-looking woman in a mini cocktail dress, with shapely legs and dangling earrings.

Introduced by Myria as Joy Rider, a sultry Crider appeared on stage mouthing the words to “I’ve been to Paradise, but I’ve never been to me,” wearing the black and gold evening dress, a shoulder-length red-brown wig with the ends curled, pancake make-up, powder on his face and dark lipstick emphasizing his thin lips. He was received with a standing ovation.

“At first I was nervous, but after I got going I loved it. I would do it in a heartbeat,” Crider said with joy and relief after the show was over. “I ended up feeling just like myself up there.”

Despite the cleft chins and masculine features, the performers are so convincing as women that one has to keep reminding him or herself they are really men.

After the show, the divas sat back relaxing, joking and complaining about how tired they were.

Myria was slumped in an orange chair with a sigh as she stretched her lanky heeled legs out in front of her and crossed them at the ankles. Claw-like white fingernails scraped against the nylons as she gently massaged her limbs. In exasperation, she threw up her hands as she snagged her pantyhose with a nail.

“Ooh. She’s put off,” mocked Pearl with a giggle.

Disgusted, Myria shook her head and replied, “Cheap old things.”

Stabbing cheese with a fake fingernail, Richelle walks over from the table with a can of hair spray and quickly remedies the problem.

“You better use hair spray, not polish on those cheap things,” she said as she began spraying and patting the snag.

The four men laughed at how tired they all were and explained that performing takes a lot of energy and is much different from their everyday lives.

“We don’t always dress like this,” explained Pearl, running her hands down her blood-red, low-cut blouse and black-sequined mini-skirt. Swinging her hips, she walked over to the chair beside Myria and sat, crossing her thigh-high, black leather boots in a lady-like fashion.

“We certainly don’t wear teddies to bed,” she stated, eyeing the other “women” with raised eyebrows. “At least most of us don’t.”

Polly shook her Barbra Streisand look-alike head at Pearl with a reprimanding eye and added, “We just do our bit for the gay and lesbian community.”

Although the shows seem like all fun and games, drag also has its serious side. Myria, Polly and Richelle formed People With AIDS (PWA) in Canada. Much of what they do goes to charity and AIDS-related organizations.

All seriousness aside, the divas try to keep their spirits uplifted by joking with one another about clothes, men, looks and make-up.

“Circus geek,” Richelle snapped back, wrinkling her face in a sneer and swinging her bouncy golden locks.

“Hey, I don’t do that no more,” joked Polly, trying to sound offended. She then retorted by pointing out the sag in Richelle’s pantyhose. “You’ve got elephant knees.”

Richelle looked down in shock and quickly hiked her blue dress up to her waist and shimmied those stockings back into place. With a tug and a wiggle of the hips the nylons were no longer sagging.

Myria sat, looking disturbed, shaking her head at the others’ playfulness and sighed, “If you look beyond all the paint and make-up we are just people.”

“Yeah,” added Polly in a lighter tone, “we are all a bunch of people living somewhere over the rainbow and thinking it’s reality.”
The first time Bryan Ritter walked up to the fourth-floor offices of KUGS-FM, nobody cared what he thought about music. So, he offered an unsolicited opinion on fast food.

"As I walked in, there was a guy named Dave Neace eating Taco Bell and smoking a cigarette," Ritter recalls. "He instantly befriended me because I told him Taco Bell was great. And the first thing I did up here — I think it was the third day of my freshman year — I went through and alphabetized the rock library, and it took me three weeks to get through it."

Now, four years later, the Tacoma native is in his third year as music director at the student-run station. It's early on a Friday afternoon in late January, and the KUGS offices are mostly empty. Ritter is settled in at the desk of the promotions director, examining the cover of a compact disc.

"Every week, there's one album I really like," explains Ritter, who has left his own office to momentarily escape from his constantly ringing phone. "If there isn't, then I'm depressed. I always need to hear good music.

"This week's selection is Cibo Matto," he continues, holding up the disc cover. "I saw them play in a club in New York once, and they had Sean Lennon on guitar. And that blew me away." He reaches forward to hit the "play" button on a portable stereo, then finally gives his full attention to his interviewer.

"I'm sorry," he says, motioning to the stereo, "but I have to have music."

The sheepish apology is a motto of sorts for Ritter, who has worked himself into the heart of what is ranked among the best noncommercial college radio stations in the country.

The College Music Journal, which is to the world of college radio what the Koran is to Islamic law, lists KUGS as one of its "core" radio stations. Essentially, CMJ recognizes the tiny, 100-watt Bellingham station as being in the top 1 percent of all college radio stations in the nation.
Consequently, record representatives want to know what Ritter thinks, and that keeps him on the phone for countless hours each week with more than 100 representatives from labels around the country.

"It's the same song and dance with every record company," says the soft-spoken Ritter, stretching out his legs and resting his clasped hands on his stomach. "They first want to find out if you've gotten their music ... and if you've listened to it, and if you have, they want to know what you thought. If it's a positive thought they want to know where it's going to be played — if it's going to be played in heavy rotation or light rotation — and if it's negative they want to know why. They want to know specifically why. Was it the vocals? Was it too hard? Too soft? Too hip-hop? Too jazz?"

On average, 200 compact discs are sent to KUGS each week. Out of those, maybe 20 will be assigned a slot on the wall inside Studio A, which holds the 480 albums that comprise the current cycle of music the station plays. The rest join the thousands of CDs that are housed in floor-to-ceiling shelves outside the studio.

Ritter's honesty with the record companies and "strong sense of ethics" are what Ted Askew, the station's general manager, sees as his most essential attributes.

"Bryan is really a natural," says Askew, who is in his second year as station manager. "He has a wonderful curiosity about all kinds of music, has excellent taste in music and a great work ethic, but it is his sense of honesty that's most vital to the position. You have to be honest with record companies about why you did or did not like one of their albums because it's the only way for them to gauge what people think. It's easy to say, 'Yeah, we're playing your band; they're pretty good,' because the companies really have no way of knowing. But the representatives really respect Bryan because they know he's being honest with them, and in turn they really respect KUGS because Bryan represents us."

Usually, Ritter, a senior English and secondary-education major, can be found at his desk with something pressed to his ear, either his headphones or the telephone. Unlike his office-mate, program director Mike Barr, Ritter does not have official office hours posted neatly on their door.

"I really should put up office hours," he says with a laugh. "... (But) I'm here whenever I'm not in class or in bed, barring music functions and plays. I've ruined my social life," he concedes, "but I love it. I love when I hear good music. It's what I live for, day-to-day. If I could go home every night with a new song in my head, from an artist I had never heard of, that is really good."

To find the good stuff, however, Ritter has to do a lot of digging. He has help from Barr and promotions director Matt Shay, but the majority of the music is heard by him first.

"When I first put in a disc, I look at the song titles and close my eyes," Ritter recounts. "I try not to look at the record label because that will bias me. I try not to look at where the band is from because that will bias me. I try not to read the instruments in the band because I've begun to loathe "bass, drums, guitar and vocals" — every band does that. So I give the
music a chance just on the music.

"But there have been times, as Matt will vouch for," Ritter continues, nodding to his co-worker, who is sitting a few feet away quietly working at the computer, "when you go through about 30 albums, and they're all just crap, just terrible music with no creativity. Your ears get tired, and the music actually has a negative healing effect on the body. You become agitated and pissy. If I've realized I've attained that state, then I stop playing that music. And, if my ears can take it, I put in a good album, one that I know I'll like ... to cleanse the palate."

The Presidents of the ... Who?

Wading through so many bands can pay off in a big way — and Ritter smiles as he recalls the case of the band The Presidents of the United States of America, when KUGS was months ahead of the rest of the world.

During the fall of 1994, the station was co-sponsoring a campus show that had The Presidents as an opening act. Disc jockey Nick Harmer, who was also the assistant local concerts coordinator at the time, brought his copy of their album up to Ritter.

"He said it was the coolest thing he'd heard in a long time," Ritter says. "So we put his copy in heavy rotation, and DJs loved it and they played the absolute hell out of it."

Eight weeks later, the band's small, Seattle-based label, PopLlama, released the CD to Northwest radio stations. At the same time, the College Music Journal had been printing KUGS' top-20 playlist for the past two months, and an unknown group had been resting comfortably on the top.

"Finally, people started calling and saying, 'What is this, a local band?'" Ritter says. "Then, Brian at Columbia Records called me ... I sent him a copy of a couple of songs, and he said, 'Do you mind if I signed them?' and I said, 'Well, someone better.' It wasn't my doing, of course, it was just good music."

noncommercial radio vs. 'Big Brother?'

Ritter has no plans to work in radio after he leaves Western. Being involved with a noncommercial station such as KUGS is worlds apart, he says, from commercial radio stations, which are in the business to make money.

"(Commercial) radio stations rarely pick the music they are going to play," Ritter explains. "It's not decided by the disc jockeys or the music director; it's decided by the record companies. It's not some sort of '1984' plot: it's true. There's a lot of money in this industry, a lot of payola ... KUGS isn't subject to that. I feel we're playing some of the best music that's out there — and it's always the college stations that are breaking the new bands."

While record companies send albums by unknown artists to college stations first, there is another fundamental difference between noncommercial and commercial radio stations. Noncommercial stations are album-oriented, while commercial stations are track-oriented.

For example, when the Foo Fighters released their debut album, commercial stations could only play one track, the song "This Is A Call," until a certain date, when they could only play the song, "Alone + Easy Target."

KUGS, by comparison, just put the CD in rotation and disc jockeys played any song they wanted to, as long as it's FCC-friendly (meaning none of the infamous "Dirty Seven" words are included). Thus, you don't hear the same song six times a day on KUGS, as you do on commercial stations.

"DJs understand what's going on," Ritter says. "If you can hear a song on every commercial station, why don't we play the B-sides?"

Fifteen minutes later, Ritter is back in his office, on the phone with another record representative. Compact discs are on shelves above his desk, in a crate underneath his desk and stacked on top of his desk, along with a stereo, telephone books and yellow Post-It Notes scattered and stuck on every surface.

In contrast, Barr's desk is bare. A program grid, phone list and, of course, an identical portable stereo are the only items on his desk, save for a phone with the message light blinking and a few pens.

"I'm drinking The Garden," Barr proudly declares, holding up an orangish-greenish, horrible-but-healthy looking slushy beverage. With his short blond hair, crewneck sweater and broad shoulders, Barr is a physical contrast to the thin, Coca-Cola drinking Ritter, whose shoulder-length brown hair, goatee and loose-fitting flannel shirts would arouse suspicions at a meeting of the College Republicans.

"Bryan has probably the most important job at the radio station," Barr says. "A lot of time has to be put into it, and there's a lot of bullshit you have to put up with. (But) Bryan is very blunt — the music industry can be very pushy, and although we can respect that, we don't have to take it."

Round-the-clock 'College Rock'

For the first time in its 22 years, KUGS started broadcasting 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week during fall quarter. Ritter, who had earlier defined the role of KUGS as "to take what we can get that's good and play the hell out of it," describes KUGS' style as 'college rock.'

"College rock' is an all-encompassing term," he says. "I like it because it hasn't been bastardized — you don't see the 'College Rock Buzz Bin' anywhere, do you? ... By saying college rock, we can get away with playing things that an 'alternative rock' station couldn't."

Askew, whose office is next door, stops by to make sure everything is OK before he leaves for the weekend. A few minutes later, Barr is out the door as well, leaving shortly before his "official" office hours are up. Even Ritter, for once, seems worn down, eyeing his ringing phone wanly and deciding against picking it up.

"Sorry guys — it's Friday," he says to the phone. While he suddenly seems dejected, chances are the mood won't last for long. What else could you expect from someone who considers his job a privilege?

"I just enjoy putting good music on the air," he says. "I enjoy letting people on campus hear things they've never heard before, and if it wasn't for KUGS they wouldn't hear it. I enjoy breaking really good artists ... KUGS stands for good music — I hope."
One man's descent into Western's cafeteria serfdom

COMMENTARY BY CASEY ROUTH

It was another zesty dining experience at the local Marriott eatery. We piled the crumbs and scrapings of our grilled cheese feast high atop our trays and took our final gulps of Crystal Light. As we placed our trays on the already-overloaded conveyor belt, I heard someone cry from the depths of the dishwashing sweatshop, "Dear God, make it stop!"

I then realized I had been taking the Marriott workers for granted. Without the dishwashers, cooks, grillers, servers and bev-
Marriott customers brush up on their art techniques with salt and pepper.

verage runners, I would be denied my daily intake of grilled cheese, Cocoa Puffs and Crystal Light. They were the unsung heroes of Western, and I was going to find out what it was like. The following day I walked into the Fairhaven manager’s office and signed up for a temporary volunteer position.

Pass the Day-glo

This was it — my first day on the job. I was given a brief tour by Jeremy Katka, the student manager. And after changing into the proper cafeteria attire, I was thrown into one of the most difficult tasks in the food service industry: working the nacho bar.

I was lucky enough to be working alongside Misty Kelley, a seasoned nacho pro. The line started off slowly. "This is going to be easier then smuggling contraband food from Marriott," I thought.

I was quickly jolted out of that sense of security by what is known in the cafeteria business as the "lunch rush." Kelley and I were soon attacked by hordes of hunger-crazed customers.

I soon learned to dish out the chili (mysteriously resembling the La Brea Tar Pits) and Kingdome cheese (commonly known as Day-glo) with reckless abandon.

I encountered a wide spectrum of customers. Most were experienced patrons and knew precisely what to order. A few seemed intimidated by the nacho bar and were hesitant to ask for the ingredients they wanted. "I guess I'll have sour cream ... maybe."

One of them was psychotic; even after I repeatedly pointed out that the bean tray was empty, he continued to insist that I serve him some. The only beans that were left were dried onto the tray like month-old gum lodged under a desk.

"You don't want those beans," I commented.

"I need the beans," he insisted. I looked to Kelley for advice, but the only thing she had to offer was a shrug. I scraped the dried beans onto his plate and handed it to him. No customer walks away from the nacho bar unsatisfied.

It had been a busy day, but our problems were far from over. The popularity of the nacho bar had led to a deficiency of the most essential nacho bar ingredient: the chips. Action had to be taken. While Kelley and I distracted the restless customers, Katka ran to the snack shop for a refill. In less than three minutes, a nearly disastrous situation was averted.

I ended the day with a handshake and a new-found respect for the Marriott worker.

The Art Institute of Marriott

My second day began outside the ultra-secret door leading to the Ridgeway kitchen. I crept inside and wandered around until a mysterious janitor helped me find my way, saying, "Go up the stairs."

I needed his advice and followed the familiar sounds of "Video Killed the Radio Star" into the Ridgeway dishroom, nestled in the corner of the complex. I was instantly amazed by the efficiency of the operation. There were seven people, each with his or her own station. With all the conveyor belts and moving parts, I was reminded of the Willy Wonka candy factory.

My mentor for the evening was veteran dishwasher Dayna Wilson. Nothing the prankster-minded customers threw at Wilson could faze her; she didn’t even flinch when some mischievous patrons had frozen their glasses to the tray with ice and honey.

A few minutes later we got a tray with a very artistic salt-and-pepper rendering of a skeleton’s head. "We get a variety of smiley faces, keys, mail, meal cards, birthday cards and Satanic messages," commented Wilson. Some of the more extensive art projects have included a man made from bread suffering from a stab wound, a potato-and-french-fry scorpion, and a mashed-potato snowman.

At times, the parade of trays seemed endless, leaving us with no time to enjoy the artwork. I could see how this could lead to the breakdown I had witnessed earlier.

"We can’t slow down the belt. Don’t push the trays — it’s already going fast enough," were Wilson’s words of advice to Marriott patrons.

The potentially stressful environment
didn’t bother Wilson. “I work with cool people and there aren’t any customers ... it’s like a party,” noted Wilson. And indeed it was. The good-humored dishwashing crew and early ’80s jams made it quite a memorable evening.

**Scramblin’ for Marriott**

I arrived at my third shift for Marriott ready for action. My partner was Kevin Rus, Marriott’s beverage refiller (officially known as a “beverage scrambler”).

Before we did any work, he took me on a tour of the “Hidden Marriott.” The first stop was the dairy fridge. It was remarkably uninteresting, except for a tub filled with a white liquid.

“That’s where we put the leftover milk. I don’t know where it goes,” Rus commented. Perhaps the ice-milk is not as fresh as I had once thought.

The second stop was the meat fridge. I was quite disappointed after the numerous rumors I had heard. The only interesting thing I did discover was that Marriott saves the burgers that are left in the burger bin. After searching for the day-old cow patties, Rus added, “There are none — we had tacos yesterday. You’d be amazed at how much we recycle.” I was left to wonder two things: where did the hamburger patties come from in the first place, and what happens to the leftover taco meat?

After the tour I was introduced to Barry Myrie, the janitor who had guided me to the dishroom a few days earlier. His first words, spoken with a grin and a heavy Jamaican accent, were, “I love and respect you.” What a cool guy.

With those words of confidence, Rus and I began the highly-stressful job of beverage scrambling. For the next 30 minutes we were on red alert, making sure that all the Crystal Light and milk dispensers were properly filled. It soon became clear that the entire infrastructure of the cafeteria would come to a grinding halt if not for the vital services of Rus.

We then went on to monitor and refill what is the most popular and consistently tasty item in Marriott’s repertoire: the cereal. When we heard an irate customer crying, “I need my Cocoa Puffs!” we knew had to take immediate action. Rus and I rushed to the basement storage room and grabbed the Cocoa Puffs, averting a potential cereal disaster. Crisis management sure seemed to be a prerequisite for the cafeteria.

**Humiliation: Just Part of the Job**

After days of preparation, I was ready for the big time: serving the dinner rush. It was pizza night and I knew it was going to be busy. I paced around the serving area, nervously anticipating the onslaught of people. They began to trickle in slowly, but soon I was overwhelmed. For two hours I was in constant motion, serving up pizza pies as fast as “Showgirls” made it to video.

During my shift, I met a wide variety of people. I was even privileged enough to serve a member of the Air Force. Unfortunately, I came face-to-face with one of the hardships of the Marriott worker — I was mercilessly teased by my peers. I doubt Steve Martin has ever been laughed at half as much as I was that night.

When my tour of duty was completed, I had the phrase “Two slices of pepperoni, please” indelibly etched into my mind like an armadillo stuck to the grill of a Mack truck.

My brief sojourn as a Marriott worker had ended. Along with my new-found skills, I gained a respect for those who don the goofy white hat.

It seems incredible so many Marriott workers stick to their jobs for such a long time. Let me tell you, it’s not for the money. At $5.38 an hour, Marriott is hardly a get-rich-quick scheme.

They work hard and deserve your kindness. So next time you see a Marriott worker, it might be nice to say, “Hey, you’re serving the mashed potatoes especially well tonight,” or, “The grilled cheese is a lovely shade of golden-brown this evening.”

K
No one outside can guarantee that Muslims, Croats and Serbs in Bosnia will come together and stay together as free citizens in a united country sharing a common destiny. Only the Bosnian people can do that ... Soon the Bosnian people will see for themselves the awesome potential of people to turn from conflict to cooperation. In just a few days, troops from Europe and North America and elsewhere, troops from Great Britain, France and Germany, troops from Greece and Turkey, troops from Poland and Lithuania, and troops from the United States and Russia, former enemies, now friends, will answer the same call and share the same responsibilities to achieve the same goal: a lasting peace in Bosnia, where enemies can become friends ... 

Thousands of lives have been torn apart by the vicious civil war that infiltrated the Balkan country of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The war, which unofficially started in early 1992 and lasted until the signing of the Dayton-Bosnia Peace Agreement on Dec. 14, 1995, has generated debate and controversy within the international community.

With the recent deployment of more than 20,000 U.S. soldiers to serve within the 60,000-person United Nations peacekeeping force, it is vital that Americans have a perspective as to why the United States has intervened in Bosnia.

For most Americans, the perception of Bosnia is one of absolute chaos and horrific human sacrifices. This is a fair description of Bosnia's recent history, but it is not how Branko Curgus, associate professor of math at Western, remembers growing up in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo.

The soft-spoken, 41-year-old Bosnian, son of a school administrator and middle school grammar teacher, Curgus earned his doctorate from the University of Sarajevo in 1985.

"Growing up in Sarajevo was great," Curgus says, as he sits in his first-floor Bond Hall office surrounded by mathematical theory books.

It was a city full of diversity, says Curgus, where the different religious groups lived in harmony. "Within one mile you could find a major mosque, orthodox church or synagogue."

He said the working environment was mixed and there was no apparent segregation. "Most of my friends were Muslims," says Curgus, who moved to the United States to teach at Western in 1987.

Inter-ethnic marriage, which is now relatively unheard of in Bosnia, was common in Sarajevo. "How you formed social groups," Curgus says, "was not based on ethnicity."

History of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Political science professor Gerard Rutan says Bosnia "is a society based in hatred going back to the 10th century. It is also a society which has, for the most part, lived in splendid community."

The provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were officially created in the 12th century. The two provinces were ruled by the medieval Bosnian state until 1580, when the Ottoman Empire took control. The Ottoman reign lasted until July 13, 1878, when Austro-Hungary obtained a mandate at the Congress of Berlin, which provided it with complete governance of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After 1878, according to Rutan, the Austrian empire put the two provinces together. "Herzegovina is the other half of the Bosnian province. It is the Roebuck of Sears and Roebuck," Rutan says.

In 1918, the Austro-Hungarian rule was broken. On December 1 of that same year, Bosnia-Herzegovina joined the State of the Slovenians, Croats and Serbs, but retained its own separate national government within this new Yugoslav state.

In 1943, the National Antifascist Liberation Council of Yugoslavia decided that Yugoslavia was to become a federal state. This new federation consisted of six equal republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and the two autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

During World War II Yugoslavia disintegrated but was refounded as a Communist state by dictator Josip Broz Tito in the late 1940s. Tito remained in control of the Yugoslav federation until his death in 1980.

After Tito's death the six republics and two autonomous provinces operated under a collective government until June 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence. This led to the beginning of the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation.

After Tito died, says Curgus, there were "no mechanisms to resolve problems. When he was alive everything revolved around him ... but after his death there was a sense that you just..."
Bosnia Fights for Independence

Three ethnically-based political coalitions existed in Bosnia: the Bosnian-Muslims (forming 44 percent of the population), Bosnian-Serbs (31 percent) and Bosnian-Croats (17 percent).

The Muslims and Croats favored independence, while the Bosnian-Serbs were against separating Bosnia from the Yugoslav federation.

The Bosnian-Serb forces were led by Slobodan Milosevic, who according to Curgus, became very popular.

"There was no one to counteract his message" Curgus adds. "I thought to myself, 'This is bad.'"

Curgus traveled to Sarajevo in the summer of 1990. He said during that visit he realized the struggles between the ethnic groups of Bosnia were "getting worse."

- March 1992: Voters in Bosnia approved independence in a vote boycotted by Bosnian-Serbs.

"Almost immediately," according to a Dec. 6, 1995 U.S. State Department Internet press release, "the Bosnian Serbs, backed by the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav army, began fierce resistance to Bosnia's independence. By the end of spring 1992, Bosnian-Serbs, who had significant military superiority, especially in heavy weapons, achieved control over more than 60 percent of Bosnia's territory."

- May 1992: The United Nations imposed economic sanctions against Serbia, which was providing the Bosnian-Serbs with the resources to fight the independence movement in Bosnia.

The Serbs continued to violate the human rights of thousands of Muslims by cutting off food and medicine to the majority of them and raping and killing thousands more. Sarajevo, which had a large majority of Muslim citizens, was constantly being bombarded by the Serbian forces.

- May 1993: In response to the need for humanitarian assistance in Bosnia, the United Nations declared Sarajevo and five other Muslim "safe areas" under U.N. protection.

According to the State Department memo, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in coordination with the United Nations, declared its readiness to respond with air strikes if the safe areas came under siege.

- April 1994: NATO launched air attacks on Bosnian-Serb artillery components, in response to a Serb artillery attack on a Sarajevo marketplace that killed 68 civilians.

The Dayton Peace Agreement and Beyond

Representatives of the three ethnic parties met on Nov. 1, 1995 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, to formulate a peace agreement.

On November 21, after three grueling weeks of diplomatic struggles and negotiations, the three sides forged an agreement of peace, called the "Dayton-Bosnia Peace Agreement."

The agreement was officially signed in Paris on Dec. 14, 1995 by the leaders of the three different countries: President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia.

The general framework of the agreement as released by the U.S. State Department on November 30, 1995, consists of four main concessions:

1) Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) agree to fully respect the sovereign equality of one another and to settle disputes by peaceful means.

2) The FRY and Bosnia-Herzegovina recognize each other and agree to discuss further aspects of their mutual recognition.

3) The parties agree to respect and promote human rights and the rights of refugees and displaced persons.

4) The parties agree to cooperate fully with all entities, including those authorized by the U.N. Security Council, in implementing the peace settlement and investigating and prosecuting war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.

The Costs of War

In Nalini Lasiewicz's book "The Break-up of Yugoslavia" on the Internet (http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~bosnia), she writes that as of October 1995, "the number of refugees from the war of destruction and extermination in Bosnia has approached 3.5 million people."

Curgus, who is unsure when he will visit Bosnia again, says dealing with the whole situation "is very difficult."

"The human tragedy is overwhelming," Curgus says sympathetically. "There are so many people who experience this tragedy 24-hours-a-day."
Art Chantry has been a graphic designer in Seattle for more than a decade. And a good decade it's been. His designs hang in collections in museums in New York, Europe and Japan. Still, he works mostly for small companies — record labels like Sub Pop, independent theater groups, locally owned stores — and sometimes for even smaller pay.

Chantry is a pioneer, a premiere and an instructor of graphic design. He is frequently asked to speak at conventions and academic seminars, but the focus of his work is still to produce great promotion at low cost to help those around him.

"He, over the years, has made it possible for a lot of bands to have quality art for nothing in a lot of cases," said Dave Crider, friend, client and owner of Bellingham's Estrus Record Company. Jeff Kleinsmith, art director at Sub Pop Records and former arts assistant at the Rocket, said he is influenced by Chantry's work and enlightened by the knowledge he shares. "He's an historian and a teacher," Kleinsmith said.

Enter the Graphic Designer

Chantry's studio overlooks sporadically busy Western Avenue from the second floor of a gray, three-story wooden building. The building is equipped with a wide delivery bay but no service elevator. He ascends a narrow staircase that would be hell for two people trying to carry a filing cabinet or a bookshelf.

The tall and narrow windows along the front of the studio yield a clear view of the bare dirt camp underneath the viaduct. Where Highway 99 North meets its submetropolitain tunnel, half-alive heroin junkies and suit-and-tie professionals in search of recreational drugs rendezvous with dealers to get a fix. Chantry's moving.

"Of the six places Eve had a studio, this is the seediest," he says without a smile.

A strong natural light enters the studio, even on the cloud-coated days common to Seattle. Chantry's thinking space is a cubicle at the rear, where a drafting table and a rustic, retractable reading lamp sit among nearly ceiling-high filled bookshelves and boxes of remnants and various catalogs.

A finished design of a logo for increasingly popular Ride Snowboards lies at the edge of the table, and another, more elaborate creation occupies the center. Designs previously used for records on Bellingham's Estrus label adorn the shelf and countertoop that surround the side of the workspace opposite the tall shelves.

An expensive photocopy machine stands next to the doorway between the rooms. Chantry can't afford to have one that breaks down in the middle of a
project. There is no computer equipment in his studio. He says he doesn’t use computers for his designs because they “tend to stop the thinking process at the box.”

A native of the Pacific Northwest, Chantry spent his teenage years in Tacoma and then went to Pacific Lutheran University for a while, but he said he got the most out of his education at Steilacoom Community College. He said the teachers were laid back and they cared about what the students were learning.

He came to Western in the late ’70s, where he studied as many subjects as he could before declaring a major, then received a bachelor’s degree in painting in 1978. Chantry said he really likes Bellingham and he wishes he could find enough work in the area to make a living so he could move here.

Enjoyable Work and Thought Control

Graphic design is the arrangement of images on a page to be displayed for all to see in an attempt to influence how the audience thinks about something. Magazine ads, promotion posters, brochures, billboards, the sides of trucks and the exteriors of product containers are all locations of graphic design. We see it everywhere, and it is always telling us something, but we don’t always register exactly what it is we’re being told.

“Graphic design is this huge language,” Chantry said. “It’s a language form every bit like English or French, but it’s a language that everybody in the immediate culture understands and reads, and nobody knows they read it.”

If a designer presents conflicting elements, like casting a silly, lighthearted band in a very serious setting, Chantry said, “it confuses everybody, and the juxtaposition creates the nuance. Juxtaposition is like a big secret in graphics ... taking contrary things and putting them together to create that buzz.”

Chantry said the finished product of the designer’s work is like a story used to attempt to change how people think about a subject.

“People understand it on a visceral level, and they just see it, and they react to it. They don’t know why they react to it — they just do, and that’s what I manipulate ... to try to control that reaction.”

After researching the client’s image, Chantry has to find out if the client knows what that image really is. He said this commonly happens with bands in need of an album cover design.

“And they’re always coming up with these, like, ‘Oh my girlfriend drew this picture, and I told her we’d use it,’ and you know it’s totally inappropriate. So I find a way to make everybody happy and still get the band’s attitude and the personality of the band across,” Chantry said.

When the finished product leaves his hands, it contains enough of the client’s original idea and Chantry’s visual language to serve its attention-grabbing purpose.

“You need to be able to look at what you’re doing and think about it like, ‘Why am I doing this?’” he said. “And that’s part of the process of being able to explain it to the client, but it also makes you a better designer because you understand what you’re doing better.”

Chantry described “pure instinct” designers who cannot explain their work and the process through which it is produced. Despite creative brilliance, he said, they lose credibility because they can’t retaliate against critics who say those designers are coming up with their designs at random.

As an artistic occupation, graphic design is constantly faced with issues of originality and fraudulent use of ideas. One reason for this is that the originators of the material aren’t graphic designers.

“It’s a collaborative art form,” Chantry said. “I don’t draw this stuff. I’m a collage artist. I do ‘assemblage.’”

Assemblage involves blending images that other artists and designers have created. The nature of graphic design is easily confused with that of painting and drawing because it uses paintings and drawings in conjunction with other things.

“This isn’t art. This isn’t following your muse. This is collaborating with a process, with a culture, with a client ...
with various personalities," Chantry said.

Art's History: Chantry on the Emergence of Design

Graphic design as an art form is still young. Chantry said it has only been 10 years since art historians first started trying to piece graphic design together as a medium. All the work done before that time was undocumented, so art historians have to concoct theories about how the history should be written.

A popular theory in art history that has been applied to graphic design is the Great Man theory: great people do original work and become leaders for other artists who copy them.

"Which I think is, like, really stupid," Chantry said, "because that's not how this stuff works at all."

Chantry said the "great men" historians have selected were people who copied someone before them because copying is part of the trade. He said historians are "trying to create a seamless continuity, and it just ain't that."

So Chantry spends more of his time investigating designers' styles and use of elements than he does getting concerned about originality. A viable source of varied styles to research, Chantry said, is subcultures.

He uses Nuclear, the trade magazine of the nuclear industry, as an example. The design style common to this journal is dry and simplistic, but at the same time happy, with primary color schemes and bold type style. Several pages have logos that are mascots made from industrial products, like "spring-man" or "atom-man." The overall look is what Chantry calls "bonehead style." He said all of the magazines of this kind from this period look the same.

"There was no concerted effort to create a standardized look. It just happened and it was the way these guys thought. And I just think it's brilliant, and it's also really stupid at the same time," Chantry said. "I started trying to imitate this look, and after a while, it caught on and I started to see all these other people imitate this look," Chantry said.

"You can watch it all change, and it's utterly fascinating. I'm never bored with what I do," he said. "All my life this is what I've wanted to do, and here I am doing it."

"I don't care what kind of money you've got. The idea of selling really expensive, stupid shoes to poor people is not my idea of a viable industry."

Chantry on corporate graphic design

Waiting for Business to Boom: Seattle's Graphic Design Industry and Pop Culture

Chantry said after 20 years of design he started to reach the point where he could make a living from it. When Chantry first started designing in Seattle in the '80s, barely any market existed for his work. While he was working on posters for punk rock shows and off-beat theater productions, Chantry found himself designing brochures for insurance companies in order to keep the lights on.

"When you're in a place like Seattle, particularly in the '80s when you couldn't get any work, you had to work really fucking hard, fast and good, in order to make any money at all," Chantry said. "And then you get plucked out and dropped in the streets of New York where there's so much work, and so much money and so much opportunity, it's like you hit the ground running."

And then pop culture in Seattle finally got off the ground, and there was abundant design work everywhere. Where he had been on the verge of occupational starvation before, designers who were copying his work were making a decent living. Grunge was just a baby, Seattle-filmed movies like "Say Anything" and "Singles" were soon to be filmed, and Art Chantry was going to make it as a graphic designer.

Chantry said he feels a great responsibility toward his job and resents the fact that some designers won't take responsibility for the ways they influence people. He has been approached by companies like Coca-Cola and Nike, but their offers don't compensate for what Chantry feels the companies do that they shouldn't.

"I don't care what kind of money you've got. The idea of selling really expensive, stupid shoes to poor people is not my idea of a viable industry ... I think that's wrong, and I'm not going to help you do it," Chantry said. "People don't understand that. They think I'm crazy."

This attitude has become part of his reputation, and the struggling hopefuls in need of an image, not the highest bidders, benefit from it.

"He's a man of amazing integrity," Dave Crider said. "And because of that, he turns down a lot of jobs he probably shouldn't."

Tuning In and Turning On to Graphic Design

Part of being good at design is being able to teach it to other people. Chantry has taught classes off and on over the years.

Going out and working on designs and responding to a cultural environment is the method Chantry prefers to sitting in a classroom waiting for instructions, when it comes to learning the tricks of the trade.

"What I teach them is pretty much the same: how to try and think like a graphic designer," he said.

Although graphic design has its confused clients and misunderstood masters, Chantry likes being a graphic designer.

"Isn't that our job — to make things misunderstood in a new way?" he asked, reflecting on his role. "We want to change the way people think about things."
The office in itself wasn't unusual—stacks of papers and an ancient typewriter, the kind now featured at 20 garage sales around town, clutter the small wooden table that fills most of the closet-sized space.

"People come into my office ... they sit down, and then they immediately notice those books over there," said Matthew Thuney, president of Northwest Rubber Stamps Inc. in Bellingham and the Bellingham UFO Club, as he waved his hand toward a tall, narrow bookcase tucked in a corner of the room.

Crammed together in rows are assortments of video tapes and books with titles such as, "UFO Sightings," or "UFO Abduction."

As he broke into a smile, which appears often and easily on his face, he admitted, "They're a great ice-breaker for people I do business with."

Thuney said he remembers how his own experience four years ago with what he believes were extraterrestrial forces, only strengthened his already-flourishing interest in UFO phenomena.

"I remember waking up at night in my room and finding it lit up very brightly. I felt myself lifted out of my body, and I could see myself in bed. After that, I was moved at a very high speed toward a grid — it was very dark with bright lines across it — and then I can't get past that part," he said, lounging back in his chair, his eyes drifting curiously over the books across the room.

"It was a real experience, not like a dream," he explained, his voice rising with conviction. "When I woke up, I noticed I had a mark on my knee."

Shuffling hastily through one of the stacks of tumbled notebooks on his desk, he pulled out a UFO Club business card, which shows a triangle with a circle around each point. "I thought it was so interesting, I patterned our logo after it."

Thuney founded the UFO Club five years ago, before his alleged "encounter" with another force, and after attending a UFO conference in Seattle in 1990.

Ironically, Thuney admitted he went to the conference with the same skepticism that many people have about the kind of people who are now in his club.

"I was wondering, 'What kind of people go to these things, anyway? Do they walk around with antennae on their heads, and are they normal?'" he said, laughing.

After deciding to establish the group, 12 people began to attend the monthly meetings on a regular basis, Thuney said. Since then, the number has grown to more than 40, with 250 other interested people receiving a monthly newsletter.

Glancing behind him at a large poster displaying the constellations as they appear in space, Thuney sighed, as he considered how the club has changed his previous perceptions about unexplained phenomena.

"I'm so much more open-minded now that I've been exposed to more new-age ideas and other peoples' theories," he concluded thoughtfully. "I went into this club wanting to be so hard-core scientific about what I'd heard. I really had to throw out a lot of preconceptions."

Although for many years people raised their eyebrows in disapproval when Thuney professed an interest in UFO study, he claimed more people are sympathetic to his interest and are becoming increasingly accepting of theories that have before seemed out-of-touch or impossible to fathom.

"We're waking up to the fact that we're part of a greater neighborhood and a larger reality," he explained.

After the club's first two years, Thuney said he began to notice people attending the meetings with their own special interests in mind, including psychic phenomena, astrology, out-of-body experiences and alien abductions.

Club member Jeff Holte said he spent years keeping his extraterrestrial contact experiences secret as he agonized over his own sanity.

Standing outside the Bellingham Public Library following the UFO Club's February meeting, Holte kept his voice low. Laughing nervously, he recounted his past fears and self-doubt.

"When I was 12, I had my first experience that I remember," he began, crossing his arms, his stance tense and discomforted. His voice seemed to rise with excitement as he explained how he and several friends were picking plums out of trees in a field when they noticed a bright light slowly getting closer.

"It was circular and, as it came
It changed colors, from red to blue to orange. I remember we jumped out of that tree as fast as we could, and I ran back home and hid under my bed. It was a frightening experience, and I was never the same afterward," he explained.

"For years I thought I was a wacko and needed medication or something," he said, explaining that the stress caused by his uncertainty cost him his marriage.

Hoke said he's been hypnotized several times to revisit his encounters, of which he remembers bits and pieces, but never the full experience. Through these sessions, he said he's discovered he has been in touch with alien beings, whom he describes as being very tall and of a higher, very wise, spiritual race.

"People live in fear of ridicule and that their lives will change or they'll lose the people they care about," he said. "That's why even if they've had something happen to them they can't explain, they won't tell anyone, and the people around them won't talk about it.

Hoke is one of several club members who participate in a monthly support group for those who believe they've had alien encounters and want to talk about their similar experiences in hopes of gaining a better understanding of what has happened to them.

Many in the club are serious about examining their encounters and sightings, and comparing them with any actual evidence they can gather to account for, or sometimes discount, their stories.

Investigators like Doug Phillips, a goldsmith and long-time Lummi Island resident, conduct UFO investigations as scientifically as possible. Details of the facts are collected through pictures and personal witness accounts.

The people are also asked to fill out a form to report the event, and then the facts and accounts are checked with more down-to-earth causes that might have been responsible for their sighting, such as a meteor seen in the same area or an aircraft flying over at the time. The reports are then sent to the state director of UFO reports in Seattle.

Gnawing on an apple and kicking back in his chair casually, Phillips explained he has been investigating UFO phenomena for over 30 years, since an encounter with animal mutilations in Southern Colorado in 1967 brought questions to his mind that he said couldn't be answered by scientific theories.

"The animal mutilations happened to some people I knew well, and I knew they couldn't have been involved — the situations were too bizarre," he said. "The horse had absolutely no flesh from the tip of its nose to the neck. There was no evidence of blood or anything that had bothered it, and the cuts were so clean, they were unexplainable."

Phillips said he investigated an animal mutilation in Sumas eight years ago. The most interesting aspect of all the cases, he said, is that all the ranchers believed they had seen bright lights in the area before and after the crime.

Phillips explained that over the years patterns emerge, including animals acting strangely before and after the encounter, headaches and severe sensitivity to light, and missing time in a person's memory.

Most people who report to Phillips aren't sure if they've seen a UFO, he said, but they are curious about the mystery of it and are looking for an explanation.

"Most of the reports I get are so vague, they aren't even reported officially," he said, his tone of voice betraying an underlying skepticism of his job. "I pay more attention to reports by more than one person."

Phillips said he has heard hoaxes and false reports, and said knowing when someone is sincere or not takes trust in one's own intuition and experience.

Phillips believes some kind of alien force is visiting the planet. He said he is not as enthusiastic about the more popular theories he used to adhere to. The evidence seems to repeat itself, but it remains inconclusive, he admitted.

"The only thing I trust less than people who are sure there's nothing to the stories is those who believe there absolutely is, and know what it's about," he said with a stark, decisive laugh.
Branding & Scarring

Through the realms of skin layers lie two alternative forms of body art, practiced for thousands of years, yet rarely known in the civilized world.

BY JAMIE LAWSON

Al D. (above) and Bear (left) are among the few branding or scarring artists in the Pacific Northwest. Al D. is in Seattle and Bear is in Vancouver, B.C.
On the outskirts of Gastown in Vancouver, B.C., a small apartment/studio waits in the wings for its next endorphin junkie. There it lies in between Alexander Street and the railroad tracks on the waterfront. No signs or advertising are present to let one know what kind of body alterations take place inside.

Behind a black-ironed gate, perhaps a foreshadow to what goes on inside, the ensuing large door leads the way into an experience that is truly "a rite of passage." The black and white marbled floor offsets the deep brushes of maroon paint on the walls. Tribal music providing an echoing chant soothes the atmosphere and conscience. Straight ahead an unpainted stairway leads upstairs and downstairs. Restless footsteps above the cement ceiling add to the music's arrhythmic beat. To the immediate right is a black leather couch soiled with the smell of cigarettes. Five feet above, a bouquet of dried red roses dipped in paint hangs nailed innocently upside-down on the wall. A cordless phone, standing erect next to the stereo on a table in front of the couch, brings back the reality of modern technology.

Next to the couch, sitting casually in a chair similar to one at a dentist’s office, is "Bear," the owner of "Taboo Tribal Wear," a piercing and branding parlor in Vancouver, B.C.

"Yes?" he says with a deep gruff and wide eyes as if a bear had actually taken over his soul.

Bear has been branding for three years. Branding is pressing red-hot steel or other metal onto the skin to create a permanent scar. He first learned the body art at a branding school in California, where he received his first brand. He currently has four brands totaling 36 strikes (a strike is each pressing of hot steel onto the flesh).

His tattooed-covered ankles seem to extend his baggy shorts down to his black worn-in boots. A large tattoo on his right hand can be seen every time he picks up his John Player Special cigarettes. Two piercings in both ears and one on the tongue, along with a piercing under his lip, gives the feeling this man likes pain — not as a means of what comes along with tattooing, piercing, branding, etc., but as an endorphin kick or high.

Many tattoo and piercing parlors have sprouted in every major city and have become quite popular among all types of people. Bear has more piercing than branding patients, and he’s not sure if branding will ever reach the popularity of other body arts.

"There’s been a fair amount of media hype on branding for awhile so it’s getting up there. How fast it’s going I don’t know," he said. "I probably get about 10 calls a week about branding. As soon as I tell them it is a series of third-degree burns, nine of them hang up."

To some people, however, body art such as tattoos or piercings doesn’t justify the means. Branding and scarring are commonly the next steps for those who enjoy body-altering experiences.

"Realistically it is the next logical step from tattooing and piercing," Bear said, cutting a piece of steel for a customer’s piercing. "One gets to the point where no longer anything is conducive to giving out the endorphins. Your body stops perceiving things that you are doing to it as threats. It stops kickin’ out the endorphins. As a result, you end up with endorphin junkies for the next find."

**Branding: burnt flesh made into art**

The process of branding is to take a red-hot piece of steel or metal (in some sort of shape) and press it against the flesh, causing a third-degree burn, and ultimately a permanent scar.

Historically, branding was commonly used by the British on prisoners as a form of identification. Today one may think of cattle branding, which uses a large one-piece iron to press against the skin as smoke rises and burning flesh falls. Human skin is not the same and this must be taken into consideration.

Human bodies present less area for suitable branding because of their curvature. Therefore, brands must be smaller and should not be larger than one inch per strike.

After healing, brandings usually spread two to three times the width of the red-hot material used.

"It takes about a month before it is completely comfortable," Bear said with an energetic half-smile. "It takes around three
half-smile. “It takes around three months to heal completely.”

The aftercare for a brand is fairly easy compared to a piercing or tattoo. For a tattoo, one needs to apply lotion on it for about two weeks until the scab falls off. A piercing needs to be cleared of any material or objects to avoid infection.

“It is pretty damn minimal,” Bear said. “Aftercare for any real deep burn is to keep it completely dry. Unfortunately, the product people use to soothe the burn and make it feel better is likely to reduce the tissue burn, which is what you don’t want.”

Finding a location and a pattern is more restricting in branding because it must be made on the flattest part of the body. Any curvature may cause a brand to be deeper in some areas than others.

“Going too deep into the skin layers could be a major issue,” Bear said. “There shouldn’t be an infection if branding is done properly. If they aren’t doing it effectively they don’t know what depth they should be going into.”

Some more common branded areas are: the upper chest or breast, upper back, shoulders, upper arms, thighs, belly, and sides of the calves.

Branding patterns should be fairly simple in design. Most patterns consist of arcs, straight lines or dots.

“Most of what I do is more simple repeating designs like arm and ankle bands,” Bear said. “You have to keep it well spaced. Most people come in with a concept which is impossible. Eventually we’ll come up with something which is feasible.

“I try not to go over 30 strikes per sitting. Most people who want one won’t be that big. On the average, one is about 15-20 strikes. It works out to be about a minute a strike.”

In large designs multiple strikes are used to make large or complex designs.

Large one-piece brands are not commonly used on humans due to the restricting capabilities of making attractive pieces. Soldering irons are too blunt and do not engrave a clear or straight line in the skin. Wires usually don’t conduct enough heat. The typical cattle irons are too large, and if used on human flesh, would present an incoherent mess.

Most branding experts use steel strips ranging in thickness from .010 inches to .060 inches. Tin can metal and sheet metal are common tools. For multi-strike brands, metal pieces cut into strips 3/4 of an inch to one inch thick can hold heat for about eight seconds. For branded dots, screws or nails are used. The heat must be very intense and concentrated close to the brandee.

Needle nose and Vise Grip pliers work to hold the brands.

The actual process of receiving a brand can be very intense, Bear said.

“I don’t know if it is as addictive as a tattoo is, but it is a different situation,” he said. “I don’t get a lot of repeat customers. It is one of those things you want to do as an experience and not over and over again.

“Lying there and keeping still allowing someone to press red-hot stainless steel into your flesh a dozen or so times it takes to do the piece is not easy. The endorphin flow is very heavy. The endorphin flow from a brand is probably the heaviest I’ve had and I’ve had pretty intense stuff.”

— Bear
which causes the scar to keloid (excessive growing of scar tissue) and rise. Picking at the scar and irritation dramatically increases the chances of keloiding.

African tribes have practiced this form of body art for centuries. Races of dark skin have a better chance to keloid more, meaning a tendency to scar easier.

"Blade," a scarcer living in Stillwater, Okla., has been involved with the art for a year. He heard about it from a friend and began to experiment. Blade didn’t attend any scarring school, but was lucky enough to have a pain-junkie friend who let him get out the scalpel and practice.

"After that much experimenting you pretty much have it down," he said. "It’s kind of a rush to cut into somebody — it’s like surgery. It’s intriguing as a body art and decorating the body. I found it an interest. It’s different than tattoos; it’s more permanent and more painful. It takes more to get one done."

After scarring a diamondback anklet on himself (it took over six hours), he decided to work on other people instead and has done about 10 scars so far.

"After going through with that (on himself) I wouldn’t do it again," he said. "One time I did a six-hour session on someone and he was trippin’ from all the endorphins blocking the pain."

The scarring process differs from artist to artist. After taking a scalpel and cutting into three layers of skin until the fat line is reached, Blade sheers it shut with a flame. To heal, he suggests "you keep it covered for three days with Neosporin on it. You then change the bandage two times a day for two weeks, putting more Neosporin on it two to three times a day. It could take a couple months for the skin to function normal again."

The healing process depends on how much the scar is irritated. Some common methods of irritation such as using a toothbrush, picking at the scab, or pouring alcohol over it may cause the scar to take longer to heal.

On the BME Branding/Cutting/Scarring FAQ web page, one common scarring technique is braiding. Two or more long strips of skin are disconnected from the bottom tissue except at one end. The strips are then braided and reattached to the lower tissue. After it has healed it forms a scar in the shape of a braid.

Another scarring technique is slash and burn. After the scar has been cut, 70 percent alcohol is rubbed lightly on the skin. A Q-Tip is then dipped into the alcohol and lit on fire. After the Q-Tip is applied to the skin, the scar is wiped off immediately. This cauterizes the cut so it won’t close and heal.

Blade believes if one can handle the pain of a scar it can be more creative and original than a tattoo.

"It’s definitely a conversation piece," he said. "Scarring is a symbol of being liberated. It’s a statement. I got a pretty intense pain rush from it."

Despite the obvious blood and pain involved in scarring, Blade feels it has a future.

"I think it will become more accepted," he said. "It depends how it is done. Some people do it as pain. If people do it as artwork it will become more accepted than tattoos."

Al D. shows several razors used for scarring.

On Mar. 29, Al D. attended a branding and scarring convention in Cleveland where he did a live branding.

"Even in a place like Cleveland many people want to see it done and performed on them," he said.

Over the last 10 years Al D. has been involved with branding and scarring.

He sees branding and scarring becoming more socially acceptable, especially in Seattle, the "bloodsport capital of the West Coast."

"I think it won’t ever become mainstream," he said. "I think it’s more of an ancient, primal thing instead of having ink in your body. People may think it’s new, but it’s not. There is evidence that this has been around for 6000 years."

Like Bear and Blade, Al D. believes branding and scarring consists of more meaning than a tattoo or piercing.

"Most of the people I see don’t do it just for aesthetic purposes," he said. "It is for milestones. It is more ritual. They’re ready and know what they want. These people usually have it thought out and are ready to progress."

Al D. continued, adding, "It is really a significant step."
It's always nice to know someone's at home who'll love you even if you forget to do the dishes or get a C- on your biology midterm. Pets can provide unconditional companionship, but having a pet can be difficult whether you're living on or off-campus as a student. Either way, you have little money, little time and little space.

If you're living in a residence hall or Birnam Wood, you're better off waiting until you graduate or move off campus if you want any kind of pet besides fish.

According to the 1995-96 Quarterly Apartment Agreement from University Residences, "students may not house or harbor cats, dogs, or any other animals, fowl or reptiles in the apartment or the apartment complex." The pet policy is the same for residence halls.

Joseph Garcia, development director for the Bellingham branch of the Humane Society, suggested volunteering at the Humane Society as an alternative to assuming full responsibility for a pet.

Volunteers can walk dogs, cuddle kittens, wash blankets and help feed the animals at the shelter.

Eldersnuggles is another option for students who want to have the companionship of a pet without the full-time responsibility.

Volunteers can "check out" puppies and kittens and take them to local nursing homes for the residents there to snuggle.

Students who live off campus have a wide variety of pet options available to them. As long as pet owners abide by national laws prohibiting captivity of wildlife and have the proper licenses, "they can get almost anything," said a receptionist and dispatcher at Animal Control-Humane Society.

Downtown on Railroad Avenue, Clark Feed & Seed displays just about every type of aquarium or terrarium pet imaginable in the dozens of glass terraria that line its back walls. It doesn't sell snakes, but it offers fish, geckos, frogs, turtles, iguanas, skinks, anoles, tarantulas, scorpions, millipedes, rats, mice, hamsters and rabbits.

Jen Reid, a Clark's employee for the past two years, said rodents are the least expensive pet to buy. She said the basic rat set-up — including a 10-gallon aquarium, bedding made of shredded recycled material, a screen top, food and water — costs about $35. Rats are low-maintenance pets and are easy to feed because they're "pretty omnivorous," Reid said. She listed fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds and dog food as good foods for rats.

Reid said reptiles, amphibians and insects are becoming more popular as pets. Geckos are the most popular because they are inexpensive.

Their prices range as widely as their colors, from $6 for a house gecko to $70 for a leopard gecko. Geckos can climb any surface, Reid said, and make a noise somewhere between a growl and a chirp. They are usually content to climb in their terrarium and eat crickets.

"No reptiles particularly like being held, (but) some will tolerate it," Reid said.

Reid cited the iguana as being one of the worst pets a student can buy. She said people don't realize they get to be four to six feet long when they're full-grown. They also need a tropical environment with the proper heat and light, which may be difficult for students to provide in their typically small living quarters.

As she stood in front of a glass case which held smaller plastic containers of large, hairy spiders, Reid explained that tarantulas and scorpions are very popular as display pets. She said, "people like to think, 'I'm cool. I have this really scary tarantula.'"

Rose-hair tarantulas are the most docile of tarantulas, Reid said, adding that neither tarantulas nor scorpions are really meant for cuddling like a kitten or a puppy.

Both scorpions and tarantulas are very low-maintenance animals that can be kept in a bare plastic cube or a set-up with plants and rocks. And while they're not necessarily cuddly, they're not as dangerous as people think.

Clark's scorpions are poisonous, but their sting isn't deadly, Reid said it would be more like a severe bee sting.

The tarantulas will bite, and some
aren't just cats anymore

BY MARLESE WEBB

can project their abdomen hairs — which cause itching — as a defense, but they'll normally just move away if they feel threatened. "Usually, you have to get them pretty ticked off," Reid said.

Clayton Harrington, a sophomore who has not yet declared his major, has had two tarantulas, Aristotle and Caesar. He had Aristotle for more than two-and-a-half years, and Caesar died around Thanksgiving last year, a little more than a month after Harrington got him.

"They're interesting...Both of them I had were fairly friendly," he said, adding that his roommates didn't share the same affection for Caesar.

Harrington said tarantulas don't require a lot of special care beyond keeping them warm and making sure they're supervised when they're out of their container. Harrington said he spent about $5 per month on Caesar.

He said tarantulas are pets that must be left alone most of the time; overhandling can be a problem.

If they're dropped, their exoskeletons can crack. When this happens, Harrington explained, vets can't do much for them.

Harrington described tarantulas as independent. He said they will crawl on their owner's hand or arm when they want to, but they will make it clear when they want to be left alone by backing into a corner and raising their legs in a defensive posture.

"Their attitude's kind of cool," he said of their independence.

Michele Koontz, who laughingly described herself as an "advanced senior" majoring in sociology, has had her ferret, Micah, for almost a year and a half. Her boyfriend, who used to own a ferret, gave her the sable-colored, raccoon-masked pet as a birthday present.

"I think he actually wanted it more than I did," she explained.

She said Micah lives in a 4-by-6 Plexiglas "apartment," furnished with tile and sheepskin, but she is usually out of it whenever Koontz or her roommates are at home.

Micah eats raisins, bananas, cereal, cat food and Fig Newton fruit bars. Koontz takes her to the vet once a year, but she said her usual expenses for Micah are between $5 and $10 per month.

She said new owners must be patient with their ferrets because the animals are "so spazzy and happy and hyper...but they're so fun."

Koontz said she has to keep an eye on Micah because the ferret likes to tip over garbage cans and glasses. In many ways, Micah behaves much like a dog; she plays fetch, takes walks on a leash and comes when people whistle for her.

Koontz recommended ferrets for people who "don't like cats or want dogs."

Before students decide what type of pet is right for them, they should decide if pets should be an option at all during their college years. Bangert advised thorough research for people seeking pets more unusual than cats or dogs.

"The most important thing is to read up on it first," she said, explaining that exotic animals, unlike cats and dogs, have "special needs." She recommended consulting a vet or asking a pet store for information on the care of an exotic animal.

Regardless of the size of your home or pocketbook, several ways exist to experience the companionship of an animal, whether or not you are allowed to keep pets in your home.
A moment of **tranquility** is invaluable. Some focus their entire existence on culminating this duration of inner calm. Moving further and further into the fringes, pursuing placid seclusion, we discover and embrace the peace and solitude.

- Coyne

**Wild Verse**

As man pushes his way into the natural homelands of animals, he runs the risk of losing his humanity and losing a part of his world forever.

- Coyne

A beast lurks from within a father’s eyes. Day breaks, hurtling a scavenger toward a king’s legacy. He reaches for **salvation** as light bleeds into night, bringing the tides of death, drowning creation.

- Nguyen

We surround ourselves with facade, raise icons of strength and adequacy. **Concealment** of weakness disguised as display of fortitude. All the while, the eye is a low window in the wall of the fortress, showing the fear inside.

- Coyne
Words I want to take back, deeds I'd undo if I were given the chance. Because I'm unable to contrive my actions, regret claims a large part of my retrospection.

-Coyne

Still a noble and feared predator, for years now they have been the hunted. Man's wretched wanting, its victim's growing pain. Their augmentation has been stunted. A unique, amiable creature ... it shall survive under the stress. For even technology can take a back seat to a rare moment shared between a mother and her son.

-Lawson

The romantic bond eludes consummation. By the time a union takes shape, we move quick to defend. Aggression toward those outside the relationship quickly looms; a link between affection and hostility.

-Coyne