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Got God?
Worshippers expound on their beliefs in the Almighty

40,000 volts of electricity
Life in a monastery
Highway Cinema with Hunter Mann
Learning Goju-Ryu for defense
Editor's Note

The golden Buddha on the cover of your copy of Klipsun does not necessarily appear courtesy of divine intervention.

If God appeared in the Klipsun office while we were trying to select stories for an issue, we’d probably tell him (or her) to leave the box of pizza and keep the change. Fortunately we have some people on staff who are more conscientious about the concept.

Leaders of various religions shared their views on the Divinity with Martina and Quincy, authors of our story about god. The descriptions these people gave were similar in a few ways, but more importantly, they outlined a personal relationship each of them shares with his or her god ... or God, or goddess, or gods or whatever. Anyway, you may read the line about this story in the contents page and think it's about how some religion is going to save you or how you can open yourself to the world's various religions and make yourself a better person ... not so, not us, not here.

The story is about god, not a religion. A religion is a set of rituals assigned to one set of beliefs. God is your personal explanation of the world surrounding you and your place in it. By this rationale, your god isn’t exactly like anyone else’s, and you learn more about the concept of god when you compare definitions.

A college campus is a marketplace of ideas that fosters this kind of exchange, rather than supressing your views. You can suggest that god is in the trees, or god is nothing, or god is a state of being ... or God, or goddess, or gods, or whatever.

Because your view of god is unique, and so is the intellectual environment you’re in, we feel it is important to exchange descriptions of god like people have done in this issue of Klipsun.

Enjoy your stroll on the path to enlightenment. And thank you for reading.

Collin Coyne, editor

DEDICATION:
The staff would like to dedicate this issue to our friend and advisor, Professor Carolyn Dale. This winter, Carolyn, overseer of more than thirty issues, will be spending her first quarter away from Klipsun in two years. We thank Carolyn for her immeasurable contribution to Klipsun and to educating each of us in the ways of making good magazines.

Klipsun is a student publication distributed free of charge twice per quarter. Klipsun is not a Greek word meaning "Damn" is not God's last name." It is really a Lummi word that means "beautiful sunset." Klipsun magazine is printed on 50 percent recycled paper, 10 percent post-consumer waste. If you don’t read this issue cover to cover, then recycle it, we’ll tell the Planet.

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Special thanks goes out to Laurie Rossman, Ann Yow, Margaret Loudon, Ron Bailey, Dave Ellison, Roy Teeter, the print plant staff and also Bill O’Neil for continually fixing the computers we use to build this thing.

ON THE COVER: This statue of Vairochana Buddha stands at Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple in Redmond, Wash. Photo by Tim Klein

BACK COVER:
Tes’l*a Coil (tes’ l koil) n. 1. Bug zapper of the gods. Photo courtesy Arthur Aubrey
4 moving pictures
Hunter Mann takes the will-show-films-for-food approach to seeing Smalltown, USA.
Story by Jacob Henifin.

8 artistic energy
Early electricity discoveries find modern purpose in the art of performance.
Story by Justin Coyne.

12 the art of defending self
At the Bellingham Academy of Self Defense, Gojo-Ryu is the canvas for a community of martial artists. Story by Amy Scribner.

16 ON THE COVER: divine discourse
God means something different to everybody. Followers take turns describing the Leader.
Story by Quincy Hanson and Martina Willems-Pfarr.

21 democracy or theocracy?
For state and nation, Christianity is part of the law despite voices of the heretics.
Story by Kevin Rus.

22 devoted to God
A visit to Westminster Abbey Monastery shows a “good life” without excesses.
Story by Linnea Shapiro.

26 living in color
People coping with Aids find a rare shade of caring at Bellingham’s Sean Humphrey House.
Photography essay by Timothy Klein. Written by Erica Christensen.

30 just wasted energy?
The Junior Writing Exam is muscled between students and their registration. This amplifies the continuing question, “What’s the JWE for, anyway?”
Commentary by Jill Carnell.
The sun broke the horizon like a seed budding orange as Hunter Mann's heart steadily beat in rhythm with his legs. The night's rain began to evaporate from tan wheat stubble and asphalt warmed beneath Hunter Mann's tires.

The shadow of his bike and trailer was cast long into the ditch, rolling over the uneven terrain like a blanket in the wind. Abandoned gas stations slouched while weeds brushed against their sun-bleached pine boards. A warm moist breeze swayed and rattled corroded tin Coca-Cola signs.

The pavement ended. The last night's rain turned the road to Sumatra, Montana into a muddy vein. It was as if the mud respired steam in the humid June morning.

The approaching white Mercedes sedan appeared to float in the mist, until it neared Hunter and the mud rolling off in braids was seen and heard. A rugged, yet friendly face filled the window and asked, "What's in the trailer?"

"Movies ... Got a theater?" rejoined Hunter.

“No," flatly stated the 30-ish mayor of Sumatra.

“Well, you do tonight," announced Hunter persuasively.

“Cool. I will go on ahead and spread the word," said the mayor, "we could use a good laugh; all our hay bales are soaking wet."

Two hundred pounds of 16mm film, a 16mm projector, extension cords and a folding screen were dragged through the mud in the trailer. It more resembled an awkward fishing lure lazily wiggling back and forth than the utility wagon that it was.

Hunter pumped through the mud, anticipating Sumatra to be like the many towns he had passed through while scouting locations for film and commercials. Little towns that, in Garrison Keillor's words, time forgot. Towns where theaters withered and died while attention turned to video and television. Towns where vacant marquees read “Closed Forever.”

“I want to take films to the forgotten populace of the American outback. I tell (the residents of small towns) I show things like Charlie Chaplin, Mickey Mouse and 'Wild Wheels,' a crazy film about art cars. They trust me not to show Earth First! or pro-abortion films," Hunter explains. This is not propaganda. It's fun.

"Movies ... Got a theater?" rejoined Hunter.
of Hunter Mann

Initially, it wasn't fun that inspired Hunter to ride across the lonely plains and into the hills showing films to theater-deprived communities. It was something thicker and more tangible that slipped away.

Before the Cascades slowly diminish into the rolling plains of the Yakima River Valley some 2,000 feet above the sea, a sentinel of pines cradles a small town that was once thought to be Alaska. It was there, six years ago, where a broken heart set Mann upon his journey. Before "Love" left his good heart in lonely darkness, Hunter Mann was a grip on the television series "Northern Exposure."

Love was an actress Hunter adored. Times were sweet until the big Hollywood unions came and pushed them all out. A displaced grip saw his heart displaced as well. In what Hunter thinks is misguided inspiration, Love rolled onto the Western landscape in Hunter Mann's cowboy truck without Hunter Mann. After seeing "Thelma and Louise," she left to look for herself somewhere in the Southwest.

"She became a stripper to, in her own words, 'exploit men.' I don't quite understand that," laments Hunter in a longing, confused voice.

He also needed to find himself by leaving the broken coal community of Roslyn, Washington—a town that was once considered for the capitol when the territory was becoming a state. He needed to leave the quaint brick buildings that surged with the new vigor and vitality of Hollywood production cash.

"I needed to re-find myself and at the same time have a purpose," he says.

Purpose may have eluded Hunter through his earlier years. He was born four years after James Dean became an icon without a cause. The next 16 years saw Hunter the boy growing and learning, playing and bleeding on the calm western shores of Lake Whatcom with his six siblings.

While at Sehome High School, he crashed classes at Western Washington University and Fairhaven College. "I would skip, so I could hang in a more intellectually stimulating and creatively inspiring environment," says Hunter. "It was Fairhaven's more hippier times and Western's more Bohemian days."

"Hunter did not get high grades," explains his high school English teacher, Bill Gardner, "but he was very engaging. He was one of my favorites...not an angry young man. He was always delightful and fun; everyone enjoyed being with Hunter."
It didn’t matter if they were conservative or liberal or whatever.

“Hunter didn’t last long. He was a vagabond, a nomad. He went hitchhiking down to Seattle one day and just kept going,” Gardner says with fond reminiscence.

Tediuous Sehome High and its ‘D’ grades were abandoned for a stab down south in Berkeley, California. After enrolling in high school there, he found various types of stimulation—and the coveted ‘A’s. The fact that he was dating a social-living teacher at the high school granted him no favoritism in grading. He was never in her class, and the things she taught him were not letter graded.

Following his social-living education, until he became involved in film, Hunter worked very little—and lived a lot—on Mexican beaches. There he developed culture and language skills and honed the subtleties of wave physics on a surf board.

“For me, hangin’ in Mexico was equivalent to following the Dead—eventually you get tired and need to grow,” he says.

During that same time, Hunter lived with Italian gypsies in Southern California. They worked the area flea markets selling fake Native American artifacts. The pieces were newly made to appear authentic.

“We sold them to greedy collectors who thought they were buying stolen museum pieces. The prices were high enough that they believed it,” Hunter says.

The gypsies taught Hunter a lot about survival: how to live well and play as hard as you work, how to survive comfortably pursuing wealth—not riches—and how to be satisfied with minimal subsistence.

Gypsy ingenuity, which is not to say thievery, helped carry Hunter through the first tour of Highway Cinema in 1993.

He left Bellingham with $42 after Ben and Jerry—of ice cream fame—retracted their promise to sponsor his trip. “I realized the show must go on,” recounts Hunter as he sips peppermint tea. “I had all the stuff. There was no reason not to go. A lack of money is no excuse not to do something. If it was, I would have gone nowhere. Money doesn’t mean freedom,” he adds, “just ask any millionaire you know.”

Hunter has never pan-handled or given blood, but he does windows. A squeegee, window cleaner and towels, packed in with a dozen or so films and other essentials, bought bread along the highway.

... Many of the windows in Sumatra were now boarded up. The people had four movie houses, two hotels, a hardware store and hope in the American dream. After the Depression hit, the first thing to go, along with most of the people, were the movie houses. Sumatra used to have 3,000 people. Now there were merely five.

The mayor with the wet hay and mud-stippled Mercedes drove into town and gave the word like a paper boy the news. It didn’t matter if they were内容...
"Cows With Guns," or whatever it's called.

The cows in Ingomar didn't have guns, because had they, it is a fair assumption they wouldn't have been slaughtered and set on a plate with a baked potato. But before Hunter left, he would have a gun. Atop a horse, with three shots of Jack Daniels caressing his throat, he gnawed on a tobacco plug, a 12-gauge Browning hefted in hand.

The honorary cowboy initiation wasn't the most difficult rite of passage—it was to discharge the shotgun without falling off the horse or swallowing the plug.

"Hey, don't judge a man by the color of his neck," Hunter proudly slurs. "He nearly fell off. Anybody who fools around with horses long enough ends up getting hurt," Seward chides. "They say the highway is the most dangerous place, but I am not so damn sure."

And Bill knows danger. He took part in seven assault landings on small islands in the South Pacific. He doesn't care to recount the nasty memories, but can only remark in dismissive regret, "we were just kids, it got pretty bloody."

Hunter travels with his own screen and the ability to set up his cinema anywhere electricity is nearby. The Silver Screen has glittered in many bars, cafes, churches and school gymnasiums.

"Way out in God-knows-where North Dakota—known as Marmouth—Hunter lit an old opera house that hadn't seen light or electricity since Lawrence Welk and his band were stalled there in 1968 while their bus was being repaired."

An excited vibration brought up dust in the abandoned Victorian opera house. The 8 p.m. show started promptly at 8:20 amidst the smell of popcorn and cheap cigarettes. Hay bales and car parts had to be removed from the vaudeville-purple theater seats.

Tired, red velvet curtains hung in tattered shreds while swallows nestled in the corners of the beams overhead. Johnny Cash's smooth-as-a-lathered-horse's-haunch voice sang "Folsom Prison Blues" dubbed into the Hop-a-long Cassidy cowboy movie. Children rocked on their grandparents' knees while the film flickered on the screen.

"They had a macaroni and cheese potluck for me. I never knew there were so many different recipes," reminisces Hunter as he slips into a drawl. "I like the ohne weth teh hawt dawg railish in it. reel gud ... and the canned peas ... "

Maybe the creamy goodness of creative Italian-American cuisine moved Hunter to conclude that tour in the more populous Minneapolis/St. Paul metroplex.

For a month he showed the films in a plethora of venues: artists' lofts, art galleries, a gay bowling alley, a plant store, art classes—even to some punk rock bikers. Hunter's pickup sat on the edge of the road. He may have been

and cheese feast. This time with cut up carrots, hot dogs and relish all mixed together—it was a pretty good salad and it is vegetarian," remarks Hunter, licking his lips sarcastically.

In the community hall, where the screen was set up below a basketball hoop, Hunter showed an old National Geographic film with Jane Goodall and a bunch of mischievous chimps.

After the film, the sheriff-and-mayor asked Hunter what kind of music were those chimps so happy about.

"It is called reggae," Hunter answered. With a look of horror, the sheriff-and-mayor clarified, "You don't mean homo!"

"No, not gay," responded Hunter, "reggae. It's pop music from Jamaica."

"Ain't that where they got all them colored folks?"

"You can imagine this old man looking at Charlie Chaplin up on the screen and hearing him say this was the last movie he saw in his town. It's pretty emotional to see this old cowboy, who's in his eighties, with a tear streaming down his leathery, worked cheek."

"Well did you like it?"

"Loved it," admitted the sheriff.

"Not that I am interested, but where could a guy get this kinda' music?"

Hunter dubbed him a copy before he left.

The next morning, while the sun simmered on the mountainous horizon, the sheriff was again sitting in his truck drinking beer, but today he was listening to Bob Marley and the Wailers.

As Hunter rolled past with a parting wave, he heard the rich lyric "could you be loved?" as he headed east into Montana.

"In some ways Highway Cinema is a vehicle for bridging gaps in small towns, or linking other small towns," Hunter says.

Over the thousands of miles and hundreds of shows he has shown, Hunter has this to say:

"If the only thing that is changed on my journey is to get a racist sheriff into Marley. I have accomplished a great thing."
Justin Coyne uncoils the mind of Nikola Tesla and shows how his inventions have enlightened today's artists.

The band hammers out frantic instrumental music as the crowd sways in the red lights and summer heat of Bellingham's 3B Tavern. The performance is more than music, more than just a firsthand version of the custom space-rock sounds of Man...or Astro-Man? heard over the years on a string of seven-inch vinyl albums. The crowd trembles, tries to keep time to the scrambling sounds and stares wide-eyed at the array on stage before them. The band's four members are costumed, of course, in NASA cast-offs and homemade space apparatus. Televisions, buzzing blue with snow, are scattered around them on trays and racks. Behind them, two screens show documentary footage of moon walks and rocket launches.

And when the band is done—when the fever pitch of the music disintegrates into the chaos of feedback reflected in dead TV screens—the musicians are replaced by a large device of coiled copper and insulators: the final performer.

The lights dim and the exhausted faces, expectant in the dark, are lit up suddenly with blue light and amazement. The coil sprays a shower of blue lightning bolts in a circle around it, buzzing and snapping to threaten the flinching crowd. It is pyrotechnics without fire, a display of technology that brings the harnessed beast of electricity, pulsing always around us, out into the open. It is showmanship.

The coil is neither exotic nor state of the art. It is an invention more than a century old, the Tesla Coil, one device in a lifetime of inventions by visionary Nikola Tesla.
Born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1856, Tesla came to America at the age of 28 to work in the workshop of Thomas Edison. From then until his death in 1943, he established himself as a thinker, a visionary and sometimes a dreamer, moving back and forth between the disciplines of his contemporaries, Edison and Albert Einstein.

Tesla was a man ahead of his time, and he suffered for it. Despite a huge body of useful inventions, he struggled throughout his lifetime for the fame and fortune needed to bring his ideas into use.

His inventions cover a broad spectrum of uses, but among the most revolutionary are alternating current (AC)—the 110 volts of power that come from light sockets—and radio. For the latter, he invented transmitters, receivers and even methods of radio control.

Although these inventions are a part of modern daily life, they seemed wild to the people of Tesla's time. Radio and AC are among his milder inventions.

He spoke of television in 1915. In 1917 he outlined the concepts of radar, a tool not developed by the military until World War II.

As an old man, he spoke of interplanetary ships, cosmic communication and "teleforce rays," which he said could be used to make a force field around the United States to melt enemy planes at a distance of 250 miles. He also believed that, through mechanical resonance, he could make the earth "split open like an apple."

Tesla envisioned a world linked by six great control towers that would deliver radio, television, wireless telephone, and wireless electrical power—a world where ships and planes would be radio-controlled and war would be a thing for unmanned machines.

The wildest aspects of Tesla's work, though, are not in his visions of the future.

They are the secret experiments of his early life; experiments even modern scientists have trouble reproducing.

English journalist Chauncey McGovern described a trip to Tesla's New York laboratory in the British magazine Pearson's: "A tall, thin young man walks up to you, and by merely snapping his fingers creates instantaneously a ball of leaping red flame, and holds it calmly in his hand. As you gaze you are surprised to see it does not burn his fingers. He lets it fall upon his clothing, on his hair, into your lap, and finally, puts the ball of flame into a wooden box. You are amazed to see that nowhere does the flame leave the slightest trace, and you rub your eyes to make sure you are not asleep."

Tesla often showcased this phenomenon, and even today no one can explain it. McGovern's tour of the lab, in which he was accompanied by writer Mark Twain, continued as the room was flooded with light.

The two writers wandered around the room, but could not find any source for the light.

To this day, no one has duplicated this effect, though Tesla once performed it for hundreds at a lecture in Paris. Tesla's amazing tricks did not end there. He stood on a charged plate before his guests, bringing the charge up to two million volts.

The inventor was surrounded by a halo of electricity, his limbs marked by tongues of flame.

At high frequencies, he explained (while passing the display off as a mere parlor trick), the electricity would run over the surface of his skin rather than through his body.

In the years since Tesla's death, if his results have not been repeated they have at least been emulated. His practical work carries on in engineering, his patents finding new uses all the time, but Tesla's showmanship, too, has created a legacy.

Dale Travous, builder of the Man...or Astro-Man? (MOAM?) Tesla Coil, has worked with a handful of artists who carry out wild and dangerous experiments for the sake of enjoyment rather than science.

Adapting the idea of Tesla's high-frequency halo, for instance, Travous worked with Jim Rose Circus Sideshow performer Tim the Torture King to make a device that would produce a similar field—this time trying to make it arc between a series of hypodermic needles puncturing the performer's skin.

An artist by training, Travous came around to electronics first as painting subjects, then through antique science magazines. His first Tesla Coil came from an article titled "Build Your Own Tesla Coil" in a '60s issue of Popular Electronics. His present coil has come through the ten years of learning and experimenting since then.

Travous' work with Tesla Coils has led him to similar projects over the years. One such project is "the shrinker," a device that uses high-powered magnetic fields to compress metallic objects—most often coins.

"I got these 40,000-volt capacitors," he explained. "They belonged to a defense contractor, and the scrap dealer didn't even really want them."

Those capacitors became the building blocks for the shrinker, which originally used them to store 80,000 volts of electricity to be dumped, in a matter of microseconds, into the coin of your choice.

"I've got this quarter about the size of a lima bean," MOAM? guitarist Robert Delburo said. "And you can still read the heads and tails on each end."

Eventually one of the shrinker's capacitors exploded, halving the power so it now shrinks coins to about two-thirds their original size. In addition to their work together on the MOAM? Tesla Coil, Travous and Delburo are currently working on another version of the shrinker.

"Basically we'll be able to take your Ratt Out of the Cellar CD and smash it...
into a little ball, text and everything," Delburo said.

The CD smasher is one of many projects in the works for MOAM, and it presents distinct problems that may keep it in the works for some time. CDs, unlike the pliable metal of coins, have the tendency to shatter.

Delburo's original idea for dealing with this was to strip a magnetron from a microwave oven and use microwave heat to soften the discs. This approach was abandoned because it damaged the discs and raised some safety concerns.

Safety is an important issue when working with high-voltage electrical current, but Travous admits that at times, he and his friends have not seen it as important enough.

"I've got this quarter about the size of a lima bean."

"I've been looking through photos Arthur Aubrey took sort of documenting us blowing up things, thinking, 'Someone should have been hurt or killed,'" Travous said.

He recalled an experiment using the shrinker's capacitors to dump over 50,000 volts suddenly into the Tesla coil's lightning channel. "At a voltage like that, the image of the lightning bolts would be impressed in your retina."

"I had something blow across the room once," he added. "But I think it was just molten metal. I was like, 'Hey, that might be ball lightning.'"

Tesla's laboratory in Colorado Springs was the site of secretive testing that gave him much of his insight into otherwise unexplainable phenomena. He often frightened neighbors, lighting up the night sky with his mad science. Ball lightning, an electrical fireball that Tesla could get to jump great distances, was among the scientific wonders striking fear in the hearts of county residents outside the town.

Modern plasma physicists still cannot display the control over ball lightning that Tesla commanded. It is one of many aspects of his work that remain, for the most part, unexplained.

Dale Travous' Seattle laboratory is a warped reflection of Tesla's century-old work. The scientist's incredible understanding of different phenomena has been replaced by fascination and curiosity. His systematic approach has been replaced by a wild, artistic fury that sel-

dom leaves notes or rationale in its wake.

At 'Travous' lab, Tesla's creations, updated and revolutionized through time by lurching technology, find new life as exhibits rather than tools.

The lab—a lofted warehouse space in downtown Seattle—is crammed to the edges with possible projects, mixed inventions and heaps of equipment collected from friends scattered all over mechanical and electronics industries. Much of the parts are the state of the art that is decades old, bought from scrap dealers or the surplus stores of Boeing and Hanford. All of the machinery that carried technology through the '40s, '50s, even into concepts of the '80s, gets recycled here among 'Travous' resourceful circle of friends.

Those friends meet us at the lab one night to fire up the Tesla Coil that has been sitting dormant for weeks. Travous meets them at the door, in the shadow of a Volkswagen body leaning inconspicuously against the wall. He wears black overalls over long johns and a flannel shirt, prepared for the cold cavern of the laboratory. His friends arrive, one or two at a time, and talk in corners of the cluttered lab about their own projects and their own garages of unused equipment. There is Dan, who works at a company that makes hospital electronics. He goes to work now on a monitor that once showed the parking lot outside, but has since gone on the fritz.

There is Brad, who helped build parts of 'Travous' coil and has his own smaller coil. He sits in the kitchen area with his girlfriend Jen and goes to work on the armload of beer he carried in with him.

Others come in and go to work on their various conversations and projects. Some work on a wheel grinder with a frozen motor. Others disassemble a virtual reality headset or discuss possible uses for a box of caster wheels Dan has brought with him. It is a swap meet, everyone offering up parts for each other's complex solutions to everyday and not-so-everyday problems.

And finally it's 'Travous' turn. The coil has whirred to life and built up the power it needs. He hands out several small, fluorescent tubes wrapped with exposed wire hanging off each end—a recent wedding gift from Robert Delburo.

The group pauses, turning to the tower of coiled copper and tubing at the end of four stages of complex machinery. And when the lights go out they are ready, but still they jump as the coil sends writhing bolts of purple lightning screaming through the room. It makes a ferocious buzzing sound like a crack of thunder suspended in time.

The spray of lightning swirls, wild and threatening, and the fluorescent tubes, clutched in the startled hands of the group, are brought to life by the invisible electrical field generated by the coil. It is a fearsome sight, this shower of light and electricity brought threateningly into the open air.

The coil is surrounded by grounded rods and contained to its corner, so it does not really threaten us. But elements of this show—its potential—remain in some ways a mystery, even to the eager hobbyists who now hover around it. Elements understood by a lonely genius working wildly through the night in a laboratory nearly a century ago. Elements harnessed now, not for understanding or furtherance, but for exhibition.

And the light dances before us and we stand, without completely understanding, enthralled.
Beyond mace and pepper spray:

Amy Scribner discovers a means for self-protection.

The instructors voice is, at first, the only sound echoing through the fluorescent-lit room. Before long, soft grunts and ragged exhales fill the place to the vaulted ceiling as students get to the halfway mark of their 45-minute warm-up.
They stand and line up with partners, using each other as braces for arm-stretching. Grimaces cover pink-splotched cheeks of squirming 12 year olds, determined-looking college students, middle-aged and senior men and women. The class totals about 40 this evening, and spans at least a 60-year age bracket.

The calisthenics end and students bow to the Shomen wall at the front of the room, which consists of a 2-foot building sculpture and two jade-colored animal sculptures. It is not a religious thing; rather, it's a wall of respect dedicated to the founder of Goju-Ryu, the martial art taught at the Bellingham Academy of Self Defense.

Enrollment in such classes is up, as self-defense is becoming an increasingly popular concept—and not just among women. In 1990, the Federal Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act was passed, requiring colleges and universities receiving federal funding to publish annual reports of crime on campus.

Western's University Police web site now lists all crimes reported and all arrests made for each year. In 1995, campus police received reports of two rapes and nine assaults, one of which was aggravated. Availability of statistics such as these may have helped boost awareness that a can of pepper spray may not be the best weapon in case of an attack.

"People need to have the knowledge to protect themselves," says Duane Sammons, who has been the chief instructor at the Bellingham Academy of Self Defense for more than 20 years.

Protective devices, such as mace and pepper spray, are no longer considered the final word in self-protection. For years, women have grasped their keychains of mace in dark parking garages or when walking alone, feeling confident in their supreme safety. The Nashville Police Department's extensive web site on self-defense states, "They [sprays] don't always work. They don't work on all people or people who are insane, extremely mad or drugged."

Phil Messina, president of Modern Warrior Defensive Tactics Institute, recently testified in a court case in which a police officer was killed by his assailant after the chemical spray failed to subdue the attacker. Incidents such as these suggest an alternative is needed.

"You possess more power and ability to defend yourself than you had previously thought," says the literature for the Academy. "Every student here learns that," says Sammons. His academy is all about strength—women and men study his technique, he says, to increase their mental confidence as much as their physical ability.

Students say they don't know Sammons' age, but estimate he's in his fifties. Whatever his age, he is in excellent shape. His hair is a pale yellow, with a hint of gray, and his white karate clothes show a trim frame underneath. He is a sixth-degree black belt—tenth is the highest level—in Goju-Ryu, making him one of the highest-ranked in Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai, the national organization.

Goju-Ryu is only one of many forms of karate now being taught as self-defense tools.
W hen performing the moves, students look as much like well-trained dancers as lethal weapons.

Ed Essex (left) and Duane Sammons demonstrate movements from a kata.

It was developed in Okinawa in 1917 by Chojun Miyagi, a martial arts expert. Common people in Okinawa weren't allowed weapons, so he developed Goju-Ryu as a weapon without the weapon—Goju means "empty-handed." It is characterized by its soft, circular motions; however, this doesn't make it any less powerful.

"A lot of the techniques are derived from animal fighting," Sammons says. "They are more efficient fighters than humans." One move, for example, is called "cobra hand," because the arm works like a snake to attack the assailant's face.

The moves are taught in "katas," sets of movements that, when strung together, result in a fluid series. When performing the moves, students look as much like well-trained dancers as lethal weapons. Katas are the building blocks of self-defense.

"It's like learning the words before you talk," Sammons says. The most important thing in self-defense, he says, is not the katas, nor the strength achieved through the vigorous calisthenics warm-up. It is the attitude.

"You have to be willing to fight the enemy," Sammons says. "It's called 'the fighting spirit.'"

The second most important thing, he says, is spiritual balance.

"My philosophy is that by the time you're in a fighting situation, talking time is done. It didn't work. So we teach respect and spirit. We teach character to identify the situation. Are you going to be a victim or not?" he says.

Sammons' dojo (gym of students) practices as if each sparring session between two students were a true attacking situation.

According to the literature, the message here is, "You must be prepared to defend yourself fully—with an all-out counterattack." Although again, Sammons stresses that attitude and balance are the crucial elements. He's a bit hesitant to talk about specific fighting techniques, since spirit is the focus at his dojo.

If he did have to name a tried and true technique,
Sammons says, “I favor a kick to the knees. If a guy can’t stand, he can’t very well fight.”

The beginning self-defense course has eight lessons consisting of theoretical situations and possible reactions. One scenario reads, “Your assailant punches at your head. You are too close together to strike with the palm-heel. You keep close and counter with an upward elbow strike to the chin.”

“Fighting never stands still,” reminds Sammons.

Pat Jorgensen is 53, and she’s outrunning, outkicking and outsweating the students half her age.

She’s tiny—probably only 5’2”—and quick to smile. But while she performs katas, her face is one of concentration and focus. She’s suddenly someone you wouldn’t want to meet in a dark alley.

Jorgensen started training 14 years ago.

“I brought my 12-year-old son in and watched for six months before I joined in,” she says. “I was raised in the days when females were prim and proper. It [training] was years of undoing cultural stuff. I actually had to learn how to make a fist.”

Her son has moved on to other interests, but Jorgensen has now been a black belt for five years. She says the benefits of training go beyond the physical.

“My mind is now stronger than my body. And the self-control I’ve gotten here—I didn’t know my body could do all this.”

It was Fourth of July a few years ago when she understood her newfound strength.

“I was on a cruise ship in the bay, and these teenagers were crowding me at the railing, pushing me aside. I knew I was not going to let them bump me. I just focused and didn’t move. I think they could see it.

“I remember, earlier in my training, waking up in the middle of the night. The actual knowledge that I could use this terrified me,” she says.

She stops and watches the other black belts on the polished wood floor, their faces serious, their poses crisp and concise.

The younger students learn in a corner of the room with another instructor, their bare feet purple on the cold yellow wood.

Jorgensen tells the fable of the black belt. A black belt, the highest degree in karate, will eventually turn white, the beginning color.

She touches her own belt, frayed white at the edges. A white belt will eventually turn black from use. A black belt, she says, never really knows anything.

There’s always more learning to do. She runs to the center of the floor, bows to the Shomen, and assumes a pose.
DIVINE DISCOURS

Martina Willems-Pfarr and Quincy Hanson engage in enlightened conversation to define the spiritual.
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...” Or was it Buddha? Or maybe the Goddess? Religions of the world have wrestled with this question for centuries. People of faith vary in their views on who created the planet they live on, and who they look to for guidance. The names they use may differ significantly. Some people refer to a male god, while others worship a goddess. Some have many gods; others have only one. Even within their own religions, followers often disagree. One follower, therefore, cannot represent an entire religion; individuals must develop their own faiths.

However, despite the differences between individuals and their faiths, on closer examination one may find more similarities than differences.
God Is A Lord And Savior

One of the more visible world religions is Christianity. In practicing her evangelical beliefs, Kirsten Behee has her own opinions. Behee seems at home with campus life. Dressed in a comfortable-looking oversized shirt, she is often seen talking to students about the person who guides her life—Jesus Christ.

Behee graduated with a bachelor's degree in English—with minors in art and music—from Western last year. She entered a campus pastor internship fall quarter so she could train to become a pastor at a secular college. She grew up in a Lutheran church but did not actively seek to serve God until she was a freshman in college. To Behee, being a Christian means being in a relationship with God through his son, Jesus.

"I think that many people over the course of history have tried to know God," she explains, "and they've tried to seek him out and understand who he is. And because we're people and he's God, we can't understand who God is on our own. We can't understand it unless he reveals himself to us. The Bible talks about Jesus being the word for God. Jesus is God revealed to us. God is personal. He loves me. He loves us—everybody," she says. "He is my Lord. I haven't found anything else that I would ever want to serve or worship."

"I think we as people always end up serving something we like it or not and worshiping something whether we like it or not," she says.

Behee often talks with awe about God's transformational and healing powers.

"I think a lot of times in our society people feel really bound by their past," she says. "They're bound by past hurts that they've had, and they feel like those things are always going to be with them. I know—I've seen it in other people's lives and I've seen it in my life—he really brings healing. He can change people so that even if they came from a very destructive home life that God can heal them. It's not like an easy healing, but that God can heal them and move them beyond that and transform who they are."

The Bible often displays these healing and transformational powers. Behee studies it to know her god more intimately. She studies the New Testament in the Bible, which helps her to get closer to God.

God Is The Universe

As Behee tries to get closer to God through her studies, Buddhist Monk Deng Xiao aims to attain the enlightenment of Buddha. He worships at Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple in Redmond, Wash.

Located at the end of a cul-de-sac in a residential neighborhood, the Buddhist Temple dominates the surrounding houses. Red pillars and Chinese characters adorn the massive front entryway, piled high with shoes of those who have entered the temple. Inside, two worshippers are silent before a large, tiered stage, which is watched by seven imposing golden statues. In a room off to the side, the monk discusses his Buddhist philosophies.

"Buddhist philosophy is really deep, really wide," he says.

Xiao describes God in terms of Buddha. "From my understanding, usually people talk to God, like a person—Jesus. But in our way we say Buddha. We don't mean just a certain leader is a god, but the universe is the God. You have a Buddha self, too. You can be a Buddha. Everybody can be a Buddha. The whole nature is Buddha. So when you get enlightenment, you are becoming Buddha."

Xiao explains that when Buddhists reach enlightenment, they become one with the universe, and then they become the universe.

"For example, one drop of water goes back to the ocean. So you become one piece," he explains. "One piece becomes the universe. Just like one drop of water goes back to the ocean and becomes the ocean. You're no longer one drop of water—you become the ocean."

God Is Limitless

To Xiao, the universe is God and the universe is limitless. To Bellingham Rabbi Yossi Liebowitz, God helps him understand the universe, and God is limitless. Xiao describes God with analogy, and Liebowitz says even artistry cannot depict God.

In another life Liebowitz could have been a linebacker for the Seahawks. His large stature would be intimidating if not for his calming voice and gentle manner. Raised an Orthodox Jew in Brooklyn, N.Y., Liebowitz began his life as a rabbi in June of 1979.

He describes Judaism as a "vast civilization" whose religious roots go back more than 4,000 years.

"If you correctly perceive Judaism as a civilization, as I've
indicated, you have to entertain the many ways of describing, experiencing the deity,” he says.

In its most remote ancestry, Liebowitz says, Judaism speaks of a creator god. But in recent times, he adds, the concept of God has been expressed in almost pantheistic and Eastern terms as a unique presence.

He finds the most compelling expressions of the concept of God in the more mystical Jewish heritage of Kabbala.

“In the Kabbalistic view,” he explains, “to describe God with human language or even with human artistry is to, by definition, render God capturable. In other words, you cannot articulate the experience of God through human language or human thought or human artistry. That as soon as I say what God is, I have, therefore, limited—through a picture, through description—that which is unlimited.

“And in that limited portrait, whether it’s a verbal portrait or whatever, I have precluded a vast terrain or way of apprehending and understanding the deity. To bring us down to earth, if I said God is love, what am I saying? I’m saying that God is not kindness. God is not compassion. God is not anger on occasion. In other words, if I experience God only in one way, then I’m probably going to be much more limited.”

Even though the concept of God is infinite to Liebowitz, he is able to describe the small portion of God he has experienced.

“He’s very personal,” Liebowitz says. “For me, God is a presence that deepens my understanding of the world, the way the universe functions. It’s a presence that deepens my understanding of relationships and growth.”

WITCHCRAFT
Wiccan Priest Don Joseph

God Is A Lord And Lady
Liebowitz illustrates his god as a sculpture with many faces to represent the many aspects of what God means to him. Wiccan Priest Don Joseph also sees a multifaceted god; he pictures a dual god-goddess.

Mystical music follows Joseph, high priest of Our Lady of the Mist Church, as he walks toward the draped and decorated storefront of Pendragons in Renton. The front third of the store is a mini-reception area with wooden chairs and a bench, a coffee maker and various announcements and pamphlets on Wiccan religion, commonly known as witchcraft. Joseph talks about his own beliefs and makes himself comfortable on the bench. He leans back and tells his story.

Joseph was working as a police officer in New York City when he first encountered Wicca.

“Back in the year they invented rope, 1965,” he says jokingly. “I was a police officer at the time,” he continues. “The people that I had met in my social gatherings were just wonderful, kind people. We would all meet at the Cafe Wah, in New York in the Village, and we would talk and laugh and have a good time. At 9:00 p.m., they would all disappear. I couldn’t tell where all my friends went! So after a few months of me asking, one of them finally took me into their confidence and [they] said, ‘We’re practicing witchcraft.’ I went, ‘Aghhhhh, witchcraft! Oh my God! There’s that word again—my god. It was a fearful thing. It’s amazing how it hit me, but it’s strange how it hit me because I really wasn’t Christian. I wasn’t anything really. I was a cop. I learned the church of the streets, and that was it. Anyway, these people weren’t what I thought they were. I thought that they were Satanists, and I realized later on that was a Christian word and a Christian devil. We don’t believe in Satan. He’s their devil, not ours. We got enough trouble,” he laughs, “but the thing that we realized, that I realized, was that I was starting to think differently. My whole world was changing at the time.”

He tries to dispel the common myths that surround his beliefs.

“The Craft has never been involved in hurting people—anything,” Joseph says. “Even the charge of our Goddess is ‘Do what thou wilt and harm none.’ That’s our witch’s creed. That’s it. But people over the years say you want to burn a baby or
Joseph says, "As a matter of witchcraft. That's not us at all. We're just another religion, another belief system."

He describes his deities with the air of a teacher.

"We do not worship a god per se," Joseph says. "As a matter of fact, Craft doesn't worship at all. Wicca is a religion of some people of the Craft. Some of us don't worship—we honor, and in honoring, we are not a religion.

"But those of us who want to worship can go to a place of worship to worship the deities," he says. "Now the deities are the Lord and the Lady. It's a dual God/Goddess, you see. The perfect statue would be a statue of a male-female all together, but it's not, and we see the Lord and the Lady in our own guises, you know, of how we imagine them in our minds."

Joseph often compares Wicca with Christian practices. "In our faith, we invoke the Goddess and God. See, to invoke is to bring to, but to envoke is to become. It's really true, and when it happens, it happens big time," he says with conviction.

God Is A Common Value

Unitarian Universalist Reverend Barbara Cheatham's beliefs are evident at first glance. She wears a heavy silver pendant as an emblem of her religious convictions. Inside the silver oval is a chalice overlaid with a cross and outlined by a Jewish eight-candle menorah. A metal-shaped flame sits atop the chalice. To Cheatham, the chalice is a symbol of the Unitarian Universalist Church, as is the fire. The oval, a representation of womanhood, encompasses the cross of Christianity and the Jewish menorah. The pendant was created by a Buddhist, who saw the same oval as a seed of creation.

As a minister, Cheatham is used to having her beliefs on display.

"Universalist Unitarianism is considered a liberal religion," Cheatham explains. She says that most of the church members come from other denominations. Her church has attracted agnostics, atheists, Buddhists, pagans and people who consider themselves Christians. "We have a lot of different beliefs of people who share common values."

She describes her members as constantly engaging in a struggle to understand; they are not given easy answers.

"No one can tell you what to believe," she affirms.

She explains the church's insistance on the use of reason as a test of faith and its encouragement of questioning.

"My job is not to give people answers. My job is to give people in my congregation as much room, and as much help, as possible, to help each person develop their own beliefs," she says.

Cheatham says it's hard for her to talk about God because she is limited by language.

"When people say to me, 'Do you believe in God?', the question is meaningless because God is not something I believe in. It's like you being asked do you believe in music? Then you'd have to say, 'Well gee, I don't really know what that question means. I've never really thought about whether I believe in music or not. I just know that I hear it all the time. I sing it. I dance it. I move my body to it. It comes up inside of me. It goes through my mind. I sway to it. I hear it in the ocean. I'm in music, and the music is in me. But I don't know if I believe in it.'"

"It's not something I can define. It's not something I can even talk about other than to say I am in it. I am of it. It moves in and through me; I move in it. It's like a constant movement as music is. Therefore, God is not indistinguishable from me, but I am not God. It's just that I am so immersed in it, that, there it is."

Each of these people sees his or her god as personal. Most of these believers have a hard time verbalizing God because of the constraints of language. To these people, God is felt and known internally where there is no need for words.

Questions about the concepts of God have no easy answers. Each person tells of a god who is real and who performs real miracles. They all trust a god who guides them on their lives' paths, and they listen to their God's messages.

Maybe these individuals have more in common among them than they know.
Democracy
Or
Theocracy?

Kevin Rus explores whether religion has a prayer in government

Throughout American history, the United States government (federal and state) has passed many laws with a religious premise behind them.

The 104th Congress recently used religious beliefs in the passing of "The Defense of Marriage Act," or DOMA, which said states do not have to acknowledge marriages of same-sex couples carried out in other states.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, while arguing for the bill, said, "I say to my colleagues, let us take our stand. The time is now. The subject is relevant. Let us defend the oldest institution, the institution of marriage between male and female as set forth in the Holy Bible."

While some may agree with DOMA, and some may not, it raises a question. Does religion, in any form, whether it is to back a law or ban certain practices, have a place in our government?

Some states believe it does. According to South Carolina's constitution, one cannot hold office if he or she does not believe in the "existence of the Supreme Being." In Wisconsin, being unfaithful in a marriage is punishable with a maximum two years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

"I believe in a separation of church and state," said Shirley Osterhaus, the Catholic campus minister for Western.

"The Senators should not come in with their Bibles. They are representing the people, and the people they represent are not all Christians," she explained.

In some cases, people use the Bible as an excuse to advance their own agendas, said Osterhaus. For instance, during the Civil Rights Movement, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had to fight against many people who used scripture from the Bible to oppress blacks, Osterhaus indicated.

Today, many white supremacist groups use "religious ideology" to justify their actions, Osterhaus added. "It is their interpretation of scripture, first 11 chapters of Genesis," she said.

Congress is also misusing scripture for their own political gain, she said.

"Whenever the Bible is used to oppress any group of people, it clearly is not God's word because God's word is liberating," Osterhaus said.

Many students at Western and Whatcom Community College did not agree with Osterhaus. In an informal survey, more than 40 Western students and more than 10 WCC students were asked the question: Do you think religion has a place in government? Results found that 30 out of more than 50 students believed religion had no place in government, and more than 20 students felt religion should be allowed.

Josh Zahnow, 19, a student at WCC, was unsure about religion's role in government.

"I don't know," he said. "Religion has always been in government. So I can't say, because I don't know what it is like to live without it."

John Williams, 22, another student at WCC, asserted, "Yes it does (belong), since that's what our government was founded on."

Laura Herzig, 19, a Western student, had a different opinion.

"The government doesn't have the right to say one religion is right and one is wrong," she said. "That's why we have freedom of religion. Using religion as justification is forcing religion upon us, denying us our freedom."

One can see, many opinions exist for many reasons. But while some students may agree that religion has a place in government and some may not, and while a religious leader sees no place for it, no easy answers will come anytime soon. The question will have to remain unsolved for now.
“Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus”
— Regula Santi Benedicti

Devoted to God

Linnea Shapiro finds the rare and extraordinary when she visits a secluded monastery in the hills of Mission, B.C.

Photos by Tim Klein

dimension&perspective
People can never predetermine the experience they will have when actively participating in a different culture. The monks of Westminster Abbey, who are from the St. Benedict (Christian) order, provided me an opportunity to view a world radically different from my own.

Throughout the day, the monks showed me the ultimate achievement of a man’s life is his enduring impact on the human race.

The solemnity of the building and the people who lived in it filled my mind with a kind of thoughtfulness; a sort of melancholy. The stone building looked old, in stark contrast to the newer, more modern interior. The Westminster Abbey Monastery in Mission, British Columbia, sits high on a hill landscaped by many tall firs, narrow handmade gravel paths, and the monks’ cemetery.

I was first greeted by Father Boniface Aicher. Close to my height of 5 feet 2 inches, this monk in his late 70s stared straight into my eyes. He appeared to be at peace. His black robe, or caculla, was thick and heavy, which made it look as if it kept him warm as we walked from the visitors’ lounge to his office in the library. To my amazement, two computers sat in the corner. Technology touches everyone, I thought to myself.

Father Boniface noticed me staring at the religious painting hanging on the wall. "There is something deeply spiritual about El Greco (a Spanish painter), almost mystical," he said. His words and his character were comforting and I started to feel more at ease.

Everyday, Father Boniface, as well as the other monks, wake at 4:55 a.m. when the first bell rings from the tower. At 5:10 another bell rings for morning praise. At 6:30 the tower chimes its bells for morning mass. The boys who attend school, the brothers of the monastery, and the monks all gather in the chapel at the last bell. At 7:10 breakfast is served. The school boys eat in one room while the monks eat in another.

The separation between the groups is a way to honor the monks.

I arrived after breakfast, but before midday prayer, to tour the monastery. I conversed with Father Boniface about the history of the abbey.

He spoke with his eyes looking down and all 10 fingertips connected in an A-frame formation. Father Boniface said he has lived at the monastery since it was built.

The property on which the monastery is located was purchased in 1943. "It was Japanese property at the time, very primitive and old. The war was coming and supplies were short," Father Boniface said, "yet, we had met church law requirements with our financial stability and the number of monks in the seminary. By January 1953, we had raised to the full stature of an abbey."

Building began on the monastery in 1946, and by Christmas Eve 1954, the monks had moved in. After they built their home, they began to feel more stable.

Father Boniface recalled, “Before all the building started, we took the founding cross, plotted it, and then began to build. It was very powerful to me.”

As I sat in Father Boniface’s office, I could hear bells ringing, which indicated it was 11:50 a.m. The bells reminded residents of the monastery they had 10 minutes to gather their thoughts before midday prayer in the chapel. I waited while Father Boniface closed down the library.

I entered the chapel, which had been recently finished
after 30 years of construction (lack of finances prevented it from being finished before 1982). The decor was magnificent. Latin words were engraved in the main door. Later I met a monk who explained what the words meant. The Latin was translated by the monk as "Enter Blessed of the Lord."

A hand-sized stone bowl, which held the holy water, was the first thing I saw when I opened the large oak doors. The stone bowl was an arm's length from the door. I touched it, but I felt quite ignorant because I didn’t know how to carry out the prayer. I sat down in the pews and watched students as young as 12 and monks as old as 80 file in. Everyone walked straight to the altar in the middle of the chapel and bowed down on one knee. The altar was made of marble and the huge candles positioned on it symbolized the Holy.

Engravings surrounded the interior. The Angel Gabriel with a rose in his hand was engraved in stone on the wall. The windows in the chapel were filled with stained glass—the colors of red and yellow represented the south and the blues and greens represented the north.

Everyone rose together. With their heads bowed, they began to chant. It was in Latin, yet Father Boniface chanted in English. His and their voices embraced one another, and it sounded as if they had one voice. The echoes in the chapel made the chanting intense, and the fact that I was the only female in the monastery made the experience even more overwhelming.

After the prayer, everyone sat down. The dimming of the lights indicated it was time for personal prayer. Each monk, brother and student prayed on his own, departed one by one, and bowed at the altar as he left. After everyone was gone, the chapel was locked.

With time to spare before a meeting with Father Boniface, I decided to take a walk to reflect on my experiences of the last few hours at the monastery. I thought, "Wow! Monks give up too much of society." However, as the day progressed, I realized the monks gained more than many living in day-to-day society.

After my walk, Father Boniface and I met over a cup of coffee and slightly stale sugar cookies. As meal time approached, he explained I could not eat with the monks because monks, students and visitors eat meals separately. As I sat alone, I pondered why no women were permitted as residents in the monastery.

Father Boniface told me later the separation is to ensure undistracted attention to the service of God.

As I waited for Father Boniface to finish lunch, I decided to walk around the monastery. I found myself on a pathway that led to classrooms and dormitories of the students.

A young man, about 18, stopped and asked me if I was lost. I informed him of my situation, we exchanged names, and "Mel" offered to give me a tour. Mel was studying to be a priest. He had been attending the monastery since he was in eighth grade, and he was now in his first year of college. He wore blue-tinted glasses, which matched his sweatshirt, yet his pants seemed to be part of a uniform.

"Students live here," he stated. "I have eight years left. High school subjects are chosen for you. It has to do with preparation for the priesthood. Math, English, science, French, Latin and physical education are studied everyday Monday through Friday."

The monks are the teachers, and as Father Boniface stated, "Teaching is one of the many ways we serve the community. I think that the boys keep me young. Not all monasteries have schools, but our motto is to pray and work."

Fourteen boys were admitted this year after background checks and I.Q. testing. Almost everyone who applies is chosen.

Mel gave me a tour through the eating hall, computer labs, new gym and the classrooms. The classrooms were all decorated about the same. Eight old wooden chair desks were scattered in rows. An old piano was pushed against the wall. The chalkboard was marked with a few Latin
The Bell Tower

phrases from the previous class. The curtains were a '70s orange, and pictures of Jesus hung on the wall.

I asked Mel if students could have any free time.

"The college guys, if they are going downtown need to tell them (the monks) to let them know where they are going," he answered.

"You know if you're going downtown too much they might tell you no. It's all in moderation. The high school kids can go downtown on Saturday afternoons and grades eight through ten can go home on the weekends. And other than that we all go home for three-day weekends about once a month," he said.

On our walk, I was introduced to Father Peter. I was surprised by how young he looked. Father Boniface described him as a master in philosophy and that he worked well with his hands.

Father Peter invited me into his office. It was cozy. The rugs on the floor gave off a warmth. They were thick, almost fur-like. I held both my hands in his, and I felt at home and secure. After our talk, he gave me a book filled with sketches of Jesus and his followers.

I came upon Brother Maurus DeKlerk, a man from the Netherlands. His main duties were to study, garden the corn and beans, and keep his faith.

"I have been here for only 40 years," he laughed, his accent clear.

I left the Rare Book Room and felt fortunate that I had seen and read books from the monks' past.

"When one of the first monasteries burnt down in the 1800s, some of these books were salvaged," Boniface said.

I expect to see you again," he said. I had been thinking the same thing.

As I drove slowly down the road that would lead me from one society to another, I noticed a weathered wooden sign by the side of the road. It said PAX, which in Latin means "peace."
The Sean Humphrey House is a non-profit organization, which opened in January of 1996 to house persons living with HIV or AIDS. It was created to provide low-cost housing in a family-oriented setting for people during their illnesses. The house was named for a 30-year-old Bellingham man who died from AIDS in 1992. He lived his last months with the best available medical care and insurance coverage, but realized not every person living with this disease was that fortunate. Sean was surrounded by family and friends who loved him, but he knew that there were many people trying to deal with HIV or AIDS on their own. His last wish was to establish a place for these people as an alternative to hospitalization.
Kathy

Kathy, 47, found out in July she has AIDS. She was working on a dock in Santa Rosa, Calif., when she almost fell in. Kathy was rushed to the hospital, where she stayed a week before she knew what was wrong with her. At first doctors thought she had suffered a stroke or had come down with pneumonia.

Kathy also suffers from progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, or PML. This is a serious and chronic disease of the brain which can occur long after infection of the HIV virus.

On Oct. 12 she got married to her long time boyfriend, Randy. She just visited him in California. He also has AIDS and hopes to move to Bellingham when he gets enough money.

“I love the taste of a cigarette. They cut me off everything else...sex, booze—I’ll be damned if they cut me off my cigarettes.”
Ron, 37, found out in 1985 that he was HIV positive. He discovered in April that he has Kaposi's sarcoma, a type of skin cancer people get with compromised immune systems. He moved into the Sean Humphrey House in August.

Besides dealing with AIDS, Ron is also chemically dependent and has suffered from depression for about the last 10 years. He attends Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings a few times a week and is getting to know a lot of people in Bellingham.

“I have a whole slew of diagnoses.”

“Well, I don’t feel like getting out of bed.”
(explaining what it is like on his worst day)
Patrick

"That's why I do early walks, because there is no activity."

"It makes you tranquil."
(after taking medication)

Patrick, 47, was involved in the San Francisco club scene during the early '80s. He studied forestry at Santa Rosa Community College. He originally grew up in Seattle, but his family still lives in San Francisco.

Patrick plans on leaving the Sean Humphrey House in August. He wakes up at 4 a.m. to go walking everyday.

[Image of Patrick]

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF SEAN HUMPHREY
1962-1992
It's 2 p.m. on Tuesday, November 5. I stand huddled in a tight group of friends, trying to stay warm in the bitter autumn wind that seems to be passing through me and beating against the walls of Fraser Hall.

We are at the end of a line of 20 people, all huddled into small groups, shivering in the cold.

Everyone's hands shake as they clutch manila envelopes desperately to their chests, in hopes that the layer of papers will block out the chill.

"We could be inside, sipping vanilla lattes and complaining about men," I tell my friend Sarah, leaning over to shout in her ear because the wind is making such a loud noise.

But instead we are outside—cold, hungry, waiting.

I got the letter in mid-October. "Dear Jill," it read. "You are required to take the JWE by winter quarter 1997 or you will never see another class as long as you live."

Oops.

Yes, "oops" was echoed across Bellingham last quarter when seniors received notice that those who had not passed the JWE by the time they received 135 credits would be blocked from registering.

The policy, which goes into effect spring 1997, requires students to have not only taken, but passed the JWE.

The JWE reminds me of the tests we had to take in elementary school—the CAT test, the DOG test, the WHY test—in which we had to find the grammatical errors in the given sentences. But this test has an added bonus: you're given a one-page typed essay that must be summarized in less than one handwritten page.

Yeah, I admit it was my own fault. I should have taken the JWE last year. But I didn't. I was lazy. I put it off. I said, "Hey, I can take it next year. No problem."

But then I got the letter.

It seems that all 11,039 students at Western—art majors, history majors, physics majors, recreation majors, chemistry majors and journalism majors—are required to take the same test to determine if they are competent enough to find 40 grammatical errors and write a summary of some pointless essay.

But who really needs to take the test? On a good day, I can find 40 grammatical errors lying around in the street. I don't need a test for that.

But what about the summary? Raise your hand if you feel confident to spit out a summary of some inane essay.

Okay, I'll make it easier—raise your hand if you know what a summary is.

I don't see why it's important to know how to write a summary. Isn't creativity valued more in writing than your ability to restate another writer's point?

Summarizing is a good skill to have, but students should be

exposition
tested on their ability to come up with original statements. That's what's important in the real world. And as for the grammatical section, it's just as easy to guess which bubble to fill in than to really know what's wrong with a sentence. Instead of giving us questions like this:

1) Find the error in the following sentence: Thelma and Louise, Western students, jumped to their deaths from the third floor of Wilson Library when they found out that they did not pass the JWE.

"Well, that's easy," said Sarah. "It should be when they found out that they did not pass the JWE."

I sighed. "Sarah," I said, "you'll never pass the JWE if you answer the real questions like that! The answer is obviously that they should have jumped from the fifth floor of the library. The third floor isn't high enough. They wouldn't die."

"Oh."

What would these non-writers do without me to help them out?

So why does the JWE exist? Barbara Sylvester, director of the Writing Center, says that the faculty at Western insisted on some sort of screening instrument for upper-division writing classes. "Professors weren't prepared to teach basic English in upper-division writing classes," she said.

And I agree with that. I don't think an instructor of any 300- or 400-level class should spend half of each class period explaining the basics. Why do people who are majoring in math or physics have to take a class that's this advanced? The university could still require that everyone take a writing or English class, but it shouldn't have to be writing intensive.

Students who need help with basic English should have to take a class that helps them learn these skills. Instead, they struggle to get passing JWE scores—which, when you think about it, can be based as much on luck as on skill—and then struggle to pass the writing-intensive class.

Come on, now. Aren't we taking classes to learn—not to show them what we know already?

The good news: Sarah, Adam and I all passed the test. Sarah, in fact, felt that it was too simple. "It was really pathetic considering all of the hype," she said. "I thought it was really elementary. If they're going to have something like that, it should at least be a little more difficult."

Yeah, I passed. So I can identify a misplaced modifier, something I've been able to do since the fifth grade. But I asked Adam—who has now taken the test twice—to identify the error in the following sentence which, I swear, is taken directly from a local television commercial:

"...and Channel XX are asking you to enter our prize drawing. If chosen, we will give you a great prize."

He couldn't find the error, but since he passed the JWE, he gets to take a writing-intensive course, where the instructor doesn't want to take the time to teach him what's wrong with that sentence.