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erin becker will graduate in march 2000, with a journalism degree and psychology minor. she plans to pursue a career in public relations. this is her second contribution to klipsun, and she probably will never be let into another sonics' game.

jackie mercurio, journalism major, brings the harsh realities of eating disorders to life in her second klipsun article. also published in the western front, mercurio hopes her career will one day take her around the world.

katie stephens is a junior at western, double majoring in journalism and spanish. someday she hopes to try out her journalistic skills while traveling through spain. this is katie's first story for klipsun. she has previously been published in the western front.

bryta alvensleben graduates from western this fall with a journalism major and spanish minor. this is her first contribution to klipsun, through her work has been published in the western front and the olympic peninsula-based forks forum.

lisa bach is a senior at western majoring in public relations with a minor in internet resources. after graduation in the spring, she plans to travel in europe. this is bach's first contribution to klipsun. she has also been published in the western front.

kayley mendenhall is a senior majoring in environmental studies and journalism. she has previously been published in the western front, the planet and klipsun. after graduating in march, she plans to expand her knowledge of environmental issues.

erika ahlstrom is a senior journalism major with a concentration in the liberal arts of religion. post-graduation she would like to be a music arranger and compile soundtracks for movies, or write for a magazine.

r. andy faubion, a senior from kapowsin, wash., raises mules and horses on his family's farm. he is a firefighter with the manietta fire department in whatcom county, and graham fire and rescue in pierce county.

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klipsun january 2000
Kevin Calabro's professional drive brought him far. Erin Becker unmask his more casual side. Photos by Erin Fredrichs.

At 6 feet 1 1/2 inches, bald with a baby face, Kevin Calabro's deep bellowing voice — perfect for radio — greets basketball fans as they tune in to hear the Sonics play-by-play.

Calabro was the second youngest NBA play-by-play announcer by the time he was 25 years old. Before his first NBA job with the Kansas City Kings, he worked for four radio stations and two TV stations during high school and college. By the time he was 27, Calabro was married, had a child and was in his second year announcing for Purdue University's football and basketball teams.

Now 43, Calabro fiddles with his hat as he sits casually on his living room couch giving a condensed autobiography. This open, relaxed man is the voice of Seattle's Supersonics.

Calabro calls Indianapolis his hometown and said he wanted to be a play-by-play announcer when he was in the fifth grade. He followed sports and listened to his heroes, the local sportscasters in Indianapolis.

Sports announcing wasn't Calabro's only on-air interest. He kept a large stack of 45s and especially liked jazz music and rock 'n' roll. In college, he hosted a late-night jazz show from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

"I couldn't wait to get to high school to take radio and TV classes," he said. "I did basic announcing and writing, but they wouldn't allow (sophomores) on the air."

After convincing the high school radio station he was mature and ready to work, Calabro did play-by-play for the football and basketball games.

"I bugged them. I waited everyone else out. Instead of going to the gym, I went to the radio station and hung out." Being an athlete himself, Calabro's transition
Every Saturday, early in the morning, I had to go to different schools to compete. "It really paid off; I didn't know it then. I feared it — loathed it. I think that's why I got into radio. I could hide in the announcer's box and be just a guy in the crowd talking about the game. And that's how it is."

Colabro graduated from high school in 1974 and couldn't wait to start college and his career. He decided on a smaller school, Butler University, and majored in radio and TV broadcasting and minored in political science.

He had listened to Butler's 4,500-watt radio station since ninth grade and was ready to go on-air as soon as he registered for classes. But again, Colabro was told that freshmen weren't allowed on-air. "I said, 'That's gotta change!'"

By the second semester of his freshman year, Calabro was on the air. He also got a job working at a radio station, WATT, in Indianapolis, just one of his three jobs as a full-time student. "At one station I was an announcer, at one I played records, at the TV station I read. All this went on with 15 credits."

Unfortunately, Colabro's grades suffered because he missed his classes — a lot. "If it came down to it — work or school — I worked. That's what I wanted to do."

While at Butler, Calabro lived at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity house year-round. "I had an active, active social life at the time. I was always in charge of music for house parties," he says with a crooked smile. "I had a great collection of records: Doors, Steppenwolf ... Ohio Players, fusion jazz, and the ladies loved the dance music. We stacked all our speakers and had a raging sound system."

During his senior year at Butler, Calabro worked as an intern, reporting at WRTV, a big-time Indianapolis TV station. "I was experienced. I kept my mouth shut and listened. I was quietly persistent. I was always there."

With fewer opportunities and more restrictions in the media than there are now, Calabro became more creative and competitive as he left college. "I think people now are being outrageous and not creative, and we tend to award people who are outrageous. Back then, music was creative. I know we couldn't get away with the stuff that is done now."

After graduation in 1978, he took a job at WIBC, a 15,000-watt station, and the number one Indianapolis radio station at the time, which needed an overnight announcer from midnight to 6 a.m. "This was the big time," he brags with a Cheshire smile. "Here I am, 22 years old. The station played a lot of album stuff: Allman Brothers, James Taylor, The Police. I'd slip some jazz records on too. It was personality radio. You'd come in and talk about your day. It was pretty loose, an extension of college radio."

WIBC was home to the Indiana Pacers, and Calabro hosted a pre- and post-game show for the station. He also produced a sports show and did play-by-play for the state high school basketball championships. In his fourth year at WIBC, Calabro did play-by-play for minor league hockey, which he knew nothing about.

"I went to the library and got a hockey rule book. I listened to tapes of guys doing hockey. I did 100 games. That's one of those things where you look back and say. That might have made me. I appreciated it."

Increasing his versatility, Calabro did play-by-play for Purdue's football and basketball teams in his fifth and final year at WIBC. When he left WIBC, Calabro was 25. "And now I wanted to do NBA, because of the Pacers. I could've stayed (at Purdue) forever, but I didn't want to. I wanted..."
to travel. I found out the Kansas City Kings needed an announcer. I sent tapes and called everyone involved, so when they had conversations, they knew my name. I knew I had a shot."

Calabro and his new wife, Sue, struggled to box up their belongings and move to Kansas City, Mo.

"It was difficult, but it was exciting. My first game was against the Lakers — it was great! We got beat, but I was psyched. It was a full house — opening night — 17,000 people," Calabro said as he remembers with enthusiasm, as if he is sitting in the announcer's box now.

One year later, in 1985, Calabro accepted a job offer working for the Kansas City Royals. Although Calabro worked for a winning team, he was let go by the Royals after one season. It was the first time he was ever let go from a job.

You'll hear this, no matter how successful you are: 'We're going in a different direction. We're looking for a different sound.' Cotton Fitzsimmons, coach of the Kings, said, 'Son, you ain't lived until you've been fired.'"

At the same time he worked for the Royals, Calabro worked for a Kansas City radio station. He was fired from his job with the Royals in April of '85, and in December of '87, Calabro was fired — for the second time in his career — from the radio station.

The only opening Calabro found was at a Seattle radio station, KHIT. The day after Christmas, the Calabro's flew to Seattle. KHIT signed off the air and Calabro found himself working at KJR with Bob Blackburn, the Sonics' announcer of 20 years.

"I worked with Bob for two years and looked over for him after three," he said. "I did TV and radio and here I am, still here. I wanted to stay here."

At 30, Calabro was still a young NBA announcer, but he found his place with the Sonics. And 13 years later, he is still there.

"I think I've been a good and steady representative of the club. I've only missed two games. I've put a lot of energy into my work. I've got a lot of pride.

"Every game is special to me, and I try to have as much fun as possible. If I'm not having fun, I better find a different job."

At 43, this father of four said he is having fun and staying very busy. He is now working for Turner Broadcasting, doing play-by-play basketball on TNT.

"I expect to do several regular season games and maybe the playoffs. I want to keep the Sonics job and work on a national level.

"(The Sonics club) knows that to be happy, I have to be doing those things. It makes me more enthusiastic. I wouldn't mind doing pro football, or go network with Fox, NBC."

Calabro travels about 120 days each year with the Sonics; however, he does not have any relationships with the players beyond professional.

"It's great — first class — they have their own 727 with huge leather chairs that recline into beds, DVD, TV — flat screen TVs on each bulkhead. We stay at the best hotels, eat great food. To put it bluntly, we are spoiled."

Despite the expensive food, perks and travel, Calabro is still an appreciative man. As he sits in his Eastside home he says. "To look back where you come from is important. It gives you a point of reference you can frame.

"Just do whatever you can — hang around, be quietly persistent. Don't let money be a big factor early in your career — starve a little. Do different jobs."

Although travel is luxurious, downtime on the road is the hardest part of Calabro's job.

"I just try to stay busy. I will not stay in the room. I exercise, golf, see movies and go to museums and restaurants. I love going to New York. We usually go for a day and a half to two days. I spend all day long walkin' around New York. I woke up, grab a bagel and hike."

Calabro leans back, folds his hands behind his head and grins as he explains the best part of his job.

"I'm basically my own boss. I have people who oversee me, but I never see them, and that's the way I like it. I'm mature enough to know what's right or wrong."

Satisfied with his job, Calabro enjoys preparing for each game and said his job is never routine.

"All you do is read notes. The club provides stats and bios. Your task is to sit down, read it, take notes and apply it to a broadcast. I rob all kinds of lyrics from songs, off the streets and the guys at practice.

Some of Calabro's favorite sayings include: "Magic carpet ride," "Get up from the down stroke" and "The sky pilot," in reference to Ruben Patterson. Although it sounds fairly straightforward, Calabro has a couple games he will never forget.

His most memorable career moment came when the Sonics went to the finals in 1996.

"The seven games against the Jazz were great! Knowing we were going to Chicago to play the Bulls was so exciting. Being at game six to watch the celebration in Chicago was amazing."

His second memory is a bit more embarrassing.

"I had my back to the team and was live on TV talkin' before the game. Frank Vrankisky is there behind me, rolling up my pant legs up above my knees. I couldn't stop. I had to keep going with the broadcast."

The cameraman never panned out to reveal Calabro's white legs, but just the same, he was embarrassed in front of the packed arena.

Calabro won't be caught with his pants up or down again.
It could have been because Mercury was in retrograde that I was unable to find the address. Or it could have been the rain and darkness blurring the house numbers along the narrow Lynden road. The stormy night seemed to mirror the uncertainty I felt as I approached the home and office of astrologer Lyn Greenleaf James.

I had never been to an astrologer before. I knocked on the door and waited, expecting a mystical and all-knowing greeting from a woman wearing large hoop earrings, a long, flowing peasant dress and a red bandana on her head to tame wild curls she hadn’t washed since the moon was in Jupiter. Instead, I was welcomed by a woman with long, straight hair wearing a cardigan sweater over a tight white tank top with a non-flowing black skirt. With her eight-year-old daughter trailing close behind, James looked more like a young, hip mom than a woman about to consult the stars and tell me my future.

As soon as I entered her home, I was immediately standing in James’ office. The small, glassed-in porch was dimly lit by a candle and an old brass lamp, which flickered because of its old extension cord, James said. Astrological charts spotted the scarce space on the walls not taken up by windows. A small space heater in the corner filled the room with a cozy warmth, despite the wind and rain beating against the glass.

Leaving skepticism at the door, Lisa Bach opens herself to the possibility of a future determined by the planets and stars.

James left me alone for a few minutes to look over the layouts of her new brochures, which were about to be sent to the printer. Her company, Down to Earth Consulting, has offered astrological assistance since 1982 on a range of topics, from marriages and family relationships to the stock market. If only I had known the stars would make me strike it rich in the stock market; what was I still doing in school?

Others shared my wariness of astrology. Articles about astrologists have not always been favorable. When James joined me in her office and we began talking, it was only a matter of minutes before the issue of public skepticism was addressed.

“There’s not skepticism about it amongst most of the people that have had some experience with it,” James said slowly, choosing her words carefully. “Whether it’s true or not, it’s a huge body of knowledge that through time has involved extremely knowledgeable people. Keplar, Galileo, Ptolemy ... Ptolemy was one of the greatest astrologers in his era.”

I had always thought Ptolemy was a science guy.

“There’s been a large empty hole in scholarship and learned thought where astrology could be,” James said. Perhaps I had fallen into that hole.
Before I met with James, she asked for the date, time and location of my birth to formulate my natal chart.

The actual chart looked like a circle divided up into 12 equal pieces. Some pieces were empty while others were crowded with numbers of degrees, roman numerals and a mess of symbols. What could she see in that circular foreign language in front of her that had anything to do with me?

James explained that the birth chart she was reading was like a picture of the stars the way they looked on October 20, at 11:57 a.m. from Renton, Wash. This allows her to make more specific predictions about me.

“In my sessions I speak primarily in English,” she said.

She explained astrology is a different language when read in its scientific form; primitive English.

“I could say, well, you have the sun in the tenth house in Libra and you have a sun-Mercury conjunction,” she rattled off easily, and continued with phrases like “mid-heaven” and “Neptune ascendant.” That was just the beginning.

As James looked intently at my chart in the dim light, she absently shifted a heart-shaped piece of turquoise plastic from hand to hand. Aha! I’ve spotted her power source.

“Oh, this?” she said, looking at the plastic heart without any attachment, “I just like to have something in my hands when I’m talking.”

Slightly disappointed, I sat back and waited for my reading.

“This is different from going to a psychic,” she warned me. “The psychic

...generates information from other sources. They are pulling information from your past lives or from an angel that’s sitting on your shoulder.”

I might have sneaked a quick glance at my shoulder to catch a glimpse of my guardian angel, because James hurriedly explained that astrology generates information differently.

“This is statistics and probability,” she said with the certainty of a science professor. “This is thousands of years of observations that when planets are in particular relationships to each other and to the earth, that corresponds to different types of events in our lives.”

So, what exactly are these planets making me do?

“The chart doesn’t make you do anything. It’s a reflection of you,” she assured me, beginning to concentrate on my chart.

Because we don’t have time for a full session, James explains that she may skip over a few things and not be able to fully develop some of what she sees in my chart. Too enthralled with the symbols on my chart, I forgot that the skeptic in me could think that maybe James was making an excuse for an inaccurate reading. I caught myself leaning in over the wooden table as I waited expectantly for my future to manifest itself from these numbers and squiggles on the piece of paper between us.

My sun sign is Libra, which means that the date I was born, the constellation of Libra was astronomically in line with the sun.

I have always thought I might have some general Libran qualities, like having a balanced nature and a natural ability to get along with people.

“There’s no such thing as good charts or bad charts,” she said, proceeding to tell me I need to be more assertive in my manner of communicating.

“People with both Venus and Mercury in Libra often have that problem,” she explained, with a hint of sympathy.

Trying not to reveal too much, I thought back to the assertiveness seminars I have attended and the countless lectures from friends and roommates about standing up for myself. Still, it could be a coincidence.

James was clearly in her element; she seemed to have ignored my initial skepticism. With her assured observations and enthusiasm for her work, I became more like a client to her than a reporter with a tape recorder on the table.

“You will naturally have relationships with very strong-willed people, and you need to stand up for yourself,” she said as the wind outside slapped the rain fiercely against the windows, punctuating her proclamation. “To most Libras, being less dominant in a relationship is way better than having it ‘my way’ and not having one.”
As the self-proclaimed "Queen of Compromise," in all my relationships, I fought back the urge to shout, "This is me, this is me!" James' eyes rolled slightly behind her thin-rimmed glasses as she thought about how to translate my chart. "Libra is the sign of the other. It is the sign of relationships and relating in the first place," she said, looking me in the eye while she absently switched the plastic heart to her other hand. "Being alone is not the natural state for you."

My curiosity overtook my suspicions and I eagerly gave her information about my current relationship. As I poured out a stream of anniversaries and birth dates, she grabbed a thick book so worn that the cover was gone, and began fumbling through its pages. Just from the date my relationship began and my boyfriend's birth date, James seemed to know details of my relationship that I had just discovered. All of this she generated from the semblance of a book she held in her hand. In this book, called an ephemeris, she could look up any date in any year and see where the stars were. This allowed her to make a relationship chart, and see things which had a strong probability of occurring.

It had taken me two years to find out the things about my boyfriend that it had taken her two seconds to see in the chart. "When my friends would set me up on blind dates, I would always ask for the guy's birth date and time," she said confidently at the end of our session. She had to get back only upset publishing, but communication of any sort. I made sure to get directions to the freeway again before I left to keep Mercury from landing me north of the Canadian border.

My mind raced; all the time I could save, I could see if I was suited for my boyfriend or if I should marry him. What else could I predict with astrology?

"You can make a chart for anything that has a beginning moment," she said, adding that she read her children's birth charts before they could talk to give her a better understanding of how they were feeling.

WOW! I bet I could even plan when to have my children, I chose their personality by their birth date — no brats in my future.

"For me as an astrologer and the level of information I can see in a chart, I didn't want to take the personal responsibility of basically choosing my child's chart," she said. "It wasn't because I didn't feel like I could: that's a huge responsibility. It gets into real heady philosophical conversations."

In the flickering candlelight with the wind swirling around the porch and the stalks of tall green plants tapping at the windows, I felt like I had been overtaken by some higher power. James had effortlessly brought the symbols on my chart to life. The insight into my personality and cycles I may go through was fun and interesting. Suddenly, I felt like I was messing with chance, destiny and nature.

As James finished up with a few more of my various personality traits, I realized I was hooked. I don't know if I just like to have someone to talk with about myself or if I really believe everything she told me. Whatever it is, the taste I was given made me want to come back. I may not seek financial advice or try to plan the birth of my first child, but I may be open to some assertiveness techniques.

"If it doesn't have value, you don't keep buying it," James said confidently at the end of our session. "It had just gone to work on her brochures, which she would put off printing until Mercury was no longer in retrograde."

"Not a good time to print things without proofreading many times," she explained.

Being the ruler of the realm of expression, Mercury can not only upset publishing, but communication of any sort. I made sure to get directions to the freeway again before I left to keep Mercury from landing me north of the Canadian border.
While marrying for love is the norm, Katie Stephens examines arranged marriages as currently practiced in America.
The girl wears the unlined innocence of youth; she is perhaps 13 or 14 and of Asian descent. Behind her painted white face and brilliant lip rouge she is nervous, wringing her hands behind her vibrant silk kimono. The impending marriage has nothing to do with her emotions or decision.

Ordered by her parents, the arrangement was a match devised to ensure a hefty dowry and the assurance that family wealth would not be squandered away by the capricious desires of her heart. Although her character is fictional, her fate mimics historical references to Asian literature and film.

The ancient practice of arranging marriages does not seem to have a niche in America's fast-forward society filled with equal rights and changing male and female roles. Love and marriage do not appear to be matters left to a third party's fickle hand.

Near the Canadian border, however, in the shrimp-shack-like town of Birch Bay, resides living proof that matchmaking is a thriving occupation.

Bill Bryant sits relaxed on an easy chair in the living room, stroking the silky fur of his wayward terrier, Annie. He scrunches his nose, chiding the dog for how dirty she is while Annie rests comfortably on his grandpa-like paunch.

A fire warms the room on this dark autumn day, gently illuminating Bryant's slightly balding head and white beard while harboring the living room from the lead-gray sky outside. A petite woman scurries into the room, stoking the fire, and even after her husband refuses, hurries to bring chilled pineapple juice with a bendy straw to him.

Shoni Bryant gently drops to the floor, kneeling at Bryant's feet. She hides her face with ebony hair, nuzzling Annie while resting her hand on her husband's knee.

Chance dictated the way Bryant began his non-customary career of matchmaking — not in the historical epochs of Asia, but in the early 1980s.

Bryant recalls an employee at the Portland-area bike shop he owned fourteen years ago.

"She had just gotten married after being brought over from Asia," Bryant remembers. "About three months into the employment, I came to find out she was being abused. Her husband was kicking her and pulling her by the hair."

After confronting her husband with the abuse charges, her husband left her. Bryant helped the woman with her immigration and divorce.

"Then one day she says, 'Bill, why don't you help me find a husband?'" Bryant says.

Sensing a demand, Bryant changed the direction of his one-man crisis center for Asian women to pursuing the unorthodox occupation of matchmaker in a little business he now calls the Asian Connection.

Bryant's matchmaking service does, however, deviate from traditional Asian matchmaking and arranged-marriage services.

Midori Takagi, associate professor of American History at Fairhaven College, tucks a stray strand of hair behind her ear as she explains the historical context behind choosing a service to ensure a match.

"Depending on which socioeconomic level you are coming from is one basis for the match — it is important you don't marry down, but laterally or up," Takagi says. "It is also important that the matchmaker then investigate the background of the suitor to make sure there is no past shame or problems which would not make the match permissible."

Takagi says traditional arranged marriages also grow in importance because when the women leave, one less mouth is left to feed in large, often poverty-stricken families. Opportunities for marrying into wealth and stature could alleviate such grievances, as well as lead to a more comfortable life.

The search for companionship rather than just escape is why women seek his service, Bryant says.

"These ladies don't want to marry an Asian man because they are basically domineering and they treat women like a second-class citizen," Bryant says. "They want an American man who's gonna treat them good."

Takagi adds, however, that the underlying motivation for women fleeing their home countries is to search for more education and jobs that pay higher than $2 a day — a standard wage in many Asian countries. Marrying into Western wealth is a narrow avenue of escape.
"If they are living in extreme poverty, it is really not a choice for them to stay home," Takagi says.

Bryant recounts the experiences of many of the women who came to him for help. They come to work in the United States and Canada from rural areas with little economic support in the Philippines, China and Japan. Upon arriving, many had been exploited for their labor because of their unfamiliarity with modern culture and laws.

Takagi also describes incidences of domestic violence where the husband would withhold sponsorship of the women’s citizenship status as a threat to keep the women from reporting physical, emotional and psychological abuse.

“There have been cases where the men refuse to teach women how to use the telephone, refuse to teach them how to drive and refuse to let them go out unless accompanied by their husband,” Takagi says.

Upon entering and living in a foreign world of non-traditional gender roles and customs, many women are left clueless and vulnerable.

Therein, Takagi says, lies the danger. "There have been cases in slightly different services, such as mail-order bride businesses, where the women become really dependent on the men," she says.

“‘There’s a place on the application to describe what they’re looking for,’ Bryant says. ‘It’s all blue sky. My wife married me and I’m a little, fat, bald-headed man!’

— Bill Bryant

"It’s always older men, who are anywhere from 15 to 25 years the women’s senior, purchasing a younger bride. The men are U.S. citizens who have all the rights, citizenship and knowledge of the legal system. This puts the men in positions of power."

Nevertheless, Bryant insists that his service is sensitive to the needs of women.

“We cater to the ladies,” Bryant says. “Each one of the ladies that we represent have all gone through screenings by the FBI to get into the country. They are all born and raised in Asia, so they bring with them that culture and background."

Not intending to start the next business empire, Bryant placed an ad in a local paper calling out to American men looking for serious relationships with Asian women. Membership prices started at $200, and the responses poured in.

"I didn’t want to charge the women anything because they had already suffered so much trying to get over here," he says.

For the most part, these men are busy, hard-working professionals that just don’t have the time to go out and find somebody, Bryant says. Many simply represent the shy guys.

"The men are looking for love and companionship — for mothers. Someone they can stay married to for the rest of their lives," Bryant says. Unfortunately, Takagi explains, this is not always the case. The men who employ mail-order bride services, for example, have a noticeable lack of idealism.

"Many of these men have become disenchanted or upset with women’s liberation in the U.S.," Takagi says. "They find American women to be too aggressive, pushy and opinionated. Right away, this sets up this expectation of a woman who is going to be docile and subservient."

Some men use services like these, envisioning a stereotypical Asian woman.

"What they want is a woman who is going to come over here and not change," Takagi says. "Regardless of these statistics, Bryant is proud of what he does and has no competition."

The process of matching couples depends almost solely on Bryant’s approval. His opinion stands as the bottom line.

"If I like the men, they go through a personal interview with me," Bryant says. "If I feel that the man is too bossy or pushy, he’s gonna be that way with his wife too."

He advertises to prospective clients in local publications like The Echo and ‘hamster and estimates that 20 phone calls come in per week. Out of those 20, one is usually signed up.

Because of his success as the sole matchmaker in Whatcom County, over the years Bryant has cranked up the fees for his expertise.

Climbing up from the earlier charges of $200, he has charged up to $995 for a year’s membership in his exclusive service.

"If they think that’s too much, they can go over to Asia," Bryant remarks. "By the time they get the girl over here, it will have cost them around $8,000."

Mail-order bride services such as World Mates or Cherry Blossoms, match the costs Bryant estimated, Takagi says.
"It's a lucrative business," Takagi says. "The men can pay as little as $7.95 per address or as much as $1,000. After they have paid for the addresses, written, telephoned, visited and eventually married the woman, they are out anywhere from $4,000 to $15,000."

Attracted to Bryant's relatively thrifty deal, ladies and gentlemen may fill out their respective applications, detailing their qualifications and desires. Bryant then designs a portfolio with hundreds of pictures — complete with biography data — for the singletons to peruse.

"The men have to make enough money to support a wife. They have to allow them to attend their own church," Bryant assures. "If they are divorced, I want to see their papers to make sure it's final so we can be sure the lady gets a clean, safe introduction."

Takagi begs to differ.

"I can't help but think that the kinds of images Bryant's clients have of why they want Asian women are not any different (from the images of men seeking mail-order brides)," Takagi says. "I think there is some potential for women to — in this case — possibly find a suitable mate, but there is a whole lot more potential for exploitation."

Asian Connection applications are fairly open-ended, leaving ample room for the men and women to describe what they are fantasizing.

"There's a place on the application to describe what they're looking for," Bryant says. "It's all blue sky. My wife married me and I'm a little, fat, bald-headed man!"

"I'm not the one who filled out the application because I was so nervous," Shoni shyly adds. "My girlfriend filled it out for me."

"She came for the interview in Vancouver, where she had been working for three years," Bryant says. "Before that, she worked in Singapore for five years, serving her apprenticeship. She was worked to death, from sun-up till one in the morning."

Shoni remembers what life was like growing up in a small province in the Philippines. When she was three or four years old, she was sent to work in the rice paddies. Later, along with her 11 brothers and sisters, Shoni walked to school in between her work in the fields.

"We'd go to town, walk for half a day barefoot," Shoni says. "I didn't have shoes till I was 20 years old."

A communist murdered her father while she was away working in Singapore. It became her goal to find a way out of the precipitous danger she seemed to be dodging daily.

After her struggle, marrying Bill was a long-sought haven — a life of comfort, wealth and shoes.

"I now work at a nursing home in Blaine; I like working with the old people," Shoni giggles.

Though Shoni seems satisfied with her decision, foreign matchmaking customs and blending of cultures may be risky.

Takagi shakes her head, worried about the vast amount of undesirable implications such services may hold.

"It makes Asian women look like commodities," she says. "It's something that you go and buy, use, and when you don't want it any more, toss. It has to do with power and that's what I'm worried about."

A young, single woman seeking marriage today does not wear the traditional rice-white face of her Asian ancestors. Instead, she wears her hair back in a sleek ponytail, trades her kimono for jeans and a sweater, and abandons conventional matchmaking by picking up a local paper.

Somewhere between the changing dynamics of cultural conversion is a way to meet a life partner. And somewhere between these foreign combinations is how she will go about finding him.

"It makes Asian women look like commodities."

— Midori Takagi
Exposing raw engineering talent in its basic form, Erika Ahlstrom delves into one of the inventive minds of today, Terrance Mitchell. Photos by G. Trevor Phillips
Terrance Mitchell says with a chuckle, "(Inventing) is very satisfying from a mental standpoint. You get to be sort of like a magician of reality."

Mitchell, an inventor with 11 official patents, more than five pending patents and a gaggle of never-marketed creations, leans forward in his swiveling desk chair and uses his fingers to count his inventions. He patented his first creation, the Slurp stuffed toy, in 1965. Today, Mitchell occupies his time experimenting with a tobacco plant-derived tobacco oil that he says is the "cure-all of cure-alls."

"It's very satisfying to invent these little things," he says, referring to the numerous gadgets and toys that crowd his small office and occupy any and all shelf and table space. "It always gives me something that nobody else has."

The cuffs of his cream, V-neck sweater are neatly folded back just at the creases of his wrists. He often presses his short, plump fingers to his temples and smooths his gray hair back from a receding hairline strikingly similar to Jack Nicholson's. A bushy gray mustache hangs slightly long, almost concealing the gap between his two front teeth that 58-year-old Mitchell reveals often with his wide smile.

In addition to inventing, Mitchell manages Clover Building, which is snugly situated between edifices in the 200 block of West Holly Street. His second-floor office and apartment are neatly packed with various trinkets and exotic collectibles.

A stuffed gold extraterrestrial doll peers out from behind the gold spray-painted leaves of a dried plant arrangement. Nearby lays a laminated newspaper clipping of a Minneapolis Tribune article from 1974 entitled, "Freelance dreamer hits on hot design: Safer matchbooks."

The preserved article details a profile of Mitchell and his patented child-safe matchbook. The article explains how the match head is inserted into the chamber of an abrasive striking surface, which Mitchell designed as a hindrance to small children playing with matches. Five pounds of pressure is necessary to sufficiently squeeze the chamber.

"That's the great American dream you know, get a patent and get rich," Mitchell says. "I had pictures of Miss America with a Slurp. I mean, Slurp took me to places you won't ever imagine."

A letter signed by George Bush, expressing appreciation and thanks to Mitchell for his attempts to implement the child-safe matchbook nationwide, hangs framed on the wall. Mitchell says he also received letters from Al Gore, Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale regarding his inventions.

"My first patent was that pink toy sitting over there," Mitchell says, pointing to a Slurp, a wildly furry, cone-shaped stuffed animal standing on two green duck feet protruding from the mess of plush fur.

Initially, Mitchell wanted to be a TV announcer; his career as an inventor began unexpectedly, he says.

"I just one day made up my mind that I wanted to invent toys," he says.

An opportunity arose after he got a position as designer for Master Industries, a toyshop in his hometown of Minneapolis, Minn. After racking his brain for a toy idea, Slurp came to him in his sleep.
"It was really a strange dream," he says. Nevertheless, the next day he purchased materials at the dime store and created the toy. The toy was named after the irritating sound his brother made while "slurping" his cereal milk.

"(The manufacturer) thought I was just out of my mind that people would buy a bloodshot-eyed, shaggy, stupid-looking creature like that," he says. Needless to say, the toy's popularity prospered for about seven years.

"The whole object of the toy was its comb-ability, by the way," he says. "Kids would sit and comb them for hours."

Master Industries rejected its production of Slurps, therefore, Mitchell and his father joined to form Spectacular Products. Business boomed immediately and the company sold its first gross — 144 Slurps — to Marshall Field in Chicago, then another to FAO Schwartz. "That's the great American dream, you know, get a patent and get rich," he says. "I had pictures of Miss America with a Slurp. I mean, Slurp took me to places you won't ever imagine."

Suddenly, the Slurp fad died and the flow of money stopped. Mitchell says the abrupt end of Slurp's success taught him a life lesson.

"Invent, and let someone else run the business," he says, explaining that he has a talent for inventing, not marketing and sales. "Inventors running businesses do not succeed."

"I had a whole career studying UFOs, and I came to a conclusion," Mitchell says. "You'll never catch one, so why not build one?"

Due to financial problems and boredom, Mitchell made a transition from toys to the engineering business in the early 1970s. Mitchell filed four patents during the three-year period he worked with the Barry Mitchell company, a diamond drill business that began as a joint effort between he and a friend.

He patented a pickaxe-shaped safety razor with small and large dual blades designed for shaving difficult facial areas. A company in Japan took his product prototype — which Gillette and other manufacturers had rejected — from the patent book without buying the rights from Mitchell. He later saw his razor in a magazine ad.

"You can control the whole wide world through the (U.S.) Patent Office," Mitchell says indifferently. Also in the 1970s, Mitchell occupied his time lecturing about UFOs. The University of Minnesota and Minnesota Program Services paid him to present at numerous high schools and colleges for a total of four years, Mitchell says.

"I had a whole career studying UFOs, and I came to a conclusion," Mitchell says. "You'll never catch one, so why not build one?"

The summer of 1999, after spending six months creating the model, designing how the engines mount and how all the mechanics work, Mitchell constructed the XTC miniature flying saucer. The silver XTC model hovers above a table, suspended by fishing wire, with a miniature paper American flag poking out the top.

"The beauty of the flying saucer is its stability and safety. Once I got into really understanding the mechanics of these things and how they work, wow. If this thing got on the market, Boeing would either have to get into it or go bankrupt," Mitchell says. "The airplane wouldn't stand a chance against a craft that can fly faster than an airplane and land anywhere."

Mitchell says he hopes to make enough money from one of his other inventions to fund the construction of his flying saucer.

"And if I build it myself, I don't want to let anyone have one, you know," Mitchell says. He seems giddy at the thought. "That'd be fun to be the only person on earth zinging around, you know, no borders, try and catch me if you can."

Looking for a change, Mitchell left the engineering company in 1973. After working on the successful documentary movie, "The Hunt for the Monster of Loch Ness," which aired nationally on CBS, the U.S. Steel company expressed interest in also sponsoring a Sasquatch documentary. As a result, Mitchell made his first trip to Bellingham, where the legend of Sasquatch is said to have originated.

Mitchell went back to thinking up new products in 1975, and his next big invention, Rocketbal, rolled out the same year.

Inspired by the well-known paddleball, Mitchell attached a bigger rubber ball to surgical latex tubing and made a sling-shot-type of contraption by looping the tubing over an old coffee pot handle. He connected a small leather pouch to the handle to catch the ball.

After he patented the toy, a chain of East Coast Kmart stores bought an order and sold more than 100,000 Rocketbals in less than one week. The possibility of being sued, however, quickly doused the toy's success, Mitchell says.

Herb Weisbaum, the consumer toy expert for KIRO TV, conducted numerous tests on Rocketbal and decided the toy was potentially dangerous to children, prompting stores to cancel their orders and essentially snuffing out the Rocketbal business, Mitchell said.
Glen Bevan bought the patent in 1997, named the new company ProBall Inc. and the toy Go-Frrr Ball, Mitchell says.

"I've basically marketed it as a fetch ball for dogs," ProBall Inc. President Bevan says.

"So now (Go-Frrr Ball) is out on its own, and I don't have to do anything," Mitchell says with a smile.

"And every three months I get a royalty check from (Bevan)."

Mitchell is interrupted by a scratching and flapping outside the window of the office, prompting him to respond to Sneaky and Squeaky, his pet pigeons he rescued as babies from under the air conditioner on the top of the building.

"He's like, 'Let me in. I'm hungry Terry,'" Mitchell says with a giggle.

"You can wait," he calls playfully to the pigeons. Mitchell says the pigeons are quite tame — they often perch on his shoulders and arms.

"I'm trying to teach them how to collect money from the street," he says, explaining that he wants to train them to retrieve coins with their beaks. Excluding the company of the pigeons, Mitchell lives alone.

He stays busy experimenting with and testing his tobacco oil that he says relieves stiff joints and sunburn, soothes dry or irritated skin and serves as an insecticide and bug repellant.

In an old history book, Mitchell says he read about a healing, multi-purpose tobacco oil used by the Native Americans. Mitchell says he extracts the carcinogens, niter and a small amount of nicotine from the tobacco by fermenting the plant leaves in glass jars. The natural chemical process removes the impurities and the oil settles in the bottom of the jar. He thins the oil with rubbing alcohol to make it a skin-applicable substance.

Multi-sized glass bottles of the viscous, rum-colored liquid reside atop a big-screen television.

"Out in the garden in the summer I've killed ants, spiders and mosquitoes (with the tobacco oil)," he says. "You name it, they see me coming with my spray and they go running."

Mitchell says he thinks the tobacco oil — which he also applies daily to his armpits as deodorant and to his scalp to prevent hair loss — will be his next "big thing." He also rolls cigarettes with the carcinogen-free, reduced-nicotine tobacco; he says they're odorless and taste great.

He has spent two and a half years working on the tobacco oil project and says he will not file for a patent until everything is lined up and ready to go.

"A lot of things I've invented I don't patent," Mitchell says as he heaves a big black briefcase onto his desk and opens it with two clicks of the latches. The briefcase holds a myriad of papers — patented prototypes and designs for non-patented creations.

Charlotte Smith, owner of Clover Building, used Mitchell's tobacco oil to exterminate the carpenter ants that plagued her home. One day after spraying the vermin, a layer of dead ants littered the back porch floors and had to be swept up by the thousands, Mitchell says.

"He can do all kinds of things; he has a great imagination," she says. She hired Mitchell about 17 years ago. "I've gotten to see lots of things that he's done over the years — who knows what he'll come up with next."

Mitchell says the most frustrating thing about inventing is when manufacturers reject products that would help the welfare of humanity.

"You create a product that might help save lives, and that's the most difficult to sell," he says, adding that he offered to give away his design for child-safe matchbooks. "That's what depresses me the most."

Mitchell explains that the lowest point in his career hit after he had spent all his time, money and energy to make the child-safe matchbook, only to have the match industry ignore his invention based on politics and money.

Today, with his salary as manager of Clover Building and the monthly royalties he receives from ProBall Inc., currently 7 cents per ball sold, Mitchell says he lives comfortably with no financial worries.

"(Inventing) consumes so much of your mental time, I mean, I'm just tickled pink about building a flying disk," Mitchell says. "I don't really worry about the woes of the world. I'm too busy thinking about the future."
Jenny Cooke poses at a dance her junior year — 98 pounds.

Exposing the dangers of measuring beauty on a bathroom scale, Jackie Mercurio documents one young woman's struggle for life. Photos by Jackie Mercurio.

After three years of bulimic behavior, bingeing and purging, 17-year-old Jenny Cooke died of a heart attack. For 20 minutes she was clinically dead. She fell into a deep coma that lasted nearly three weeks. The doctors suggested taking her off life support. Her mom did not give up hope, though, and eventually her daughter woke up. Doctors said she would be in a vegetable state forever, but miraculously, a year-and-a-half later, 19-year-old Cooke can walk, eat and openly talk about her experience.

Between five and 10 million women and girls in the United States have active eating disorders, according to Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention. Cooke is one of many who perceive themselves as overweight and destroy their health trying to look model thin.

During Cooke's first year of high school she became interested in boys. She grew conscious of her figure, her weight and her overall looks. She remembers the first boy she dated, who was a few years older than her.

"He was embarrassed to be with me. I felt that way at least," she says. "I felt that way with a lot of guys."

Cooke made herself throw up to feel skinnier and more attractive. Only 5-foot-3-inches tall, she thought her chances of becoming a model would be better if she was rail thin, even though she weighed a mere 120 pounds.

"I would stand naked in front of the mirror and count my ribs. I had no boobs and that made me really happy. They came back, unfortunately," she says, sincerely upset that she has a chest many young women would be proud to show off.

Cooke wasn't purging alone. Two of her friends also had obsessions with their bodies. Cooke says they would go to parties and drink alcohol to induce vomiting. Cooke's friends quit vomiting, but Cooke threw up every day for three years.

Cooke says she picked up techniques by reading informational books about eating disorders.

"It helped me get more bulimic. It gave me tips on how people did it," Cooke says.

One idea was to use a straw to make herself throw up at fast-food restaurants. A Jumbo Jack hamburger, curly fries and diet Pepsi became her daily diet.

Cooke swallowed laxatives a few times and even drank nail-polish remover once, but stayed steady shoving a silver spoon down her throat.
Jenn Cooke shows her tracheotomy scar.
--- 130 pounds.

Cooke says she would remember the first thing she ate, using a red jellybean for example, making sure it was the last thing she saw after puking. That way she knew she threw everything up.

"I don't know if it even worked. That was just my little theory," she says matter-of-factly.

Cooke says her throat often ached from throwing up, and some days she wouldn't talk. She bruised easily, shivered all the time and suffered mood swings. She says she thought she had a permanent pimple next to her mouth, but later learned from the doctor it was blood vessels popping in her cheek because of the force of puking.

"I got really bitchy. I took things to my heart too fast," she says, adding that she would throw up when she got upset.

"Sometimes I would just throw up to see if there was anything in there. It's kind of like a clogged pipe," Cooke says.

Cooke threw up in shoeboxes and scented bags and stashed them in her room, hidden among her Tigger bedspread, stuffed animals and collectibles.

Cooke's mom and friends tried to get her help, but she didn't want it.

After spending an entire day at a crisis center, followed by a trip to the emergency room, Cooke promised her mom she'd never puke again. But that night, immediately after dinner, she threw up in a towel and proceeded to take a relaxing bath. Her mom found the towel on the floor in the middle of her bedroom. Exasperated, she stormed to the bathroom and threw the towel of vomit at her daughter.

"I felt so, so, so gross," Cooke says, shivering with disgust. "She apologized for doing that later. I think I probably deserved it."

That was a turning point, and Cooke started seeing a counselor, however, her obsession didn't stop.

Cooke says things weren't working out between her and her mother. Her mom tried to make her quit bingeing and puking, but Cooke didn't want anything to do with her, so she moved in with her grandma.

Cooke's obsession caught up to her, and toward the end of her senior year her heart failed.

Cooke talks about her heart attack, but only as it has been told to her. "I can't tell you what exactly happened because I was dead."

April 17, 1998, her grandma called her name while Cooke, 93 pounds, was getting ready for school. Cooke didn't answer because she had suffered a heart attack. Her grandma tried opening the
A second belly button marks the door, but the end of the bed jammed it shut. Her grandma called the fire department, and five firefighters maneuvered the door open. The medics rushed Cooke to the hospital.

Her mom recounts the details because Cooke doesn’t remember anything clearly.

"Once the fire department got to her she was believed to have been deceased, and her brain, from what we can figure out, went without oxygen for approximately 20 minutes," her mother notes in a letter detailing the ordeal.

"They used the electric paddles on her and thought they had a registered heartbeat but found out it was just a vibration from the shocking," her mom notes.

The medics tried to revive her on the way to the hospital with manual CPR, but she suffered another heart attack when she got to the hospital. She was put on life support and moved to the Intensive Care Unit.

"We were told at that point it did not look good for any type of recovery," her mom recalls. "Her heart would not beat on its own. Her lungs were not working. They also did a brain scan and found very little brain activity. For two plus weeks we were told that we should pull her off the life support systems because, medically, there was no hope."

After two-and-a-half weeks Cooke woke up and gradually learned how to function again. Cooke’s family didn’t send her to a nursing home as the doctors suggested, instead they took her to their Puyallup home once she was released from the hospital.

"People didn’t understand that when you wake up from a coma you don’t just wake up and everything is back to normal," her mom says. "Jenny had to learn how to sit up, talk, walk and eat all over again."

"I felt like an 18-year-old with Alzheimer’s," Cooke says.

Despite overwhelming odds, Cooke graduated in June. Classmates, parents and teachers gave Cooke a standing ovation as she trembled and visibly shook across the stage, supported by her step dad.

Cooke doesn’t remember the standing ovation but watches it on video.

"I felt an overwhelming, ‘Wow.’ People really liked me, I guess," she says with self-confidence. "I thought people hated me."

Cooke worked 20 hours per week at a clothing store prior to the incident but still made time for cheerleading. Key Club, Students Against Drunk Driving, and was vice president of the Associated Student Body and of International Club.

Her sparkling personality was missed by many at school. A 2-foot-tall greeting card sits in her room, covered left to right and top to bottom with messages from classmates wishing her well.

Cooke says she realized who her real friends were after the accident because they showed support by staying nights with her in the hospital.

Cooke slept through her senior prom. Cooke slept through her grandma’s death, too.

"I never got to say bye to her. That’s what I regret most in my life," she says.

Surprisingly, Cooke doesn’t wish she could take back her days of regular bingeing and purging.

"I don't regret any of it. I learned so much and met so many great people," she says.

Even more surprisingly, Cooke still battles bulimia.

"It would be nice to say it’s gone, but unfortunately it’s still here and dealt with on a daily basis," her mom says. "It’s very frustrating to see someone who has this problem and understand why they don’t just stop, but it going..."
Cooke threw up in shoeboxes and scented bags and stashed them in her room, hidden among her Tigger bedspread, stuffed animals and collectibles. through all this is not enough to make someone give it up, it goes to show you how deep it becomes engraved in someone's personality or brain, or wherever it comes from."

Cooke's auburn, curly locks frame her round face and genuine, dimpled smile. Still small, she weighs a healthy 130 pounds, and says she realizes she has never been fat or obese.

"You know how you put your shoes on every day? That's how regular it is for me (to throw up)," Cooke says, but adds that she doesn't throw up regularly anymore.

Cooke describes herself as a goal-oriented person. "I set expectations for myself and if I don't achieve them I get disappointed really fast," she says, "Once I set a goal I always go for it. That's how my bulimia got so bad."

Cooke's short-term goal is to get her driver's license again, but first she needs to finish rehabilitation. 

She also wants to go to college so she can get a job at Western State, a mental hospital, to work with the elderly. For now she volunteers at a home for people with Alzheimer's.

"I love old people. They're like little kids with wrinkles," she says.

She starts each morning by taking 10 pills for her heart and blood pressure, which she will have to take for the rest of her life. She volunteers three days per week, meets with her psychologist two days per week and indulges her creative spirit with pottery classes. Other time is spent around the house, watching Ricki Lake, writing in her diary and working on art projects.

The walls of her room are covered with pictures of friends in high school and red and gold cheerleading memorabilia. A picture of Kermit the Frog is centered directly over her bed, cut out from a poster.

"It said 'No Pigs' on the bottom (referring to Miss Piggy)," she says, horrified that message was printed on a poster. "I thought that was kind of rude."

An essential message board hangs on Cooke's white bedroom door, where she writes down all appointments, classes and things to do. She suffers from short-term memory loss, although it has improved. At first, she couldn't remember anything after 1989.

"She can't be left alone for long periods of time due to her memory problems," her mom says, adding that the memory loss is due to the brain injury.

The large, walnut-shaped maroon scar covering the front of her neck — a direct result of the breathing tube she had while in the coma — takes precedence over her silver star necklace.

A "second belly button" from the feeding tube, as she puts it, doesn't scare her enough to quit throwing up either. For Cooke, bulimia is a way of life.

She hopes her experience can benefit others. Her mom does, too.

"I hope someone can figure out a way to stop this from ever happening to another person," her mom says. "The outcome for Jenny is unknown. She has already improved beyond anyone's expectations. Whatever the final outcome is, we are very grateful to have what we have and know that God has had a hand in her recovery from the beginning."

People who took care of Cooke while she was a patient at Good Samaritan Rehab Center:

Physical Therapist: for motor skills
Speech Therapist: for speech, eating and cognitive skills
Recreational Therapist: to reintroduce her to the world outside
Psychologist: to help her deal with her brain injury and life changes
Rehab Physician: to monitor her recovery
Cardiologist: to repair her damaged heart
Cardiac Therapy class: usually for elderly people who have had heart attacks
Neurologist: for brain injury because her short-term memory was affected

After a year-and-a-half, Cooke has recovered far beyond all expectations.

An acupuncture patient displays his needled hand.

Dr. Adich cups a small amount of moxa.
Imagine lying perfectly still on a wooden table, draped in a crisp, white sheet. Meditative music hums quietly in the background, and sweet-smelling incense creeps silently around the room. Paper-thin needles, the length of porcupine quills, protrude from specific points on wrists and ankles creating a dull, warm ache. 

Amidst the scene is a young, blond doctor from the Midwest. He talks fast, diverting his patient's attention from the task at hand. Dr. David Adich doesn't fit the wrists and ankles creating a dull, warm ache. 

Droves of Americans are leaving state universities in favor of naturopathic schools — and picking up silents around the room. Paper-thin needles, the length of porcupine quills, protrude from specific points on wrists and ankles creating a dull, warm ache. 

The 21-year-old speaks softly when discussing his chosen career path, but excitement gleams in his dark brown eyes when he explains that his childhood naturopath influenced his attitude toward Eastern medicine.

Adich also supports Eastern medicine and promotes it through his clinic.

"Acupuncture balances the energy in your body so it flows better," said Adich, of the Adich Natural Health Clinic in Bellingham. "There isn't a ton of scientific data to explain how the effectiveness of acupuncture isn't so concerned with how it works, but if it works — it's been working for thousands of years."

The ancient healing art's premise lies in the power of Qi (pronounced chee), the vital energy driving all life forms. The Chinese believed Qi flows through the body along specific pathways called meridians. When the flow of Qi along the meridians become blocked, pain and ailments occur. Acupuncture aims to unblock these pathways and restore the body to its natural state of balance, according to Adich's website.

"It is difficult to define acupuncture," Adich said. "The Chinese say once you define something, you limit it."

He explained the effectiveness of acupuncture in terms of too much or too little energy. A depressed patient lacks energy, and acupuncture cannot create more. Under stress or anxiety, a patient's energy blocks pathways and disrupts Qi flow within the body. Sticking needles in these "hot" points releases excess energy.

Adich learned the secrets of the meridians while studying naturopathic healing at a Chicago university. After his 1991 graduation, his love of all things natural led him to the forests, mountains and ocean of the Northwest.

Much as at the Chicago university, Bastyr students practice intensely on each other before they start treating patients. Three hundred clinical hours are required before a student is tested to become a licensed acupuncturist, Schneider said.

Some doctors use only the form of the fetus to find the head, body, arm and leg points within.

"We get into groups and have a series of things to find on each other," he said. "It is taking time to practice, getting used to touching people ... I wouldn't start sticking needles into people you don't know."

Acupuncture is often used along with other natural healing methods. These may include herbs, massage, body manipulation and exercise. One of Adich's common supplements to acupuncture is an Asian herb called moxa.

The doctor opens a jar containing small segments of moxa. The herb is soft, almost like cotton or felt. He rolls a marble-sized ball between his fingers and ignites a flame. The herb burns quickly and smells of marijuana or sage. Adich laughs and points to a sign saying the aroma is from moxa. It was posted to avert any ideas of him smoking joints in his backroom.

"Moxa is used to warm up areas, to bring blood to Qi to the areas," he said.

He sometimes places sesame-seed sized pellets directly on the patient's skin. In other cases, the herb burns on the needles as they are inserted in the body.

Charts hanging around the room illustrate differing treatment methods, such as distal and local needling and the use of microsystems representative of the whole body.

One graph shows two large ears and outlines acupuncture points inside each. Several smaller ears line the poster's edge, one showing an upside-down fetus superimposed on the ear. Some doctors use the ear as a microsystem, following the form of the superimposed fetus to find the head, body, arm and leg points within.

Adich uses distal needling, in which the arms and legs from the elbows and knees down are used to treat points for the rest of the body. He inserts needles far from the pain. Local needling, on the other hand, inserts needles close to the pain.

"Practitioners find a style they like, get good at it, find understanding within it and go with it," he said.

Bastyr's program teaches both traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine, Schneider said. This term he is taking two Chinese medicine classes, anatomy and physiology, and living anatomy.

"The approach we're being taught is that the ideal is a combined medicine," he said. "For some instances you're going to have to go to a modern medical doctor. (Acupuncture) has its limitations. You're not going to cure cancer with acupuncture."

Acupuncture and herbs, however, can relieve the painful side effects of chemotherapy. Additionally, Adich said, referrals from modern medical doctors help increase insurance coverage of acupuncture. At roughly $50 per visit, the treatment can get expensive.

Both Adich and Schneider agree acupuncture is a holistic medicine that treats the entire body but isn't a miracle in itself.

"There is no cure-all in the world," Adich said. "It is not acupuncture; it's not chiropractic; it's not modern medicine. The human body is multi-faceted. There needs to be different options for all people out there to find out what works."
Bryta Alvensleben tracks the progress of one former Western student who found job satisfaction on the Internet. Photos by Matt Anderson.

Twenty-two-year-old Ibn Archer risked failure when he dropped out of Western's Music Department nearly two years ago and left behind the safety of a college education — and his tuba — to follow an elusive cyber dream.

Even doomsday predictions from friends and parents couldn't dissuade Archer from entering the Internet job market — a realm of computer fanatics created by a half century of devoted math and science visionaries and made famous only recently by Bill Gates and a crop of amazingly young Microsoft millionaires.

And it paid off.

After a string of computer tech jobs starting in Eastern Washington and including a short stint as a bouncer in a Baltimore strip club, Archer returned to the Northwest on the advice of a friend and landed a job in small Internet company called InterNAP Network Services.

The company provides direct Internet connections for other Internet companies, Archer explains. Clients such as Amazon.com and Home Grocer benefit from using InterNAP's services because their web pages download more quickly for waiting viewers. InterNAP's direct connections can transmit information from Seattle to the East Coast in 60 milliseconds — roughly the speed of light.

"The average time people will wait is 15 seconds," he says, explaining that with every "hop," each step between a customer and their Internet connection, the download time gets slower, increasing the odds that viewers will look at other, faster-loading sites.

Archer is part of the company's network operations center staff — it's his job to deal with unhappy customers.

"Basically, we troubleshoot for things that break — it's actually a lot of fun," Archer says. "It's a bunch of 23- to 24-year-olds running the company. There's a lot of youth here."

As he speaks in smooth, deep tones, Archer's radio-talk-show voice seems almost wasted in the computer domain he has chosen.

Archer says that as a new hire he didn't fully comprehend the importance of the stock options that were part of his contract and allowed him to purchase company stock for less than a dollar per share.

"To be honest, I really didn't think about it. I was just stoked to be making more than $10 an hour," Archer recalls.

Archer didn't have long to puzzle over the mystery when, only seven months later, the company decided to go public and started trading its shares on the stock market. On the day InterNAP became available to the public, the stock skyrocketed from $20 to end the day at $70 — and it is still rising.

On Nov. 11, a Thursday, at 2:15 p.m. Eastern time, the price for a share of InterNAP was $112. On that day, Archer's 15,000 shares made him worth $1.68 million.

Oddly, Archer does not seem fazed by his newly acquired wealth.

Part of the reason could be that the money isn't his quite yet. Archer receives 25 percent of his promised 15,000 shares every year he works for the company. He reaches his first year and first 3,750 shares Feb. 3, 2000.
"That's when I started losing interest in school. I didn't go to class," he admits. "I just thought, 'Why can't I make money doing what I like to do in my free time?'"

With these thoughts, Archer didn't need much convincing to follow Garrison to a small Internet service provider in Chewelah, Wash.

"My friends, they thought I was pretty crazy. They thought that was definitely the wrong thing to do," Archer reflects.

Confronted with his friend's success, Rose says he admires Archer's ascension up the tech-job ladder.

"He's kind of jumped so many levels in computer-nerddom since he left for Chewelah," Rose says. "Of course, all he did in Eastern Washington was sit in a basement and read computer manuals."

Archer agrees that he spends much of his time — both at work and at home — in front of his computer. "I keep everything on my computer. Even within our house, we do everything on e-mail. If there's a problem among roommates, it'll usually come up on e-mail," he says.

Archer explains this dedication is almost a requirement for his kind of work. "For any sort of tech job like this, having a degree doesn't really mean much," he says. "(For me) it was kind of self-taught. If you're a hard-core computer nerd, you have the drive to learn this kind of stuff."

At his workplace, a suite of rooms on the fifth floor of the Weston building in Seattle, Archer is completely at ease. To the casual observer, the room resembles a scene from an old Twilight Zone episode. Thick gray electrical cords and cables snake from the backs of all the cabinets, disappearing up into ceilings and down under the floors. From the cabinet fronts, small yellow and green lights flash and glow diabolically.

The whir of the fan humming in the background is necessary because the room contains so much electrical wiring that it has to be cooled. Otherwise, the room gets unbearably hot, Archer says.

"Money's cool, but there's a lot more things I'd like to learn." — Ibn Archer

"Well, at this point, financially, I haven't seen any of it," Archer admits. "I don't know if it's really hit me. The possibility of having over a million dollars never really came to mind."

Still, Archer is hesitant to define success by wealth alone. "It's a pretty good feeling. I'd say it's success, but there's still more to be had," he says. "Money's cool, but there's a lot more things I'd like to learn."

Archer explains his career started with an increasing desire to learn more about computers. Archer's friend since kindergarten and self-professed computer nerd, Western student Josh Rose remembers when Archer developed an interest in the tech domain.

"We both turned into computer nerds together, in about '93," Rose recounts.

Archer got even more involved with computers his sophomore year at Western. His dormant obsession was triggered when he ran into Ian Garrison, an old high school acquaintance.

"On the weekends, Ian would come over and bring his computer," Archer remembers. "I found I was spending my free time doing computer stuff."

Ending his tour, Archer greets a fellow worker who pads quietly by, a steaming ceramic mug of tea in hand and feet clad only in green argyle socks.

As much as he enjoys his job, Archer can still envision a life without Internet. "I'd probably be teaching — or still in college. One of my favorite jobs I ever had was working as a counselor at a camp for low-income children. I would be working with kids on some level," Archer speculates.

For now, Archer says he will remain at InterNAP, at least for the next three to four years.

"I've never worked in a place where there's so many intelligent people," he says proudly. "The shit can really hit the fan at any moment — it's a whole motion of activity."

Not even a crash in the stock market would disillusion Archer with his job. "It would have to go incredibly down, because I bought my shares for under a dollar. And if our stock went under a dollar, I don't think I'd buy it," he says, displaying a keen business sense that may explain his current success.
She firmly wrestles the beast’s mouth open. With her fingers on the side of its face, near the bridge of its nose, she places her thumb between the animal’s powerful jaws. While she rubs the animal’s palate with her thumb, she strokes its neck with her other hand. She purposely positions her thumb behind the animal’s incisors where no teeth exist on the jaw. In the unlikely event the animal is not receptive to her touch, she will still have a thumb. After a minute the animal is salivating sufficiently, and she removes her thumb. The horse chews, licks its lips and swallows.

This exercise constitutes a handshake between Eleanor Doty and half of her clients. The other half prefer to settle for a formal handshake. Doty, 47, owns and operates Alliance Farms just north of Bellingham. Slenderly built, her brunette curls fall at her shoulders. She is a horse whisperer, dressage (a style of riding) clinician and breeder of Arabian horses. She calls the rubbing of the horse’s palate “de-glutenating.” This technique makes the animal relax. Doty says salivating inhibits an animal’s ability to be aggressive.

“It’s like trying to be intimidating while drooling down the front of your shirt,” Doty explains, motions with her hands to illustrate drooling.

She says the movie “The Horse Whisperer” put horse whispering on the map. The practice never had a name until then; it had simply been really good training.

“It’s the ability to communicate with horses on their level. If you look at a herd of horses in a field, they are always talking, but it is a silent communication,” Doty says, looking out the window at the horses in the pasture.

She says the practice of horse whispering became prevalent when women decided to become horse trainers. She says when it came to horse whispering or the communication with the horse itself, women picked up the trade quicker than men. Women could not necessarily muscle the horse into submission; they needed a different way to manipulate the horse’s actions.

“If I can get the horse to react to me through his own language, knowing and understanding what I am asking for him to do and give me, I’ll usually find that the horse will respond 10 times better, and faster,” Doty explains.

Horse whisperers utilize body language — as horses use body language in their herd. Studying the animals helps horse whisperers learn how the positioning of their bodies may be interpreted by the animal.

“If you watch two stallions in a fight, one will rear up on its hind feet, raising its head as high it can.
her, horse and canine companion trek through the stables at Alliance Farms.
The other horse will bite at the first one's front feet, trying to get that animal to lower his head again. It is all about asserting dominance with the height of the head," Doty says, motioning with her hands to portray the rearing up of a stallion.

Doty asserts her dominance as the leader of the herd by lowering the head of the horse she is working with. Gripping the horse's halter, she methodically places pressure on the bridge of its nose, forcing it to lower its head. She praises the horse when it complies with her request. She says the amount of pressure she exerts depends on the amount of resistance she receives from the animal.

She uses this philosophy in disciplining the animals as well, and says that any whips or chains on the property are only used as an extension of her arms. For instance, if she is leading an animal into a trailer and it balks and requires some persuasion, she will use the whip to reach back behind the animal's hock (ankle) and gently tap it. Through repetition and patient training, the horses have learned that this means they are to take a step with that foot.

Alliance Farms is not a large operation, and from a distance the property looks almost run-down. The ceramic lawn jockey leaning against the front-gate fence, connected to his broken metal stand only by a rebar skeleton, acts as a sentry. The dilapidated barn next to the mobile home from the mid '80s looks as though it has seen better days.

The fact that the property looks run-down actually is great camouflage considering that in each of the two barns, 10 or 12 stalls house horses ranging in price from $5,000 to $50,000.

Doty challenges people's first impressions and their visions of how a horse trainer should live. She is too modest to admit this, and excuses the look of the place by admitting she has only so much energy. Although some things might look worn, everything works and serves its purpose well.

The legless lawn jockey isn't alone in his job as a sentry. A large black Poodle named Sweet, and a Labrador mix named Butch, patrol the grounds, poised to lick visitors into submission. The dogs have a full-time job, because people are constantly coming and going.

Doty has about 20 students whom she teaches on a weekly basis. She has at least three lessons a day, four or five days per week, varying from week to week depending on the individual needs of her students.

A young girl rides a large, dark horse in a circle beneath the uncovered end of an arena, which is about 70 yards long. Wearing a dark red thermal jacket, Doty stands in the middle of the circle giving out directions. Holding up her hand she asks the rider how many fingers she sees. This forces the rider to look at Doty and refrain from focusing on the mammoth head and neck beneath the saddle.

"I ask my students to sit up straight and maintain the picture in their minds of what they want the horse to do," Doty explains. "If they hunch over the saddle and worry about what the horse is doing instead of what they want the horse to do, then they are not in control."
The daughter of a military chaplain, Doty isn’t really a native of anywhere. Her family traveled frequently, but she feels Washington is where she spent the most time. She moved to Bellingham in 1971 from Port Angeles.

A Western graduate, she studied biology and graduated with a degree in pre-veterinary medicine. She worked for the Whatcom County Humane Society and ultimately retired as its director after 26 years.

She makes about $30,000 a year from training, pack trips, clinics, horse boarding, and producing and selling instructional videos. Her rates vary from $25 an hour for training, to $650 a month for boarding.

Alliance Farms, Doty says, is named for an agreement or contract she believes every horse she trains signs with her. She believes that horse and trainer must form an alliance to work together. The horse needs to accept her as the teacher, or else time and money is wasted.

As the lesson comes to an end, the rider dismounts, and Doty and the youngster walk the horse through the gate, up to the barn. Doty recaps the important points of the lesson while the student removes the bridle and saddle. When the student looks up questioningly from the saddle, Doty instructs her how to unbuckle the cinch, a strap on the horse’s underbelly that holds the saddle in place. Even though they have left the arena, the lesson has not ended. While the student brushes the horse, Doty feeds it a handful of grain. They finish and take the horse back to its stall.

The 19-year-old Arabian mare, Mindy, dwarfs 8-year-old Madison Marsyla who leads the horse down the path to the lower barn. Doty does not catch the animals for her students, she only explains how things must be done. Madison had to open the stall door and place the halter on the beast unaided by Doty. Watching Madison lead Mindy down the path is reminiscent of what it would be like to see a flea taking a dog for a walk. Madison, who started taking riding lessons from Doty only three weeks ago, shows no signs of fear.

“Maddy is my animal child,” Jill Marsyla says of her daughter. “She has always enjoyed being around animals.”

Jill drives Madison to riding lessons once a week. She surprised her daughter with her first lesson on her birthday.

“I have to admit that I was a little apprehensive at first. I thought (Doty) was a little over the top,” Jill says. “She kept me on the phone for over an hour when I just called to inquire about prices and techniques.”

The immediate rapport Doty had with Madison and Madison’s receptiveness to Doty’s teaching style, however, quelled any apprehensions Jill might have had.

“I teach my clients horse (language), and I teach the horse very little English,” Doty explains between mouthfuls of sandwich. She has another lesson in 10 minutes, and she didn’t have much for breakfast.

The dogs begin to bark outside and a blue Chevy van pulls up the drive. Her student is early. She takes another quick bite, grabs her coat and heads out the door leaving the sandwich unfinished on the plate.

Mary Summers, another of Doty’s clients, originally came to Doty to learn different riding styles. She ended up buying horses from Doty and having her train horses Summers already owned.

At 49, Summers says she has been involved in equestrian activities throughout her life. She says she has never seen anyone with the skill and ability to read a horse like Doty does.

“lf you look at a herd of horses in a field, they are always talking, but it is a silent communication.”

— Eleanor Doty

Summers says she has consulted many trainers and teachers and believes Doty ranks among the very great in the equestrian field.

“She is an incredible teacher. I’ve been doing things a certain way all my life, and in 20 minutes she’s got me doing them a different, better way,” Summers says. “She tells you how to do something and then tells you why to do it.

“Her energy level is incredible. She is on the ground the entire lesson, watching you, watching the horse, correcting both, running from one end of the arena to the other. After a lesson I’m exhausted just from having to think and move my body to the right position, but she has to do that all day, with only a short break between lessons.”

Whether she is de-glutenating a horse or instructing a student how to unbuckle a cinch, Doty says she never gets tired of the pace, the people or the animals.

“It’s never the same thing. The people and the horses are always learning and their skill levels and abilities are always changing. I’m learning something new every day,” she says with a slight smirk on her face. It’s almost knowing smile that says she’s found her calling in life.