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Klipsun Magazine, 2002, Volume 32, Issue 02 - January

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Editor's Note

Former New York Times Sunday editor Lester Markle once said, "What you see is the news, what you know is background and what you feel is opinion."

As a magazine staff, our job is to "see the news" — to scope with watchful eyes for newsworthy stories that will interest our readers.

This quarter's Klipsun staff sought stories with this mission in mind. In "Pay Attention," a reporter interviewed a Western student who sells her own prescribed Attention Deficit Disorder drugs, Ritalin and Adderall, to students who decide they need the additional help while studying late at night. In "The Lab Down Under," another reporter ventured into Western's animal lab — a place many people have heard about, but few have actually seen.

In lieu of these controversial topics, it's our hope that readers will have the background they need to establish a feeling or opinion about the stories in this issue.

Please feel free to e-mail us at klipsun@faith.journ.wwu.edu or call us at 650-3737.

Regards,

Erin Crumpacker, managing editor

Jeff Lechtanski
loves movies — no, you don't understand — Jeff loves movies.
Planning "Home Film Festivals," he will barricade himself in his living room with nothing but food and stacks of DVDs. Jeff jumped at the opportunity to sit and talk about watching and making movies.

James Cassill
is thankful to those students who shared information for this article. The senior communication major believes the use of Ritalin and Adderall stimulants on campus is a serious issue. These "study drugs" can be a helpful medication to some, while life threatening to others.

In his final article for Klipsun magazine, Ryan Bentz grapples with Alzheimer's disease through the eyes of a Bellingham man. Ryan's encounter with the disease brought him to realize his own mortality, and he hopes others will glean from the story something meaningful as well.

Brittany Sadler
spent hours learning the art of sampling by shadowing sample expert Andrea Hendrickson. In an adventure that Jumped from store-to-store, she was able to practice some of Hendrickson's techniques and develop a new-found appreciation for grocery store sampling.

Carly Barrett,
a public relations major, would like to thank everyone who helped her see the artistic beauty of the tattoo world. Though absent of tattoos, she understands why so many support this craft.

The secret to replicating a 400-year-old bentwood box is patience and determination. Bobbie Egan explores the age-old Native art form of using steam to bend wood.

Kristie Aukofer,
a senior public relations major, hopes that her eye opening experience will encourage others to explore the beautiful outdoors and enjoy the existing area hot springs while they can.

Angie Bring
thanks Greg for buying the Enrique Iglesias stickers she used to decorate her Klipsun computer with.
visions of Enrique and the gaze of his chocolate brown eyes, made the endless hours in front of the computer tolerable for this senior public relations major.

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The first Lummi Native in three generations to master the art of bentwood box making, Felix Solomon has revived a cultural tradition. **Bobbie Egan** tells how this local artist and business owner has carved a deep appreciation for his creative roots. Photos by Bobbie Egan.
Rails of curled cedar wood chips cover the brown-carpeted floor of Felix Solomon's single-wide trailer. The 12-foot-long scattered trail leads to a small, teal-colored studio where red and yellow cedar boxes in various stages of completion line the wall.

Solomon, 44, a Lummi tribal member, has revived the lost art of bentwood box making, a Northwest coastal Native tradition. Bentwood box making is a common art form for northern tribes, British Columbian Haida, and for many southern Alaska tribes.

Northwest Natives typically used the bentwood box for ceremonial containers, urns and fishing lure containers. Since then, as the tradition is passed from generation to generation and from one artist to another, the seamless box has gained heightened attention among art collectors.

The boxes, usually made from red cedar or alder, aren't hard to find at Native American galleries throughout the Northwest. But Solomon, whose grandfather was part Haida, claims he is the first Lummi tribal member to carve the seamless boxes in more than three generations. And few would argue.

Lummi oral historian Bill James says he cannot recall the last Lummi native to carve bentwood boxes. He credits Solomon's artistic talent to his Haida heritage.

While most of Solomon's current customers tend to be art collectors, members from both the Nooksack and Lummi tribes purchase his smaller boxes to use as urns during ceremonial funerals.

His passion for bentwood box carving sets Solomon apart from other Lummi artists who practice more common Native arts like totem, mask and jewelry carving and basket weaving.

Learning to carve and bend wood didn't come naturally to Solomon. Like his father and grandfather, he spent 23 years fishing for salmon, halibut and cod in Washington and Alaska. Though Solomon had grown accustomed to hard physical labor, the declining fishing industry forced him to reconsider his profession.

For the last eight years, Solomon has operated Felix's Fish-n-Stuff out of a purple fifth-wheel trailer he hitchs to a rusty, 250-ton Ford truck. He has an almost cult-like following at the Northwest Indian College, where he serves deep-fried cod and halibut. His fry bread, drenched in hot butter, is as large as a dinner plate.

"Cooking pays the bills and I enjoy interacting with people," he says. "I don't want to turn (carving) into a living. It would be scary to mass-produce boxes every day. I carve because it's in my blood, not because it's all I do."

Despite being mostly self-taught, Solomon credits much of his success to his teachers and fellow Native artists Gloria Goodrich and master carver Scott Jensen.
You can see Felix in his art.
His work represents a lot of love.
It is powerful, but gentle.
That's what makes him a great carver.

Gloria Goodrich
Northwest Native coastal artist

(Above) Master carver Scott Jensen has been exploring and interpreting Northwest coastal Native art for more than 20 years. He holds a cow hide satchel. (Top) Carver Felix Solomon works quickly to bend the final kerf of a steamed red cedar plank.

Carver Felix Solomon's bentwood boxes often are inspired replications of Northwest Native masters’ work from centuries ago.
"You can see Felix in his art," Goodrich says. "His work represents a lot of love. It is powerful, but gentle. That’s what makes him a great carver."

Although Goodrich, 46, teaches Solomon detailed relief carving and painting, both she and Solomon credit most of their expertise to Jensen.

Solomon says he still remembers bringing his first carving, an oddly-shaped 12-inch bear rattle to Jensen five years ago, after months of carving.

"I don’t know what (Jensen) thought about that rattle," Solomon says, chuckling. "He never did tell me, but he agreed to show me carving techniques."

Jensen began his artistic career much like Solomon, working the arts-and-crafts circuits and small community art shows across Washington and Oregon. Since then, he has spent his days working from his two-story Lummi Island studio. He sells masks, totem poles and boxes exclusively through the Stonington Gallery in Seattle.

Native coastal art has a complex 10,000-year history, which took Jensen years to comprehend. Jensen says serious students of Native coastal art, like Solomon, spend endless hours studying the carving techniques of ancient master carvers. He recalls seeing a Tingit bentwood box at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC six months after he began carving masks, from ancient master carvers. He recalls seeing an 8-by-10-inch laminated photo of that weathered 400-year-old Tingit box sits propped against an identical red cedar box, one of the first boxes Solomon carved.

An 8-by-10-inch laminated photo of that weathered 400-year-old Tingit box sits propped against an identical red cedar box, one of the first boxes Solomon carved.

Four hundred years ago, the Tlingit native, whose identity is unknown, used the same traditional hand-carved elbowed adz and curved knives as Solomon now uses to carve deep grooves into a freshly cut alder plank.

Solomon says he spent about 10 hours chiseling what started out as a 6-foot-long red cedar plank that he eventually steamed and bent to replicate the photo of the Tingit box.

"So many people think I just carve a design from memory, but hours of thought and sketching go into everything I make," he explains.

Few bentwood box makers steam wood the way native ancestors did. Natives dug three fire pits, one for each kerf—the carved area where the corners are bent. After the fire was hot, they wrapped the plank in wet seaweed and covered it with sand to cook it.

Today, bentwood box makers place pre-carved planks in plastic visquine bags sealed with silver duct tape. Steam flows into the airtight bags through a one-inch thick lynch tube. Depending on the type of wood, Solomon says steaming a plank takes anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour and a half.

Making the walls of a box out of one plank of green, or hard, wood involves many steps. Before a plank can be steamed, the kerfs must be thinly cut across the plank to form a 90-degree angle, so the bent corners will seal together when the wood dries.

The inside of the box has to be chiseled down before the box is bent. Then the plank soaks for as long as one week before being steamed.

After 45 minutes of steaming an old-growth red cedar plank he got from a lumber mill in Concrete, Solomon opens the bag with orange, heat-resistant gloves. As a cloud of steam escapes the 6-foot-long bag, he realizes the plank isn’t ready to be bent, after all. He pulls out a curved blade knife and whittles the kerf’s thickness down to four or five centimeters.

"Steaming a plank teaches me patience," Solomon says smiling, his breath labored after working quickly. "You can’t rush it."

After another 25 minutes, the plank is ready. Solomon lays the hot plank on his table, working quickly so the plank won’t lose its steam and flexibility. Beads of perspiration run down his forehead and into his long black hair as he pushes the kerfs together to form the box’s sides.

After the sides are bent, he cinches the edges together with bar clamps that help the corners dry tightly together.

After the box has dried, Solomon uses half-inch wooden pegs or sinew to sew the first corner to the last. He fits the bottom using the same method. Even with the frame nearly complete, Solomon has days of carving and painting remaining.

He tacks translucent sheets of sketches to his workroom’s walls, where dozens of handmade straight knives and gauges lay covered with a dusting of cedar chips.

"Carving is a learned behavior for me," he says. "It teaches me much more than carving. It helps me get through my thoughts. Even though I’m replicating work, (carving) still takes a lot of self-expression."

After the plank is steamed, the bottom and sides are sewn together, and the exterior design is carved, one box is complete. It stands about 12 inches high and six inches wide.

Its form and design hardly stray from the traditional boxes carved hundreds of years ago. The only difference, Solomon says, probably will be how the box is used. The box exudes elegance and skill, but does not sacrifice his respect for the traditional visual language.

In the four years Solomon has been traveling the local artist circuit, selling his boxes and warrior masks, he has gained his peers’ admiration and respect. His boxes have earned him a place in Lon Schleining’s recently published book on American boxes called Treasure Chests: The Legacy of Extraordinary Boxes.

Although Solomon doesn’t describe himself as a full-time artist, he certainly has carved his niche in life.
In an industry that caters to big names and big bucks, success as an independent filmmaker is a rare feat. Jeff Lechtanski recounts one Northwest independent filmmaker's journey from high school stagehand to the red-carpet premiere of his film *Counting Days*. Photos courtesy Brian Young.
His appearance is in constant transition. Sure, he can be described as Caucasian, medium height, medium build, brown hair and brown eyes. These are the consistent elements. It is in the details — the hair length, the facial hair and the clothes — that Brian Young, 39, changes who he is.

Young is a writer, a director and a producer for both stage and screen, but it is his role as an actor that requires his appearance to constantly change.

The Mount Vernon resident currently is sporting muttonchops for his role as Scrooge in LaConnor’s Maple Hall production of *A Christmas Carol*, which he also is directing.

“I’ll be shaving my head for my next role,” Young says. His next project is the lead role in a feature-length independent film.

“As I started to get more serious as a performer, I learned that changing my appearance helps me get into character, helps me feel the character,” he says. “Also, as a director, I understand that I owe it to the production.”

Young has been in the performing arts field for 25 years, doing everything from sound, lights and directing to acting in movies, in plays and in national commercials, including one for Ford Motor Company.

“I do both theater and film, but film is a lot more intense,” Young says. “You’re spending a lot more money, there are multiple takes of intense and emotional scenes and there are many more technical things to deal with than in a stage play.”

Young’s journey into film production began at Kamiakin High School in Kennewick, Wash. Through studying drama, he says, he discovered he would have to learn how to build sets and work with props, lighting and sound before he could perform onstage.

“I have always been interested in the technical aspect of film production,” he says. Young studied photography, graphics and design, storyboarding and English in high school.

“All of these kind of get together to make this work,” he says.

While learning the basics of dramatic production, he discovered some older classmates were making movies.

“They were out there making movies on the weekend, these goofy three-minute student films,” Young says. “So I started to learn with them.”

He learned quickly and soon started writing scripts and producing his own small films.

Young’s first experience with filmmaking came in 1979 when he was 17. He had an idea for a short film about the Hindenburg, the hydrogen-filled airship that crashed in New Jersey in 1937, and he knew the Pasco airport in the Tri-Cities had just built a new wing not yet open to the public.

“I called and asked if I could come in on a Saturday and shoot a short film,” he explains. “And they said, ‘Sure, as long as you don’t go out on the runway.’”

Young says he wanted to have cars from the era of the Hindenburg crash, to add background for the film.

“I called this classic car club and asked if they had some cars I could use, because this was a period piece,” Young says. “What else do they have these cars for? To show them off.”

The car club granted his request.

Young recalled arriving early on the morning of production. As he was setting up his equipment, he looked out just in time to see 30 classic cars pulling into the airport.

“It was like a parade,” he says, smiling. “All of these people were stopping to see all of these cool old cars — and they were there for me — a 17-year-old kid directing like 40 adults and 30 classic cars. People want to help, if just to say they were in a movie.”

In 1998, Young decided he wanted to independently produce a feature-length film but was informed the odds were not in his favor.

“The numbers were not with us,” he says, shaking his head. “We kept hearing that only 5 percent of people that start this kind of thing actually finish.”

He says essentially, an independent filmmaker does not work under the studio system of getting money to produce a product. Whether during the screenwriting phase or in the middle of production, feature-length independent films typically go unfinished.

“It was a heck of an undertaking and we were often told, ‘You will not finish this,’” he says. “There are cans and cans of exposed film sitting in basements and studios because people just ran out of money.”

But Young persisted. He spent about a year writing the script and three weeks taping at locations in Mount Vernon and Skagit County. Editing the film took another year. He called the finished product *Counting Days*.

“It’s about a man’s journey coming to grips with a past of extreme abuse at the hands of his father and the healing that must occur for him to move on in life,” Young says. “I had too many friends who knew a victim, or were once a victim of sexual abuse. My family was the opposite of the one in the film, so, it was interesting to walk in someone else’s shoes who didn’t have the same positive upbringing.”

Young cast himself as the male lead in the film and asked if they had some cars he could use, because this was a period piece. The car club granted his request and he was able to use 30 classic cars from the era of the Hindenburg crash to add background for the film. He called the finished product *Counting Days*. It’s about a man’s journey coming to grips with a past of extreme abuse at the hands of his father and the healing that must occur for him to move on in life. Young says he had too many friends who knew a victim, or were once a victim of sexual abuse. His family was the opposite of the one in the film, so it was interesting to walk in someone else’s shoes who didn’t have the same positive upbringing.
lead, but still needed to find an actress for the female lead. A colleague working on the film saw actress Gladis Jimenez on the CBS soap opera *The Young and The Restless*. She told Young that Jimenez was perfect for the role. Trusting his associate’s judgment, Young sent an e-mail to CBS, not really expecting a response.

“I was sure they get hundreds of this type of e-mail,” Young says. “But I got a reply in like 10 minutes. They sent me her bio and contact information.”

After viewing samples of Jimenez’s work, he decided she was perfect for the female lead. Young began negotiating with her agent, and just two weeks before the start of production, all the contracts were signed. Young had to work fast because Jimenez was only under contract to work for two weeks.

“She was picked up at the airport at 2 (p.m.), and she was on the set being filmed at 4,” he recalls. “She is a professional. We shot 93 scenes at 22 locations in 17 days.”

While Hollywood studio productions can devote many months to filming a movie, independent productions typically work much faster, Young says.

In addition to employing professional actors and technicians, independent film productions can serve as learning experiences for people new to the business, Young says.

In 1998, after reading a newspaper article about Young in the *Skagit Valley Herald*, Jennifer Erholm, 30, a part-time actress and a newcomer to the Northwest arts community, telephoned Young. She was interested in how movies were made and volunteered to help Young with his work.

“Jennifer has a lot of energy,” Young says. “And enthusiasm goes a long way when you’re not making money.”

Erholm later served as a production assistant and stand-in for *Counting Days*.

“He had a definite vision,” she says. “I was pretty much a grunt worker, but he was really into helping people get the most out of the experience. He was open to ideas and questions — that’s why I was there, so I could see how it all works.”

On June 21, 2000, Young arrived in a limousine for his film’s premiere at Mount Vernon’s Lincoln Theater, which seats 500 people. Photographers were lined up on the sidewalk. There was even a red carpet.

“It was totally what you would expect with a movie premiere,” Erholm says. “People were dressed up. It was not your typical night at the movies.”

It was a packed house, and the audience gave the film a standing ovation, she says.

In one weekend, three nights total, *Counting Days* produced the second-highest gross profit in Lincoln Theater’s history.

“We are second to (the Academy Award-winning) *Life Is Beautiful*,” Young says. “It gives me the feeling that I can actually produce something people will want to come watch.”

*Counting Days* played at the Pickford for a week last June.

“At the Pickford Cinema, (in Bellingham) we four-walled it,” he says. “That is where you rent the theater, play the movie and promote it yourself. If you make money ... great. If you don’t, too bad.”
While it did not set any records at the box office, both Young and the theater were able to cover their expenses, and his film drew more attendance than the nationally-released films shown at the Pickford the weeks before and after, Young says. Even with the film completed and premiered, Young still faces decisions. He is trying to get widespread distribution for his movie.

"As an independent filmmaker, you have to decide whether you relinquish control for money, or be truly independent," he says. He explains that in a studio system, as is the case with most Hollywood films, executives pick a project and place someone at the helm. Most projects do not originate and get produced by one person or even one group. The director or writer only has control over one aspect of the film. The resulting product often is different than originally planned.

He says marketing aspects, such as when the film will be released, who will have the lead role and who will appear on the posters, have to be worked out before studio productions even begin.

"But then there are (films) like Schindler's List," Young says. "Every minute of that film is Spielberg's passion — you can see it," he says, looking up at the ceiling, as if picturing the film in his head. "That is where every filmmaker would love to be.

"But Hollywood is driven by money. The bottom line is that Hollywood looks at the bottom line," Young says. "If they can find a way to save $10,000, they will do it."

Washington state's movie industry is virtually destroyed because of the advantages of filming in Vancouver, British Columbia, he says. The dollar exchange in favor of the United States. Also Canadian hotels supply free rooms and meals to lure big name talent, and many Canadian cities offer tax breaks to movie productions.

"I bet there are 200 studio productions going on there right now, in comparison to virtually none in Washington," Young says.

But, he says, like most communities, Mount Vernon has great resources and independent filmmakers simply have to learn how to use them. Many people will participate or allow filming just to have their building or possessions in a movie.

"The closer you get to Los Angeles, things get more difficult to find, and in Hollywood everything has a price," he says.

"I found a person with (a) Czech MiG jet that I can use for free," he says. He plans to use the fighter jet in an action-thriller he is currently writing. "That's a $1 million prop that I just asked if I could use in a movie. The owner said 'yes.'"

He says as much as Hollywood is interested in saving money, the industry typically spends much more than independent projects and both groups are attempting to attract the same consumer.

"It is tough for new filmmakers when you are up against Hollywood's star power and the special effects blockbusters the public is used to," Young says. "Here I am, out there competing against The Matrix." ☮

“As an independent filmmaker, you have to decide whether you relinquish control for money, or be truly independent.”

Brian Young
Northwest independent filmmaker
Two years ago, animal rights activists burglarized Western's animal research labs. Now, Angie Bring follows a paper trail to the critters in Western's basement. Photos courtesy Michael Shepard.

The Lab Down Under

To unlock the double doors that hide the animal labs in Miller Hall's basement, Western psychology professors must enter their codes on the keypad. The doors open into a hallway lined several labs and offices. In one lab, dedicated to research involving rats, a black maze, a Costco-size bag of chocolate chips and scales decorate the counter.

In a neighboring room, two metal instruments and a variety of scissors used to perform brain surgery on rats cover the table. The rats' cages are in another room, and albino rabbits' cages are in another. The primate room, equipped to house up to six macaque monkeys, is at the end of the hall. Presently, the room remains empty, awaiting the arrival of more macaque monkeys.

Last spring, Western traded its five macaque monkeys for younger animals at the University of Washington, said Geri Walker, director of Western's Bureau of Faculty Research. They are now in a breeding program and will never again be used for research.

Walker said the monkeys became too old and too aggressive to handle. On Dec. 11, 1998, an inspection reported that one monkey had died and another was ill. According to a follow-up report, the monkey's cause of death was undetermined.

"The last monkeys we traded, we got a letter from the UW that said they were impressed with how easy it was to bring those animals into their facility," Walker said. "It said they were very sociable and happy."

Western's primate room is always locked, unlike the primate research facility at Central Washington University, which offers public tours.

The basement labs' security tightened after one night two years ago. On Oct. 23, 1999, Animal Liberation Front (ALF) members stole four rabbits and 37 rats being used for research, University Assistant Police Chief Dave Doughty said. Using sledgehammers to enter the offices, they found a key ring to the labs, spray painted walls with "Vegan Power" and "Thanks for the keys," scattered animal cages and poured muriatic acid all over the offices. The intruders made a feeble attempt to get into the primate room but didn't succeed, he said.

"They had a key," Doughty said. "But I think they were smart enough to know that bunnies and mice, you can handle, but raging monkeys are a bit more dangerous."

The ALF members left the lab without being discovered and no one has been charged, Doughty said.

Today, the offices and labs show no signs of the vandalism. Since Western is self-insured, the university paid for the cleanup and damages, valued at approximately $15,000, Doughty said. Additionally, Western pays $1,000 to 2,000 for care and food for the rats, said Ruth Hackler, psychology department administrative assistant.
Although Western’s Associated Students club, Western Animal Rights Network (WARN) wasn’t involved in the break-in, they have protested Miller Hall’s animal lab.

Western student Michael Shepard and other WARN members researched the psychology labs from 1998 to 2000. They interviewed a former Western lab technician, read faculty proposals for animal research, and asked doctors for second opinions on the proposals as they began to protest the labs.

At the time, Western professors were experimenting solely to teach students how to conduct animal experiments but were not uncovering new data about human diseases, Shepard said.

Shepard and other WARN members took their concerns to the Associated Students board on March 3, 2001, hoping to end the use of animals when other methods would suffice. WARN members argued biology videos, in vitro experiments and computer simulation could be used effectively to prepare students for future research on animals.

Merle Prim, the psychology lab director, Ronald Kleinknecht, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and psychology students also spoke in front of the board, supporting animal use. According to the board minutes, Prim argued animal experimentation at Western prepared students for future animal research and thus the research should be preserved. Prim did not return any of several telephone and e-mail requests for comment.

In following weeks, board members toured the Miller Hall labs, and on April 7, 1999, they passed a motion supporting implementation of “superior non-animal alternatives” as approved by the psychology department. Since the A.S. Board is only a student group, the resolution gave WARN the board’s support, but didn’t stop the animal experiments and research.

Shepard stressed he considered the activity in Miller Hall to be animal experimentation—not research. He cited one of Prim’s experiments with albino rabbits as particularly offensive. Researchers cut a hole in rabbits’ skulls, implanted electrodes into their brains and left the holes exposed, Shepard said.

Researchers then monitored the rabbit brains’ responses to stimuli, said Wayne Landis, the chair of the Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC), the group that monitors Western’s psychology labs.

“The brain has no pain receptors, so the animal doesn’t seem to care at all,” Landis said.

Shepard also said captive primates, like the monkeys Prim used, experience high levels of neurological damage caused by living in captivity. He said they are notorious for biting their cages, their fingers and their toes, and for masturbating excessively. Additionally, they suffer from psychological stress caused by confinement in such an unnatural environment and subjection to experimentation.

Although Shepard said he opposes all research on animals, he differentiates between animal experimentation and the use of animals to discover cures for human diseases.

“I don’t believe the human race should think of themselves as so highly superior and take another species and experiment on it without consent, but at the same time I’m a realist,” he said. “I choose my battles. I’m not going to take on the University of Washington’s cancer research center, but when it comes to Western, I don’t feel the labs are justifiable.”

When Shepard took an animal physiology course at Western, he practiced what he has preached. Instead of participating in traditional animal dissection, he and three friends used videos, charts, diagrams and computer simulations to learn what the other students learned through traditional dissections.

However, Landis said handling animals is crucial to learning science and can’t be replaced effectively.

“The reason you have animals is to teach people how to do science, which includes experimentation,” he said. “And you can’t do that on a computer screen. You have to get in there and do it. You have to handle the animals—reading about it is not the same.”

When Shepard and WARN members concluded their research early in 2000, Western professor Janet Finlay had just set up her lab on campus. Finlay, whose
research is funded through grants, uses animals to discover new data about schizophrenia. Shepard said he wasn’t familiar with Finlay’s research and didn’t have an opinion about it.

Currently, Finlay tests whether the changes in brain chemistry can lead to brain abnormalities such as schizophrenia. Although evidence shows structural abnormalities exist in the brains of schizophrenics, Finlay said scientists don’t understand how the abnormalities impair brain functioning.

Finlay defends using animals to introduce students to animal research.

“I think it is an incredible opportunity for students,” Finlay said. “It is very difficult to get into graduate school without lab experience.”

Biopsychology major Sita Symonette, 21, has worked with Finlay for two years. She is one of three undergraduate students, one graduate student and two research assistants who aid Finlay in her research. She said she is learning to perform brain surgery on rats in order to create aspects of a schizophrenic’s brain as a model to study.

Researchers then test the rats’ memories to try to understand the correlation between memory and schizophrenia.

“Once we know what’s going on, we can test novel treatment strategies,” Finlay said.

Finlay said her goal is to improve the treatment of schizophrenia. Her long-term goal is to cure the illness, but she said that won’t happen in her lifetime.

All Western student and faculty researchers who use animals must submit a proposal, to explain the purpose and justification for using animals. Western’s ACUC reviews the proposals to determine if they’re valid, Walker said.

In addition to Walker and Landis, a UW veterinarian and a Bellingham elementary school teacher are also ACUC members.

She said Prim doesn’t need a proposal to have monkeys on campus; he only needs to submit a proposal if the monkeys will be involved in research or experimentation. The cost of the monkeys is covered by a $2,000 non-Western grant, Hackler said.

Prim’s most recent proposal, which was denied, was in the summer of 1997. He proposed to test six monkeys’ learning abilities, then remove the front portion of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, and test the monkeys’ learning abilities again and compare their responses with the previous tests. He then would euthanize the monkeys. He never explained exactly what results this experiment would produce.

The ACUC approved the initial learning abilities tests, but denied Prim permission to perform the brain surgery and euthanasia. The committee researched and consulted specialists in behavioral testing and primate research to review the protocol before it denied Prim’s request. The ACUC members determined Prim could use rats to examine the prefrontal cortex’s role in working memory instead of the primates. They cited the Animal Welfare Act regulation that requires researchers use the least evolutionarily developed animal possible.

Along with denying or approving proposals for animal research, the ACUC inspects the Miller Hall animal labs twice each year.

“What the committee looks at is how the animals are being housed, if the animals are healthy and whether researchers are following regulations,” Walker said.

The Animal Welfare Act establishes the regulations researchers

On Oct. 23, 1999, Animal Liberation Front members broke into the Miller Hall basement, ransacked offices, spray painted walls and stole 37 rats and four rabbits to protest the animal research at Western.

Rabbits are fitted with electrodes that protrude from exposed portions of their brains. However, their brains don’t have pain receptors, so they don’t feel anything. Students test the rabbits for their responses to stimuli.
must follow for housing, feeding and caring for the animals.

For example, the rat cages must have enough bedding to allow the animals to burrow and must always have water available and the rooms must be kept at a certain temperature. The monkeys must be kept mentally stimulated with different toys to play with to keep them happy, Walker said.

The ACUC conducted its most recent inspection of the animal labs in June 2001. According to the June 5, 2001 ACUC minutes, the animal labs were clean and odor free, and the animals were healthy.

The ACUC inspections haven’t always reported the lab condition acceptable. The Dec. 11, 1998 inspection noted that the rats had no access to water when the committee visited, and their cages were dirty.

According to the report, the primate room was clean. Walker said the primate room is similar in size to her office in Old Main, which is approximately 30 square feet. She said it includes one large cage divided into three sections. Two monkeys live in each section.

“They are put together according to who gets along best,” Walker said. “Many times it’s by size.”

In addition to the ACUC, U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians perform unannounced inspections on the labs. The last USDA inspection was Sept. 14, 1999.

In 1997, the Department of Agriculture reported researchers were using more than 1.2 million animals in the United States, said Susan Adler, a spokesperson for the Washington Association for Biomedical Research, a group that educates the public about the benefits of animal research. This number doesn’t include rodents, which aren’t required to be counted. Primates compile less than one percent of all research animals. Adler said, in 1997, Washington researchers used 888 primates. Rodents comprise 90 percent of research animals, she said.

Mike Mana, who is Finlay’s husband and a psychology professor, also uses rats to study the relationship between aging and memory loss. Mana uses tests and mazes to discover a relationship between the rats’ ages, changes in their brain chemistry and their ability to remember their way through the mazes.

Western student Sarah Frame, 21, worked inMana’s lab fall quarter and considers herself an animal lover. She said she is not ashamed or shy about her participation in animal research.

Frame, a vegetarian, shudders when she sees a dish of meat. Her stomach turns at the thought of eating a once-live animal. At the same time, she is confident about her participation in animal testing.

“A lot of people think the animals suffer, but they don’t,” she said. “They are fat and happy and well fed.”

Frame admits she has grown attached to the rats as one grows attached to personal pets.

“We decided not to name them — we thought it’d be too personal," she said. “They have numbers, but I usually just call them all George. When it’s one rat’s turn to go through the maze, I pick it up and say, ‘Let’s go swimming, George.’”

Last year, Symonette went to a conference with Finlay and met parents whose children have schizophrenia. She said the conference made her realize the importance of her research.

“I love animals myself,” Symonette said. “I’m really an animal person. But I know if my kid had schizophrenia, I’d hope someone was doing research to help cure it.”

Adler said many don’t realize the connection between the hope for cures and the way the biomedical process works.

“One must look at how the whole living system operates,” she said. “And that’s why you have to use an animal.”

Landis said he condemns animal rights activists who promote releasing the animals used in labs and in research. He said the animals are bred and live multiple generations in the laboratory and don’t survive outside the labs.

“The animals are domestic in so many ways; releasing the animals is essentially condemning them to death,” he said.

Landis said if people don’t like the animal research being conducted on Western’s campus, they should talk to the ACUC.

“But don’t hurt the animals,” he said. “The animals shouldn’t suffer.”

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“[I don’t believe the human race should think of themselves as so highly superior and take another species and experiment on it without consent.]”

Michael Shepard
Former coordinator
Western Animal Rights Network
Many people today suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder. James Cassill looks at the use of ADD drugs such as Ritalin and Adderall and finds that many students use this easily accessible drug as a study aid — unaware of the side effects. Photo illustrations by Stephanie Kosonen.

One Saturday morning, just two days before spring finals week, Susan*, a Western senior, began her morning routine. She took a quick shower, put on her makeup, ate a bowl of Lucky Charms and then took her medication.

As she reached for her Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) pills, she realized she had only two Adderall pills left. Two weeks had passed since Susan last had her monthly Adderall prescription filled. However, her doctor in Tacoma had no problem satisfying her request two weeks early.

Susan's need for an early prescription that morning wasn't due to her overusing her medication, and the pills weren't spilled or lost in the cushions of her couch.

Susan illegally sells her Adderall and Ritalin pills to Western students for studying and recreational purposes.

Susan, 22, was diagnosed with ADD during her freshman year at Western. Her doctor wrote a prescription for two Adderall pills per day (40 mg) and one Ritalin pill (5 mg) at night. One prescription carries 60 Adderall pills and 200 Ritalin pills. She said she takes only one Adderall per day and doesn't take Ritalin at all.

With the exception of a $10 copay, her medical insurance pays for the pills, which she sells for a near 100 percent profit. She charges $2 per Ritalin pill, $5 for one Adderall pill and $10 for three Adderall to her friends. She said one Adderall is comparable to four Ritalin.

Susan has sold Ritalin and Adderall for two years to more than 20 different customers, most of whom Western students. She said she has six "regulars" who generate $60 to $150 in revenue, depending on the time of the school year. During midterms and finals, the demand for the drugs increases because studying and sleep deprivation become more intense. During these times, she raises the Adderall price to $10 a pill.

"If I run out of pills, I just ask for more," Susan said. "My doctor is prescription happy and just gives them to me, no questions asked."

Both Ritalin and Adderall are widely prescribed to treat ADD and a similar condition Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Sales of Ritalin, also known as methylphenidate, have been declining for years as doctors prescribe cheaper, generic versions of the drug approved in 1955. In the 1960s, Adderall was marketed as a weight-loss drug. In 1999, Adderall surpassed Ritalin as the most-prescribed drug for ADD and ADHD.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Ritalin, Adderall and similar drugs are known as Schedule II controlled substances. They are the most addictive substances that are legal with a prescription. Schedule I drugs such as heroin, cocaine and LSD, are illegal.

Problems with Schedule II drugs have escalated. The DEA says Ritalin, Adderall and other stimulants are among the most frequently stolen prescription drugs. Some students crush and snort these pills to achieve a speed-like high. In Orem, Utah, an elementary school principal was sentenced to 30 days in jail after he stole his students' Ritalin pills and replaced them with sugar pills.

Lt. Dac Jamison of the Bellingham Police Department said Ritalin and Adderall have become some of the most abused illegal stimulants on Western's campus. Jamison does not believe these drugs will help students study, but only will make them feel better.

*In protecting the confidentiality of our sources, Klipsun has changed the names of each person involved in the drug usage.
for a short time about the workload ahead.

Jamison warns students that even though these are prescription drugs, the penalties for abuse remain severe. Selling these drugs is considered a felony and results in jail time for anyone caught. Buying them is considered possession of a Schedule II substance without a prescription. Consequences can result in anything from jail time to a large fine and a conviction record, but courts decide penalties based on prior criminal record.

Susan, a psychology major who maintains nearly a 4.0 GPA, said she only takes Adderall to enhance concentration and performance in her schoolwork and her part-time job as a waitress.

"It allows you to stay awake, concentrate on the task at hand more efficiently and remember the information better," she said.

She said her customers use Adderall and Ritalin primarily for academic reasons, but sometimes they also have fun using it recreationally.

"When I go out partying Adderall makes me more social and keeps me awake," Western senior Christopher* said. "If you’re ever feeling really good or energetic, that’s how you feel all the time when you’re on it, especially when you go out."

Christopher is one of Susan’s customers who normally has trouble staying awake in his classes. He said he takes about four Adderall per week and an occasional Ritalin or two.

"It’s kind of like having an IV of coffee in your arm all day," he said. "You don’t fall asleep, plain and simple."

Susan doesn’t think her users are addicted to Adderall and Ritalin, but rather they depend on the drugs to achieve their desired performance level.

"Taking Adderall and Ritalin is like a cross between cocaine and Ecstasy without the runny nose or tight jaw," said Western senior Logan*, another of Susan’s customers, who was actually studying on Adderall during the time of the interview.

"I’d recommend the drugs to anyone who needs to stay up all night and cram a large amount of information in a short amount of time," Logan said.

Some students take these drugs for the high and others take it to get by," said Elva Giddings, coordinator of Western’s drug and alcohol consultation and assessment services. "The addictiveness aspect usually comes from recreational use rather than studying purposes."

Now, parents are relying on giving their children Ritalin, Adderall and other Schedule II drugs in place of traditional forms of discipline. This has created a growing illegal traffic in what are potent and dangerous speed-like stimulants.

"As a society, we are very quick to say ‘Here, take this pill’," Giddings said. "Instead of effort and guidance by parents and teachers, they easily resort to a pill that a child is too young to have control over."

According to IMS Health, a health care information company, doctors wrote more than 20 million monthly prescriptions for the Schedule II stimulants last year. Most prescriptions were written for children, especially boys. The drugs’ sales last year rose to $758 million, 13 percent more than 1999.

Dr. Robert Watson, a psychiatrist at Western’s student health center, said awareness of the disorders has increased because physicians can better recognize the symptoms of ADD and ADHD.

According to a community-based study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the prevalence of ADD/ADHD (both under the same survey) is 4 to 12 percent. In a school-based study, the percentages narrowed, ranging from 6 to 9 percent.

The first step in diagnosing a child or an adult for these conditions is to perform a clinical interview. Doctors and psychiatrists test their patients using standard diagnostic criteria for ADD and ADHD. For ADD, they look for a majority of symptoms of inattention that have persisted for at least six months to a degree that is inconsistent with developmental level. Symptoms include failure to give close attention to details, tendencencies to make careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities, and difficulty sustaining attention in tasks. Often people don’t seem to listen when spoken to directly and fail to finish schoolwork, chores or workplace duties. They are usually forgetful, easily distracted and disorganized.

To diagnose ADHD, doctors and psychiatrists look for a majority of symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity in the same six-month time frame, including fidgeting with hands or feet or squirming in the seat. People with ADHD often leave their seat in classroom or other situations in which remaining seated is expected. Adolescents or
"If I run out of pills, I just ask for more. My doctor is prescription happy and just gives them to me, no questions asked."

Susan
Western Student

adults may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness. People have difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activity quietly, are always "on the go," and talk excessively.

Watson emphasized although people may exhibit the majority of the above symptoms, they may not have the disorders. Any recent traumatic event in one's life could trigger many of these symptoms.

"Looking at your clinical history over time is what makes the diagnosis," Watson said. "There must be evidence of the disorder early in life, usually before the age of seven."

In diagnosing children, it is standard that doctors and psychiatrists first speak to parents and teachers about childhood behavioral experiences.

Watson said examining old report cards usually gives him a good understanding of a child's attentiveness and performance in class. Elementary report cards also include behavioral comments.

Watson said he has seen a rising number of adults diagnosed with ADD or ADHD over the past few years. In the past, Watson said doctors only looked for hyperactivity among youths in school. Now they have broadened the scope to measure attention deficiency in adults that deals with lack of focus and organization.

Used as party drugs, Ritalin and Adderall are especially dangerous, even lethal. According to Current Health 2 magazine, in Roanoke, Va., a 19-year-old died after snorting crushed Ritalin pills at a party one night in April 1995. Although he was resuscitated and put on life support at a hospital emergency room, he died 18 hours later. The DEA also has reported deaths in Mississippi and Virginia associated with snorting these stimulants. When taken for recreational purposes, the effects and addictiveness of these stimulants have been compared to those of speed and cocaine.

Dr. John Pearson, a pharmacist at Bellingham's Barkley Village Haggen, said cocaine is more physically addicting than Ritalin and Adderall, which are more psychologically addictive. Both can be equally harmful to the heart.

"At a young age, anybody could have a congenital heart disorder that normally would not be detected until an older age," Pearson said. "The problem could be triggered by these drugs (cocaine, speed, Adderall and Ritalin) and in turn, could cause the heart to fail at any dosage."

According to Western's Health and Wellness Services, these stimulants, whether taken medicinally or recreationally, could include side effects such as an allergic reaction, an irregular or fast heartbeat, chest pains or very high blood pressure, confusion, insomnia, decreased appetite or weight loss, fever convulsions, vomiting and hallucinations.

University Police Chief Jim Shaw said he can't recall any arrests for prescription drugs sales in the past couple of years.

"I hear about it, it's topical, but we rarely intervene with those types of drugs," Shaw said.

Although the risk of being busted for selling these prescription drugs on campus is low, students must decide whether the risk is worthwhile. Susan said her selling is justified.

"I feel like I would have a whole list of excuses or ways out if I were to be questioned about my prescription drugs," she said. "I am prescribed more Ritalin and Adderall than I could ever take in my whole life, so it doesn't hurt me to help my customers and make some money too."
Alzheimer's disease whitewashes the minds of people, regardless of their race or gender. An estimated 19 million Americans have a family member with the disease. Ryan Bentz searches a Bellingham resident's wrinkled features as he reminisces about a disease that stripped his wife of her ability to remember. Photos courtesy Nate Kunzmann.

On their 60th wedding anniversary, Peg Kunzmann did not recognize her husband, Nate. Not because he looked different. Not because her vision was blurry. She simply did not remember him. To her, he was a stranger who sat down by her at the dinner table and invaded her privacy.

"Who the hell are you?" she asked.

That was just a year ago. Now, as Nate, 85, recalls that day, his chin quivers. Sitting at the head of a rectangular table during one of the many support groups he attends, he takes a deep breath and with a wrinkled finger, traces the spiraled spine of a tattered red notebook. Casting his eyes downward, he fingers the stray corner of a crookedly placed sticker in the center of the notebook's cover. It reads:

Hello! My name is:
Nate

"Nothing prepares you for it," he states matter-of-factly.

Nate is one of the 19 million Americans who have a family member with Alzheimer's disease. As many as 37 million people know someone who has the disease. It has claimed the memories of more than four million Americans.

The Chicago-based Alzheimer's Association's website warns that Alzheimer's is an "equal opportunity disease," meaning it does not discriminate between gender and race. If a cure is not found soon, the website cautions, more than 14 million of today's baby boomers will be afflicted as they grow older within the next 50 years.

"We are in a race against time as the baby boomer generation ages and enters the greatest period of risk for developing Alzheimer's disease," says Alan Stone, the association's CEO and president.

Josselyn Winslow, director of operations at the Bellingham-based Alzheimer's Society of Washington, agrees with Stone that researchers are racing to combat the disease. However, she does not believe it is highly likely that a cure will be found soon. Consequently, the highest priority is to prepare for the massive process of caring for the growing number of people who suffer from the disease.

"There will be a huge chunk of people who will have Alzheimer's," Winslow says. "Each patient requires about four people for proper care. So, for example, if you have 100,000 people in Washington with Alzheimer's, that means you'll need about 400,000 people to care for them."

Winslow says the right proportion of caregivers to patients in Washington is not being met because not as many people are becoming caregivers as are needed.

Dr. Mark Laudenbaum, a Bellingham geriatrician, agrees with Winslow that the problem will become worse as baby boomers outnumber the younger generations and a cure is not yet on the horizon.

"There won't be one isolated cause for Alzheimer's," Laudenbaum notes. "Because of this, a miracle cure within the next half-century would be relatively unlikely. Research on Alzheimer's will progress much like cancer research progresses— in increments."

For Peg, 85, talk of cures and research is meaningless. All she and Nate have left is the present moment.

"I've put it in my mind that I'm going to lose her," Nate says,
his voice cracking with emotion. "I'd say she has a year left — maybe a year and a half."

Although it is considered one of the leading causes of death for American senior citizens, Alzheimer's patients do not die directly from the disease.

"Ultimately, it makes it so people can't take care of themselves," Laudenbaum says.

This opens the door to secondary problems like pneumonia, infections, falls and other complications — all of which can be fatal in the disease's final stages.

Nearly two years ago, when Peg was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Nate's role suddenly shifted from being a husband to being a caregiver for his wife. Nate says for months prior to the diagnosis, he saw the change coming, but did not want to accept the reality.

"I was really hoping that she didn't have Alzheimer's," he admits. "I was pretty well able to cover it up. At that time, though, she didn't sneak out of the house at night."

When Peg began "wandering," the situation grew much more severe than just dealing with forgetfulness and other odd behavior. In the middle of the night, he says, Peg would wake up, sneak out of the house and walk the streets in surrounding neighborhoods. Either the police would find her and bring her home, or Nate would go find her. Once during a rainstorm, he found her huddled under the Lakeway Drive I-5 overpass about five blocks from their home. He had no idea how long she had been out or where she had gone — and neither did she.

After the diagnosis came, Nate accepted it with determination, but his new role was taking its toll on him.

"I had a heart attack," he says. "The doctor said it was stress, or whatever you want to call it."

Less than a year after Peg's diagnosis, Nate was forced to put his wife of more than 61 years into the Cottage at Highgate House in northern Bellingham, a special care facility for Alzheimer's patients. He could no longer manage Peg's increasing symptoms alone. Placing her in the Cottage fundamentally altered the fabric of their lives and their close relationship.

Nate says he pays $4,000 a month for Peg's care. He receives no financial assistance from state or federal funds.

"You work all your life and figure you're going to have a hell of a good life after you retire, and then you have something like this," he says. "Financially, I got it planned so she can be in there for two more years, but I don't think she'll live that long. I really don't."

Inside the home where Nate and Peg have lived since 1946, sepia and black and white images of days past constitute a historical mosaic on the living room's wood-paneled walls. Other dust-blurred pictures stand crammed together like tombstones on end-tables and bookshelves. Piles of file folders and loose papers with Medicaid letterheads sprawl across a desk where Nate's battered red notebook teeters on the corner. One mug with the carcass of a tea bag flopped inside sits next to the kitchen sink.

Sitting in the kitchen, Nate says he often reminisces about the joyful times he and Peg shared.

"We were closest when we were outside, be it hunting, fishing, clam digging, crabbing or anything like that," Nate says. "Hell,
Approximately three out of five days of the week, Peg Kunzmann remembers important events such as her wedding and the birth of her sons. Her husband Nate still sees a spark of remembrance from time to time.

when I tie up my fly poles, or do work on my shotgun, she’ll sit down and help me. In fact, she shot on the men’s rifle team at the sportsman’s club. She was a hell of a good shot.’”

Laughing, he sits back in his chair.

“I hate to admit this, but I would say 90 percent of the time she out fishes me,” he says with a forced laugh. “She has a funny quirk. When she gets her limit, she quits fishing. She puts her pole down and — Jesus! — it’s either snowing, raining, or the wind is blowing and I’m goddamn near freezing to death with only one more fish to catch. And I ask her, I says, ‘Would you give me a hand and help me get my limit? I suppose you got yours.’ She says, ‘Oh yeah.’ She points. ‘There they are.’ She says, ‘Catch your own damn fish.’”

He chuckles and gazes out the window into the backyard. Small crescents of tears pool in the folds of skin beneath his aquamarine eyes. As he blinks, a thin veil of tears intensifies the color in his irises.

“It gets so damn lonesome,” he says. “I long for those days to be here again.”

Now, Nate’s fishing and hunting equipment collects dust in storage. As memories flicker and die in Peg’s mind, so does the fire that drives Nate to do the things he loved. Someday, he may return to fish in Pearrygin Lake, but for now, Nate says, he is dedicated solely to caring for his wife.

“I know it’s happening, and I’ve learned to live with it,” he says. “Sometimes, people don’t realize how tough it is.”

Peg cannot get up and move anywhere on her own and so is confined to a wheelchair, Nate says. During one visit, he found drops of blood on the floor next to her bed and noticed the sheets were soaked with blood on one side. As nurses rushed to care for Peg and change her sheets, they told Nate she had tried to get out of bed, but could not control her body and ended up gashing her arm open. In the days immediately before Peg moved into the Cottage, she became incontinent. Her speech is rarely coherent and nowadays she seldom recognizes her husband. Nate says he has come to the point where he is hesitant for others to visit her, especially on weekends.

“It’s hell,” he says. “It’s a living hell.”

Although Peg now lives in the Cottage, Nate visits her almost every afternoon. In the past nine months, he has missed only six days.

“There are lots of times I’ve been out there and she doesn’t know me,” he says, shaking his head. “The last four or five days she hasn’t known me. I try to reach her or something and — hell, I’ve cried all the way back to town. I can’t even see the road sometimes, because I’m crying so damn hard.”

Every time Nate drives to see her, he tries to think of a story or something he can bring that is tangible to take her mind back to the house — to help her remember. One time his strategy worked particularly well.

While Peg was still at home, every morning, crows gathered on a wire above their house, and every morning, they cawed until either Nate or Peg fed them bread. Since Peg moved to the Cottage, Nate has fed the crows every morning. One morning, a feather drifted down from one of the crow’s wings. Nate grabbed it and tucked it away in his shirt pocket.

That day, he drove out to visit Peg and told her the story, although she did not recognize him. As he recounted the story, he
embellished it so it sounded as though the crow had told Nate to
give his regards to Peg and to tickle her under her chin with the
feather.

"I reached out and started tickling her chin and, hell, it was just
like night and day," he says, his chest heaving with laughter. "You
could see mentally she was okay and you could just see how her
body lit up. By the time I was through, she was laughing and talk­
ing and having a good time. That's when I can reach her, is when I can
think about something to take her back here — the trees and the leaves that
break off, or something like that. Sometimes I can get her to kick back
into normal."

To keep himself busy when not visit­
ing Peg, Nate works to educate others
about Alzheimer's. Armed with a myri­
ad of Internet documents, medical
reports and fact sheets all placed neatly inside his red notebook,
Nate attends more than five support groups in any particular
month in the Bellingham area. At each meeting, he always shares
a few points of wisdom with the other members.

"There's nothing you can do, except bear with it," he says.
"That's why I stay active with the caregivers, because there are so
many people out there who don't know how to handle it."

Nate stresses that caregivers should be patient and loving
toward people who have the disease.

"Do not chastise anybody with Alzheimer's," he says.
"Mentally, they don't know, and it's hurting you more than it is
them. I think one of the greatest things you can do for them is
put your hand on their shoulder. I don't know what it is, but it
does help."

A sense of humor also is helpful, Nate says. In his experiences,
he has found he has better luck getting in touch with patients
than their families have because he suppresses the frustration and
uses his sense of humor to reach them.

"If you can get them to smile — hell, you don't have to get
them to laugh — you've still accomplished something," he says with a
shrug.

Caregivers also should remember to
take care of themselves when dealing
with Alzheimer's patients, Nate says.

LeAnna Bergquist, 83, who attends
one of the support groups Nate attends,
says this is difficult, but absolutely neces­
sary to do.

"When Albert had Alzheimer's, I had
to keep saying to myself, 'I have to take care of myself, too,'" she
says. "This made it easier both on myself and my husband."

Most of all, Nate urges caregivers and families to hold on to
hope.

"I've had a doctor ask me if I've ever contemplated suicide. I
think it's asinine," Nate snorts.

He clenches his fist and gently raps it on the table, emphasizing
his point.

"I'm living on the hope that, damn it, we cured polio, so we will
find a cure for Alzheimer's. And I believe I'm going to live long
enough to see it. That's the first thing I think of when I get up
in the morning."
Just how many free samples can you grab before they tell you to take a hike? **Brittany Sadler** talks to one woman who has spent years finding out. Photos by Jennifer Collins.

In the midst of people hurriedly pushing carts up and down grocery store aisles to complete their weekend shopping, Andrea Hendrickson looks over the prepackaged dips and deli salads in search of samples. “Today is going to be such a great day for sampling,” she says, clapping her hands together in anticipation. “I can already tell.”

While most people enjoy snacking on grocery store samples while shopping, Hendrickson takes sampling to extremes. Hendrickson, 21, an art major at Western, has become a sample connoisseur after four years of serious practice. The promise of a free bakery cookie often sends her scurrying to the grocery store.

“There is an art to it,” she says. “You have to use your wit and charm.”

Hendrickson says she used to go sampling daily with friends, but has cut back in recent years, allowing it to “just happen naturally.” “I don’t go out any more with a ‘let’s go sampling!’ mindset,” she says. “But if you’re hungry, but not sure what you are hungry for, it’s perfect. If you want something sweet, but don’t want to pay for it, you can always get a free cookie.”
Hendrickson is so in tune with the art of sampling, she says she can sense upon arriving whether or not a store will offer samples. She says some stores put off a “stale, cold presence that makes them seem kind of stingy.”

Hendrickson is deceptively thin, making it easy to underestimate the number of samples she can put away. She shoves her hands into the pockets of her brown suede jacket, which is nicely accented with a faux fur collar, and scans the store for any indication of samples. Her deep red hair matches the color of her tennis shoes to perfection.

“We can look, but I can tell they won’t have any samples,” she says, walking into Cost Cutter on Lakeway Drive. She fiddles with a black elastic bracelet wrapped around her wrist and intertwined between her fingers. “It’s so stark in here.”

Contrary to her original prediction, she finds smoked salmon spread and crackers toward the back of the store.

“I always feel this obligation, even if I don’t like the sample, to eat it because they have put it out,” she says as she helps herself to a couple crackers smothered in the light pink, slightly chunky spread. Unfortunately, she finds no other samples to cleanse her pallet of the fishy aftertaste.

Hendrickson says most bakery employees will give out the free cookies reserved for children if older shoppers ask for one, although she occasionally is rejected.

“One place would not allow me to get a cookie, even with my nicest voice,” she says. “I think they caught on to me, because they started putting the cookies in a box that said ‘12 and under.’”

At Cost Cutter, Hendrickson confidently approaches the bakery counter and asks the woman behind it for a cookie sample. After looking Hendrickson up and down with an unamused expression, the woman says she doesn’t have any cookies to give out.

“See, I told you they were stingy,” Hendrickson whispers.

While she says she no longer goes to grocery stores only for freebees, she admits she does go to Costco solely for sample gratification.

Upon arrival at Costco, Hendrickson beelines to the first sampling booth, knowing immediately where it will be located. She says Costco provides a pathway through the demonstration stations, which usually starts with juices and breads and leads into heavier “meaty” samples.

“I usually end up in the meat section and have the taste of meat in my mouth,” she says. “So I like to backtrack to one of my favorite samples so I can leave with that taste in my mouth.”

To Hendrickson, Costco trips are a treat, since she doesn’t have the required membership.

“The beauty of Costco is that they’re all about ‘no limitations,’” she says. “They have sample employees taking shifts and you know they’re not going to run out, so you don’t feel bad about going back again and again — which I do.”

Most grocery stores have limited amounts of samples available, meaning, once the last chip on the platter is dipped, sampling time is over. Costco, however, has a seemingly endless supply.
In fact, the store subcontracts Warehouse Demonstration Services (WDS) to provide people whose main responsibility is to distribute samples with a smile to passersby.

Melva Yeager, a WDS employee, passes out little cups of Idahoan Mashed Potatoes as the first demo of the Costco sample smorgasbord. Yeager, a retired nurse, says she loves her job.

"It's so fun," she says. "There's no stress and you get to meet lots of wonderful people."

Yeager says although she occasionally sees some sample-abusers come through her demo, "it doesn't really matter."

"There's a large supply of samples," she says. "I try to be polite. If they come back too much, I ask them if they wouldn't like to purchase some and take some home with them."

Stacey Blakney, WDS human resources coordinator, says no specific policies exist to discourage excessive sample-snatchers.

"We have to bite our lips and let it happen," Blakney says. "Most (Costco) members are really good about taking one or two samples, though. There are no real problems with people standing there and chowing them all down."

Hendrickson says although she does take multiple samples, she is usually conscientious about leaving some for others. She says if grocery stores only put a single unattended plate out, she usually limits her intake to one or two samples. At Costco, however, she's unconcerned with snatching some extra samples.

"As long as you act somewhat interested in the product, you can usually get away with taking more without them getting annoyed with you," Hendrickson says. "That way, you don't have to pretend to be your evil twin."

After savoring the warm creaminess of the mashed potatoes, Hendrickson moves down the line of demonstrations, from thick and chunky beef stew, to steamed vegetables, to Italian dry salami and toasted butterflake rolls spread with butter.

Gene Teller, a six-year WDS veteran, says he enjoys partaking in sampling as much as the customers do.

"If you don't sample, you can't tell how it is," he says.

Next to Teller, Shirley Wallace distributes Asian barbecued pork. Hendrickson closes in, eager to try the exotic sample.

"You guys are so easily excited," Wallace says. "I wish everyone was this excited about my demo."

Wallace says she enjoys her job because it gives her something to do since she's retired.

A man wearing a shirt with the Costco emblem embroidered across the breast saunters over, walkie-talkie in hand.

"These ladies bothering you?" he asks Wallace with a straight face. Then, cracking a smile he adds, "Well, then feed them!"

Hendrickson moves through the hustle and bustle of the busy Saturday crowd with the ease only a seasoned sampler could display. She says early afternoons on the weekends are the best times to go sampling, because most stores have demos set up.
Blakney says while Costco has demos daily, Saturdays and Sundays are heavier sample days, averaging around 11 demonstration booths.

Hendrickson continues to feast, migrating from the olive oil, balsamic vinegar and bread demo, to the pumpkin cheesecake, to the sweet mini peppers and on to Gala and Red Delicious apples.

Hendrickson says people shouldn’t overlook some of the hidden stations. “People need to know that they should go through the whole store because there are samples all over, and the sample guy back in the toilet paper corner gets left out,” she says.

Besides Costco, Hendrickson says, Haggen is her favorite sampling store. It is the “absolute best” for sample platters, she says, because it always has the biggest variety.

At the Samish Way Haggen, Hendrickson begins her sample quest in the produce department, immediately finding a platter of orange wedges and then a tub of garlic teriyaki almond slices. Then she wanders past the bulk foods to the bakery department.

“Bam! You get back to the bakery and they have stuff out,” Hendrickson says. She grabs a few chocolate chip cookie chunks out of the sample bin as she explains that in the bakery, sample containers often are placed among the stacks of containers for sale, so sample-seekers must always keep an eye out.

Not finding any additional cookie, cake or pastry samples, she strolls up to the bakery counter and peaks around the corner, eyeing a plastic bin of M&M cookies. A short, highly animated man behind the counter quickly walks toward her.

“Would you like a cookie?” he asks, giggling. “Are you a big kid?” He holds out the bin, offering not just a piece, but an entire cookie.

“Did you see that?” she asks with excitement. “I didn’t even have to ask. He just offered. Now that’s service!”

Hendrickson says she’s been known to run back into an unattended bakery and snatch one of the “kid” cookies on more than one occasion. “They usually don’t care,” she says. “They’re cookies they were going to give away for free anyway.”

Hendrickson meanders through the rest of the store, picking out samples of meatballs in red sauce, bagel chips and Thai chicken pizza, which was distributed at the only demonstration stand.

“Did you see all the food groups I got in there?” Hendrickson asks, noting she can often substitute sampling for entire meals.

She says she enjoys sampling at Haggen because she always receives friendly service, which she considers an indication of the store’s generosity. “It’s all about whether or not they are willing to go the extra mile to offer something to their customers,” she says.

“Haggen goes all out,” she says. “And I’m not some conspirator that works for Haggen. I’m just really satisfied with my sampleage.”

The Meridian Street Cost Cutter, unlike the Lakeway store, provides a pleasant experience despite some initial similarity. Walking into the store, Hendrickson eyes a table full of holiday cookies and brownies for sale just inside the entrance, taunting her with sealed packages.

“Hmm, what does that taste like?” she asks sarcastically. “I don’t know. See how they tease you and put them out at the front and then don’t let you try any?”

Finding her way back to the deli, Hendrickson discovers a sample booth, although its attendant is nowhere to be found. She passes by, uninterested in the abandoned station. In the refrigerated section along the back wall, she finds hanging bins filled with small pieces of assorted meats and cheeses, free for the taking.

After eating a few rounds of meat and cheese, she finds a corner with plentiful chip and dip samples. She tries hummus with some crackers and a cream cheese salsa spread with some corn chips.

Finally, Hendrickson nods her head in approval and delivers her verdict: “Cost Cutter on Meridian — not so disappointing. I’m actually surprised and impressed. That was action-packed!”

Fourth-grader Hanna Mutchler and third-grader Breanne Pleadwell sneak heaping spoonfuls of pumpkin cheesecake samples at the Bellingham Costco as Mutchler’s mom Dianne shops. “Eating!” they exclaimed, is their favorite part of the Costco experience.
"It's not bad," said the recipient of this rose tattoo. "I came in here with a headache actually, and after that it's gone."

ART IN THE FLESH

With Old School, Camden Chameleon, Kalamalka and others, Bellingham has no shortage of tattoo studios. Stephanie Kosonen photographs the artists and patrons at several local shops and Carly Barrett tells the story of one man whose ink is more than skin deep.
(Above) Jason, an artist at Old School Tattoo, displays a one-of-a-kind tattoo on his elbow. (Center) His chest bears the image of a dead Virgin Mary with her lips sewn together which fits in with his tattoos' theme on religion.

(Bryan Polinder says his tattoos are like a coat of armor, signifying his life-changing experiences and personal convictions. The seven tattoos covering his body are more than just abstract designs — they represent personal stories and lessons.

Polinder, a professional body piercer at Bellingham's Kalamalka Studio, will show his tattoos to those interested, but chooses to keep the stories behind them to himself.

On the back of Polinder's right calf is a drawing of a female devil and on the opposite calf is a female angel. They contradict the popular saying that evil is always on the left and righteousness is on the right. The reason, he said, for switching the saying is to show that things in life are not always the way people perceive them.

Some of his tattoos make political statements.

"I always wanted a tattoo of a naked woman; one that I felt was beautiful," he said. "The tattoo I decided to have done is not the skinny models that society portrays as the 'ideal woman.' Some of the girls that come to have belly button piercing done ... I think they need to eat more."

All the tattoos on the left side of Polinder's body are done in color; those on the right side of his body are all in black.

One of the first tattoos he ever received shows a sketch of Mickey Mouse dressed in a blue sorcerer's robe, from the classic Disney film "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." He said it was a tattoo from his youth when he was "really into Fantasia stuff.

Polinder's view of tattoos relates to Kalamalka's overall theme, that customers can get any tattoo they choose. "Tattoos are a personal choice and should remain personal," Polinder said. "It's your body."
There are numerous hot springs in the Northwest. Kristie Aukofer talks to students who enjoy the warmth of these natural wonders and finds that they are slowly becoming extinct.

Through pouring rain and howling wind, hikers wonder aloud if the effort is really worth it. Sweating under heavy winter clothing, they shed sweaters and jackets. To lighten their loads, some remove items from their backpacks as they approach the steep vertical climb to the "lobster pot."

Exhausted, they round the last torturous corner and get a glimpse of the steam rising from Scenic Hot Springs, near Stevens Pass ski area on Highway 2. After a while, their noses adjust to the sulfurous smell. Finally, the moment the group has anticipated: A relaxing soak in the soothing hot spring.

This hidden treasure has not been accessible to the public since Nov. 11. A trend of closures due to health and safety concerns is making Northwest hot springs nearly impossible to enjoy.

Prior to Scenic’s closure, University of Washington student Brady Bumgarner, 23, visited the spring three times and said it was a popular spot for young people.

"The road (to Scenic) is nearly gone because of snow erosion," Bumgarner said. "Once you hike up the old forest service road for awhile, a narrow trail emerges that leads hikers up the mountain in a zigzag pattern."

"Just when you thought you couldn't possibly go any further on that vertical nightmare hike, the laughter coming from somewhere in the darkness pushed you forward," he said.

Scenic offered four pools with varying temperatures. But due to the spring’s health and safety violations, King County Sheriff’s Department demolished the decks and stairs, as well as the supports that held the tarped pools together, making access impossible for visitors. Not only is it impossible to use the pools, it also has become illegal. Sheriffs now issue trespassing tickets to those who don’t obey the newly-posted signs announcing the punishment for violating private property rights.

On Nov. 11, 2001, Jim Piper, co-owner of the 40 acres including and surrounding Scenic Hot Springs since 1964, ordered the springs to be destroyed because of a court order. The case, Scenic Hot Springs v. Washington Laws, was brought to court partially due to the makeshift toilet near the springs, which contaminated the pools. The contaminated water was being flushed into the Skykomish River, which contains endangered salmon and steelhead fish.

Liability is another issue. If people were hurt at the spring, they could sue the private property owner. Also, the decks were built without a county building permit and without the property owners’ permission.

Some discussion has surfaced via Internet chat rooms about an interest group, called Friends of Scenic Hot Springs, possibly trying to buy a section of the land from the Pipers on which to keep the springs open, but no plans have been made. Until then, the hot spring will remain closed. Scenic was said to be one of the most dazzling and pristine hot springs in the Pacific Northwest.

"The lobster pot was the top pool and by far the hottest one there," Bumgarner said. "You couldn't sit there too long, or it felt like your insides were going to boil."

Western geochemistry professor Scott Babcock explained that the temperature varies between the lobster pot and the pools below it because of geothermal energy.

"They (springs) form where water from rain or run-off runs down deep into the cracks in the volcano," Babcock said. "The cold water goes down and is heated by hot spots in the Earth and then it's pushed back to the surface with naturally occurring geothermal energy. Where the water comes back to the surface is the place where the pools are then formed."

Hot springs are formed when water seeps into volcanic cracks and resurfaces in pools. Sometimes the stagnant water can pose health risks.
This cycle is similar to the moisture cycle formed by precipitation and evaporation on the Earth's surface, except geothermal energy occurs with the moisture below the surface.

"The more water that circles through this cycle, the hotter the pools will be," Babcock said, explaining why the "lobster pot," at the top of the pool chain, is hotter than the others. The water goes there first and then is passed on to the pools below.

"Sometimes the water can be too hot to enter, like those at Yellowstone National Park," Babcock said. "People could get scalded by the high temperatures if they aren't careful."

The lobster pot usually reaches a temperature of 114 degrees Fahrenheit. The "monster tub," just below the "lobster pot," typically hits 98 degrees Fahrenheit. Long exposure to water this hot can cause health problems.

"People can suffer from heat rashes and skin sensitivity from the minerals in the water," said Dr. Emily Gibson of Western's student health center.

Another health concern the springs present, one that many people don't often think about, is dehydration. Sitting in hot water, dehydrates the body.

When soakers drink alcohol in the springs, they risk becoming seriously dehydrated.

Western graduate Shannon Killgore, 23, witnessed dehydration-related dangers when she visited the Collins Hot Springs in The Dalles, Ore., last Memorial Day weekend.

"Everyone was drinking alcohol in the pools when I was there and not drinking any water," she said. "A girl passed out cold at the Collins Hot Springs because she didn't have enough water in her body to keep her going."

But Killgore said, along with a come-as-you-are mentality, everyone seemed to watch out for each other. When this girl was in trouble and no longer able to talk, everyone helped out and she was able to walk out later that day on her own.

Although Killgore and her group braved the hike to Collins, during daylight, other hot springs like Scenic were more popular in the evening.

"To be honest, I wouldn't want to see the pools in the daylight. Those tarps are covered with slimy algae and God knows what else." - Brady Bumgarner

University of Washington student

body has no defense against it and the person will die."

He said an infected person would begin convulsing and because hot springs are almost always located "out in the middle of nowhere," the person wouldn't usually have a chance to get to a hospital in time.

"They (parasites) are naturally found in soil and muddy water, so springs that are just a hole in the ground are at risk," Moyer said. "The good news is that I've never heard of a case in this area, usually only down in Nevada and Arizona."

However, soakers may have to travel to destinations like Nevada and Arizona to enjoy hot springs if the closures continue.

Scenic wasn't the first Northwest hot spring to be closed. Bellingham Police Lt. Dae Jamison remembered when Mt. Baker Hot Springs was closed 10 to 15 years ago.

"The pool had a high count of the E.coli bacteria and people were getting sick," Jamison said. "At one time, the pool was pretty nice, more than a couple people could fit in it at once."

Today, the Mt. Baker Hot Spring isn't officially closed to visitors, Eli Warren of the Mt. Baker Forest Service said. "We've taken away trailhead signs to diminish use, but people still use the unmaintained trail and the pool at their own risk."

"It's not uncommon to see Pampers and syringes floating in the water," Warren said. He said overuse causes enormous devastation to the area.

Harrison Hot Springs in British Columbia, however, doesn't have many of these problems.

"Harrison draws a large crowd, not only for the springs, but also because it's a spa," Bellingham resident Dave Sanford said. He said his family has gone there for years because it offers so many different activities.

"My dad plays golf and my mom shops and enjoys spa treatments," he said, noting that these springs are part of a resort and thus are cleaned regularly to prevent contaminants from harming guests. Of the six most popular springs in the Northwest, Scenic is the only one officially closed. Goklmyer, Wind River, and Kennedy Hot Springs are still open to visitors. Baker and Olympic Hot Springs are not officially closed, but use is discouraged because of the surrounding private property's destruction.

"It's too bad Scenic was destroyed," Bumgarner said. "Hopefully someday it will be available for hikers to once again enjoy."