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Taber Streur, a senior public relations student, has always been infatuated with ghosts even though he has never experienced any firsthand. His story investigates paranormal events in Sycamore Square that have affected those who work there. He hopes his story is as intriguing to those who read it as it was to write.

Cindy Vrieling is a senior public relations major. Her personal experience with a family member who committed suicide prompted her to write this story. She hopes it will help people better understand, and more openly discuss the complexity of suicide. Suicide is a universal struggle, affecting people from all walks of life.
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THE DARK SIDE OF THE SUN
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It's a cold, gray windy Northwestern afternoon as Estrus Records owner Dave Crider, clad in a black dress shirt and black leather jacket, takes a sip from his bloody mary and says, "I've come to find out over the years that my youth was not as typical as I thought at the time."

Crider recounts his earliest rock memory: waiting in line for an hour with his parents in Harrogate, England, the Crider's residence for four years, to buy the new Rolling Stones single, "Brown Sugar."

"I just figured everybody's parents did that," Crider says. One of the first albums Crider's grandmother bought him was Black Sabbath's "Paranoid." She sat down and listened to the album with him saying it wasn't her kind of music, but she was happy he liked it, Crider says. Just for reference, throughout the rest of this article when "rock" is referred to, try picturing decibel meters (in the red), walls of guitar amps and a drum set on fire, just for good measure.


Intensely loud and uncompromising in their devotion to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, these bands cleared the way for the introduction of the punk music scene in the early 1970s.

Josh Haupt meets with Dave Crider, the founder of Estrus, to find out what makes Bellingham's own loud, in-your-face rock 'n' roll record label tick. Photos by Chris Fuller.

Snide, brash, theatrical, playful, visceral, aggressive, cynical and confrontational — Estrus bands embody all these qualities and more.

Some Estrus bands are local, but others, like The Cherry Valance of North Carolina and The Mooney Suzuki of New York City, are scattered across the country.

"If there's a band in North Carolina that I like and want to work with, I'm going to," Crider says. Crider began Estrus while living in Bellingham. He started the label so his band, The Roofdogs, would have a label name to put on their demo tape.

When a band sends out demo tapes to record labels, the more professional looking a tape or compact disc is the better. Many independent labels, including Estrus, start with publishing their own music then decide to put out other bands under the same label name.

But from 1987 to 1989, Crider says he didn't do much with Estrus until he put out the first Mono Men single, "Burning Bush.”

The Mono Men, a later incarnation of The Roofdogs, could best be described as '60s garage rock revival/surf punk. Their albums, including more than 60 releases, with titles like "Sin and Tonic," gained a cult popularity, helping Estrus receive a larger audience's attention.

This is also the band that recorded a live album while playing at a bachelor party in Normal, Ill. at the extremely upscale Tom's Strip and Bowl.

"It sort of became a glorified hobby that started taking up a lot of time," Crider says. "And it became pretty apparent that there were a lot of other bands that I liked that maybe it didn't seem as easy for them as it had been for me."
At first Crider personally called 250 record stores a week promoting Estrus bands. This was a necessity at the time since Estrus hadn’t started using a larger distributor yet and sold directly to record stores in what Crider refers to as a “guerilla warfare” approach to getting Estrus bands out there.

Crider says the way the bands conduct themselves as people has a lot to do with his choices of bands.

“These bands are 110 percent when they play,” Crider says.

Crider’s own DTs are a scrunching three-piece with drums, vocals and Crider on guitar.

The DTs could be likened to what would happen if Janis Joplin and Fred “Sonic” Smith of MC5 had a child, then abandoned it, only for it to show up on their doorstep one day royally pissed off and armed to the teeth with loud guitar amps and still louder soul-oriented vocals.

That 110 percent attitude has allowed the label to grow to the point where Estrus was able to leave a distributor called Mordam and switch to Touch and Go records. Touch and Go, based in Chicago, is considered the premier independent record label, respected for its "handshake record deal policy."

Here’s a little clarification for those lost in the world of record labels and distributors. Though some record labels and distributors have a tendency to multi-task, there is a difference. A record label, like Estrus, signs a band and pays for it to record an album. A record label also promotes the album, providing publicity for the band so it can sell the album. The function of a distributor is to get the album out to record stores in an efficient manner.

For example, one of the ways Touch and Go distributes is through “one stops.”

A “one stop” is a warehouse/wholesaler operation that buys albums from many different record labels or distributors and then resells them to record stores that don’t have time to buy from different labels or distributors for their store stock. Independent record labels like Estrus and Touch and Go typically sell through mail order as well.

Crider’s longtime friend, Tim Kerr of Estrus band The Monkeywrench, urged him to talk to Corey Rusk at Touch and Go. It was a perfect fit for Estrus, Crider says, because he already had several friends who worked at Touch and Go or were otherwise associated through bands.

“And it’s still the same philosophy of bands and people that I like,” Crider says.

Being distributed through a well known, independent label has its perks, as Estrus band Federation X found out when they decided to record their next album. Crider helped them get in touch with Steve Albini, quite possibly the best-known recording engineer in independent circles, especially renowned for the way he records drums. He also plays guitar in one of Touch and Go’s most famous bands, Shellac, and also in Big Black.

Here’s a simple take on a recording engineer’s job.

The engineer mikes a band’s instruments, routing the signal to a separated control booth where he mixes the recorded sound to tape. Each mike has a track. These tracks, which can number up to 64 (depending on the instrumentation of an album), are then mixed down by the engineer to a two-track stereo mix. This mixed-down version is the sound you hear while listening to your favorite album.

Albini is renowned at being really, disgustingly good at this process.

His credits include, but are definitely not limited to, Nirvana’s “In Utero,” The Breeders’ “Pod” and PJ Harvey’s “Rid of Me.” Albini also recorded everyone’s favorite Pixies song “Where is My Mind?” from the group’s album “Surfer Rosa.”

The idea of approaching such a music great as Albini could be a little daunting for a band from Bellingham.

"Dirty" Bill Badgly of Federation X recalls his trek to Chicago to meet Albini as he sits in the dimly lit Ranch Room bar amidst the regulars lined up on barstools.

You walk up to the front and there’s this polished shiny metal door with an ‘E’ insignia,” Badgly says. "We ring the door and he opens the door dressed in this blue jumpsuit.”

"At this stage I’ve been, like, wondering what it would be like to meet him pretty much my whole life," Badgly says. "And he’s like this squirrelly little dude, kinda looks like a human chipmunk with three days of stubble.”

But none of this would have been possible, Badgly says, without the support that Estrus, and more specifically Crider, gives them as a band.

Badgly refers to this as a family-like environment.

As Tim Kerr put it, "Dave is a really great human being and is one of those few who hold music and self expression dear, we are a family."
Many business owners and tenants in Fairhaven's historic Sycamore Square believe the building is filled with supernatural forces. Taber Streur investigates the stories of peculiar encounters with moving objects and a young female ghost who roams the building. Photos by Alaina Dunn.

Two years ago April McAllister was alone at night in Sycamore Square on Harris Avenue painting an office on the second floor. She was on a ladder near the ceiling and since the second floor had no air conditioning, it was sweltering. She recalls the temperature in the building being in the mid 80s.

McAllister had an uneasy feeling all night that someone was watching her. Around 8 p.m., she had nearly finished painting the ceiling and stood on the ladder in the corner of the room when for no apparent reason she was suddenly chilled.

Out of the corner of her eye, McAllister said she saw a woman wearing a long, green velvet dress, the type women wore at the start of the 20th century. Her hair was up under a large green hat, and her dress buttoned up the side. She was pale and you could see through her face and body.

"A chill ran up my spine and the hair stood up on the back of my neck," McAllister, 43, said.

McAllister packed up her things and quickly left the building for the evening.

She said she has believed in ghosts since that night.

The story of the Lady in Green has never gone farther than a small, one-page description about McAllister's experience that is posted in the lobby of the building.

Following her encounter, McAllister searched through newspaper archives and found an article from 1892 in the Fairhaven Herald, now the Bellingham Herald, about a woman dying in the building. Her name was Flora Blakely, and she lived in the Mason Block building, now named Sycamore Square. She died on the fourth floor after a sudden illness. Blakely's funeral was held in the court where there is now a fountain. Her husband transported her body to Brownsville, Ore. where it was buried in Brownsville Pioneer Cemetery.

According to cemetery records, Flora A. Blakely died on March 15, 1892 at age 33 and left behind her husband, and a son who would be placed under the care of his grandmother. Blakely's illness was reported in the March 16, 1892 issue of the Fairhaven Herald as being "beyond the power of human science to heal."

Her husband, Joseph Blakely and his father, James Blakely, each owned one quarter of the Mason building. James Blakely, who lived to be 101 years old, was a real estate man. Joseph was the Fairhaven marshal and lived on the fourth floor of the Mason Block with Blakely prior to her death.

Sycamore Square was originally constructed in 1890 by Allen C. Mason and was branded with the name the Mason Block. The building was constructed to house businesses and provide living space for tenants. The building was renovated in 1973, but some things seemingly can't be expelled or changed. One of those is the Lady in Green.

Sycamore Square has an early 20th century ambiance. The building is complete with intertwined mahogany stairways, leaded windows and Victorian style millworks that preserve the building's historic characteristics. The stores, cafes and salons that conduct business in the plaza, and the white stone fountain that splashes in the atrium make the building more modern.

The employees and owners of Tangles Salon, Mambo Italiano Cafe, La Playa and The Black Cat restaurant have heard the ghost stories in Sycamore Square and said they believe the building is haunted.

Danny Sisneros, owner of Cat N Fiddle Salon on the building's fourth floor, said the salon has a cupboard that opens by itself, even though it is usually locked.

"It opens slowly while we are here working," Sisneros said. "The one that opens is the one with the latch on it. There is no way to open it. You need a ladder or step-stool just to get up to it."

Sisneros said the last time this occurred was four months ago.

The Lady in Green has made sure McAllister and tenants of the building don't forget about her by moving furniture, walking the halls and laughing late at night.
Christina Sanchez, the owner of La Playa, said she believes in the ghost and said she gets nervous in the Sycamore Square building at night. "I'm not nervous that she (the Lady in Green) will do something to me. I just don't have a desire to see her or any other ghosts," Sanchez said.

McAllister kept to herself about seeing this mysterious lady until she started hearing stories from other tenants. One tenant reported "cold spots" in her office. "I hear a story about once a month," McAllister said. "I have never tried to contact her (the Lady in Green), but I would like a clairvoyant to contact her."

"I believe in ghosts, yes I do," Tipton said. "Because my past assistant would put the chairs facing the desk when we would come in the next morning, they would be facing the window. It could just be physics, but this is weird."

Tipton pointed out that her chair might move because the floor in the office is slightly slanted and the weight of the chair back may cause it to spin. She has replaced the chair three times since leasing the office in 1997 and each chair turns to face the window.

Both McAllister and Tipton have experienced coming to work and having all of their chairs turned to face the windows. "Who else would it be?" McAllister said.

The office has been remodeled, but many wonder: What lies below the carpeting and added walls? Is there a trace of Blakely left in the building that prevents her from leaving? What does she want, and why won't she leave?

Baron Heating tried to provide a reasonable explanation for the chill that struck McAllister in the summer of 2000. The room where Blakely died. Tipton never noticed any strange phenomenon until her assistant at the time pointed out that her chair was Blakely showing herself again. McAllister returned to the room to take another photograph.

Upon arriving at the room she said aloud, "If there is any ghost in this suite, please show yourself." She then took three pictures in a row. McAllister returned to her office and loaded the pictures onto her computer. To her amazement, the first photograph contained nearly 30 orbs floating around the room in a mix.

"I've taken hundreds and hundreds of pictures in this building and nothing like that has ever happened before or again," McAllister said.

Whether the spirit of Blakely remains trapped in the building is uncertain. The tenants of Sycamore Square seem to have no electronic interferences could have created an image of this nature.

McAllister is hopeful that some day the Lady in Green's spirit will be allowed to leave. "I guess she is just stuck here," McAllister said. "I hope someday I could hire a clairvoyant to find out why, but I think I would have a hard time explaining that to the owner of the building. I don't have a separate budget for that."

Until then, the saga of the Lady in Green will continue to grow for those who know her best — the tenants of Sycamore Square.
TRANSCENDING TIME
The day-to-day activities at many elderly care centers may seem dull or routine. But there is a trend spreading across the nation that has brought new life to these facilities.

Dian McClurg spends time at St. Francis Extended Health Care where they combine childcare with elderly care. Photos by Dian McClurg.

The idea of a nursing home conjures images of old people living amidst the sounds of piano practice and slow wheelchair races going “whoosh” along the thin carpet. Sometimes they feel like the hidden end of something that was once important that has now become messy and embarrassing.

But when an elderly care center shares facilities with a childcare center something magical occurs.

The result smells like hot peanut butter cookies, crayons and hand lotion. It tastes like root beer and sounds like a birthday party. The children spread out around the table between older adults in wheelchairs. When the door to the playground opens, a cold wind of fresh fall smells tickles the thin hair on young and old heads. The noise and the laughing, the racing around and the bright eyes look like the beginning of something important that will last a lifetime for the children and bring health and happiness to the tired seniors. This is what intergenerational programs at St. Francis Extended Health Care are like.

The residents at St. Francis, located on Squalicum Parkway in Bellingham, have enjoyed weekly activities with the children, aged 18 months to 8 years, since 1985. Meghan Bondor, who graduated from Western last spring, is the lead recreational aid at St. Francis. She has worked at the center for almost two years. Her department helps plan and run all of the intergenerational programs.
"The kids are like life to the residents," Bonder said. "It's wonderful for them (the residents) to be able to remember their childhood now that they're coming to the end of life."

And this is why intergenerational care has become a national trend. The American Association of Retired Persons estimated 280 such centers existed in the country in 1999, compared to 50 in the early 1980s. With intergenerational care, elderly adults get a chance to reflect on the continuity of life and enjoy the love and energy of young children. And the children learn how to accept the frail elderly as a normal part of life and learn to appreciate what the elderly have to teach.

Intergenerational care is not a new concept. Grandparents have cared for the young members of their families for centuries, particularly in cultures outside the United States and Europe. But recognizing these care centers as an opportunity for the elderly and young children is still in the early stages for America.

Generations United, based in Washington, D.C., is one of the nation's leading proponents of intergenerational care. Part of their mission statement reads: "Each generation has unique strengths to help meet the needs of another. Efforts to create more decent societies rest on the interdependence of generations, past, living and still to come."

Generations United also states that intergenerational collaboration will unite and improve the nation's communities. Every person, young and old, is a resource and adds value to a culture. Resources are more wisely used when they connect the generations rather than separate them.

The St. Francis Childcare Center cares for the young children of employees and several families in the community. Bonder said the children and seniors participate in a variety of activities - reading, cooking and art projects - but cooking days are the best for both groups.

"They get to interact more with each other," Bonder said. "It's so great to see the older adults helping the kids."

Debra Kibler is the director of childcare at St. Francis. She's only been in her position for two months, but she said she already understands the valuable relationship between the children and the residents.

"The situation really enhances both the lives of the children and the lives of the residents," Kibler said.

But the center gets busy - busier than a regular daycare. Space is a precious commodity at St. Francis. The small, one-floor facility is home to 108 senior residents, and the staff and children have to have rooms as well. The toddlers have their own permanent room, but the older children use the recreation room during the day. Kibler and her helpers at the childcare center have to shuffle around and clear out the recreation room every evening so the residents can use the space for gatherings.

Recently, the recreation room became an intergenerational baking room. Six children and three residents crowded around a long folding table while the recreation director, Kibler and several childcare helpers hovered and helped out in the kitchenette. Melanie Blakeley became the recreation director in May. Her daughter, Alyson Blakeley, was one of the children busy at the table that day.

"I'm 5 years old today," Alyson said, "It's my birthday."

Kibler grabbed a purple paper crown decorated with glitter and colored feathers from the counter and set it on Alyson's head.

"Alyson, 5" was written on the crown with a black marker. Fittingly, the baking group looked just like a little birthday gathering. Arbutus "Boots" Kendall, 85, Hazel Schmel, 98, and Vernon Frisk, 81, smiled at the children as they nudged each other and talked about past birthday parties.

Schmel, who was once a cook for the Bellingham School District, was busy pressing fork marks into a sheet of unbaked peanut butter cookies. She was so excited with her fork that the cookies were beginning to look as though they'd been run over by a few toy cars.
Blakley popped one batch of cookies into the oven. She turned back to the cooking group and asked in a loud, clearly enunciated voice, "Kids, what do you like best about the intergenerational program?"

Alyson didn't hesitate. "My favorite thing is making cookies," she said with a grin.

Then Blakley asked the residents: "What do you like about the intergen program? Do you like the baking or the reading? What do you like best, Vern?"

Frisk smiled and said, "I like to eat what the kids make."

"Yeah, I bet you do," Blakley said. All the adults in the room chuckled, but Kendall was more thoughtful with her answer. "I think it's really healthy for me to be with young people," she said. "I need the energy they have. It's so beautiful to see their energy. Then, when the cookies are done, that's what I like, too."

Blakley took a break from filling cups of root beer and checking on the cookies. She added to what the residents had to say about intergenerational programs. "I think it gives the kids an appreciation for the adults," she said. "And like Boots said, the kids give the adults that extra energy."

When the cookies were done, Blakley went back to directing the show. Children from the napping room were slowly straying into the room, perhaps coaxed into exploring by the warm cookie smells.

"People who helped bake, they get to eat first," Blakley said.

Kendall and Schmeil laughed and held out their thin, shaking hands. Kendall had a gold band on her left hand. Kendall had shiny pink polish on her nails. The room grew quieter with mouths full of cookie.

"I think that's one of the nicest things about staying here is we get to be with the children," Kendall said after taking a bite of her cookie. The other residents grinned and nodded with her.

"I think it's really healthy for me to be with young people," —Arbutus Kendall, St. Francis resident.

One week ago, Bondor directed a baking group with the same three residents by herself in a different part of the facility. Frisk watched television while Bondor mixed the brownie batter. Kendall watched Bondor work without talking, and Schmeil didn't even eat the brownies when they were done. The group was more attentive when the baking program was with the children.

Not all of the older adults react to the children in the same way. Some seniors prefer their privacy or solitude. Some just like to observe the kids. The main television room at St. Francis is an open rotunda room with windows facing out on the childcare playground. Residents who don't want to interact can still see the kids playing.

Bondor said the childcare center tries to have an open-door policy for the older adults. The residents can come into the childcare center whenever they want and observe, or join in the play. Bondor said some of the residents carry stuffed animals around on their wheelchairs. When they visit the childcare center, the children love to talk to them about their pets and hold them.

Blakley said her younger daughter, who is nearly 2, is close with one particular woman. "When the woman sees my daughter, her whole face lights up," Blakley said. "Many of the residents either have grandkids or great-grandkids that they don't get to see very often. Being around the kids here changes their whole personality."

And Kibler said the children take to the residents like it's second nature. "The children aren't uncomfortable with the handicapped people. She said they do well around all the wheelchairs.

"They're so gentle and careful," Kibler said.

Bondor said St. Francis has a bazaar every year in December. Each year they raffle a hand-made quilt imprinted with handprints from both the elderly and the children. The money St. Francis makes from the bazaar is used for the St. Francis Foundation. Bondor said the center hopes to raise enough money for a new bus, one they can use to take senior residents and children together for field trips.

Kibler said St. Francis usually runs about three intergenerational programs per week. In the summer, the kids and the residents go on walks together. In the winter they do more baking. She said the residents love having the children around. During residence council each month, the older adults give suggestions for future intergenerational activities. They talk about how much they enjoy the reading and cooking groups.

"It brings a spark back," Kibler said. "Some of the residents are not responsive with the other residents at all, but when the children are around, their eyes light up and they smile. "
Along State Route 9, the shade of a tree is all that is needed to host a gathering of dairy workers from a farm in Lawrence after a hard day's work. A few beers, jokes and stories from home were exchanged warmly until a call from the dairy stamped out the coals of the good time. Tomorrow will be another long day for the workers.

The road home...
Postcards from Highway 9

Places with names like Sumas, Acme, Wickersham, Deming, Everson and Nooksack hang like Christmas ornaments off State Route 9 in Whatcom County. The winding stretch of road sneaks up from the Skagit flatlands and into Canada's Fraser Valley, sustaining pockets of life along the way that are the epitome of Americana. Unlike the congested Interstate 5 to the west, State Route 9 is a thread through communities where casual evidence of a slower lifestyle still exists. Evan E. Parker captures these images that preserve glimpses of life off this uniquely ordinary road.

**Each photograph was taken no farther than one mile off the highway.**
Six pumps in three months. Chiron Monday, 15, of Nooksack, who has type II autism, has developed a fixation on the above-ground pool's pump, and when his supervisors go inside to make lunch or answer the phone he makes his move. It appears breaking the pumps is his way of playing a joke on whoever is watching him. Turn your back on him for a minute and he has already made his move; catch him in the act and he quickly submerges to the depths of the pool where harsh tones and threats don't carry well. The Department of Health and Social Services did not consider the pool a therapeutic device and did not help Monday's mother, Valerie, with the cost. His sister bought the $300 pool for him, and for up to five hours a day Monday splashes, dives and strengthens his leg muscles behind his prefabricated home a block away from State Route 9. As storm clouds swoop in and the day's light fades away, Monday can tell his time in the pool is coming to a seasonal end. When Mom goes to the house for more clothes pins, Monday goes in for one last peek.

The Mount Baker High School marching band performs their fight song under the first Friday night lights of the season. The Mountaineers Band, as they are called, got heckled by fans because their kilts reminded fans of Scotsmen, not Mountaineers. The jokers quickly quieted down once the band struck up the score to "Star Wars" and other familiar tunes, and the band was eventually the lone highlight of the evening, as the Mountaineers lost the lead in the fourth quarter to Nooksack Valley High School.
In the boys' locker room, together as they are for the last time, the senior men from Nooksack Valley High School make all the final preparations before heading out to the flashbulbs, tears and announcements of their high school graduation ceremony. Tassels are straightened, breaths are taken and promises are made before leaving the locker room. There can be no going back now.

Nooksack Valley High School said goodbye to 122 of its own this night; it's not the biggest class in the county, but not the smallest either.

After coaching her first soccer game, Karla Treptow (second from left) goes over the highlights of the match with her father, Cecil Ramsey, who came to pick up his grandson, and star goalie, Alex, 6, (right) to go fishing. As the discussion lingers on, the waiting becomes unbearable for Alex and, humming softly to himself, he climbs out of the driver's side to start playing with the antenna, side mirrors, and eventually the windshield wipers. He says he can't wait to hit the water and catch a fish in the Nooksack River. "Last time I caught a bigger one than grandpa's," he says. Karla, a quality assurance manager in town, tries to stay active in the life of her son. Even when it requires her to do things she has never done before, like coaching soccer. Her mother, Lillian Ramsey (left), and Cecil, also participate in the activities Alex undertakes.
Cloudy skies are no stranger to the everyday life along State Route 9, where Saturday morning soccer games are played under the theatre above.

Eric Larsen slams down the hood of his early '70s Ford truck and walks around the hand painted frame of the rig to the driver's side door. He takes the cigarette off the dashboard, puts it between his lips and says out of the side of his mouth, "Ready for this?" He turns the key to the truck. The truck makes practically no noise. A low hum comes from under the hood, and when Larsen puts his foot to the gas the engine seems to suck the air into its mechanics through whispered valves.

Larsen lives at the junction of Nugent's Corner and Highway 9, right at the stoplight. At night the logging trucks keep him awake. At all hours the trucks come, each one making him more of a spotted owl lover. Awake at the wee hours, in a one-bedroom apartment, he said he wishes those logging trucks could be more like his Ford.

Along the highway a political pundit offers a hand to potential voters who pass by his sign in Deming. Elections begin soon and hopeful candidates are trying to reach Whatcom County's rural constituency any way they can. 34
With Mount Baker just a short trip from Bellingham, many students take advantage of the opportunity to snowboard at this popular ski area. Orion Stewart meets two Western students who manage to balance a full load of homework and a snowboarding career, working hard in the classroom and on the mountain.

Lifestyle shot of Pat McCarthy by Tim Kroll
Background Image: Pat McCarthy
Photo by: Grant Gunderson
John Laing straps onto his snowboard, ratchets the binding straps tight, adjusts his goggles and studies the jump. He pauses for just a few seconds, enough time to visualize his trick again: riding in, slight pressure on the toeside of his board, shoulders and upper body wound to the left with just the right tension, waiting until the board is just off the lip of the jump, releasing his upper body torque into a rotation, spinning over his rear shoulder through 720 degrees, then finally slowing the spin and looking for his landing.

"Dropping!" Laing yells.

The time for imagining is over. He has just signaled for the cameraman positioned at the base of the snowy knoll beneath the jump to start filming. The conditions for the shot are ideal; the skies over Mount Baker’s backcountry are blue and the powder is deep. All that remains is the 21-year-old’s aerial maneuver. The camera is rolling.

Laing straightens his snowboard and rides toward the jump. He throws himself into a backside 720, as he had visualized. From above the jump, where Laing’s friends sit waiting to drop in themselves, he appears to spin into oblivion.

But the camera below captures the rest of Laing’s trick. His board is not perfectly aligned with the snow when he touches down. He hits the ground leaning back too far and slams onto the side of his hip and chest.

This shot will not make it into any snowboard magazines or videos. No one wants to see a trick almost completed; Laing needs to stomp the landing and ride away smoothly to get a usable shot.

He rides out to the side of the landing area, unstraps, shakes himself off and begins the tiresome task of hiking up the steep, snowy slope back to the jump. He focuses on the adjustments needed to land the backside 720. He thinks about what must be done to get the shot, to keep his sponsors happy, to excite his friends and, most importantly, to please himself.

"The goal in snowboarding is always to have fun," Laing says. "I have myself, my family and my sponsors all behind me supporting my lifestyle and encouraging me to continue progressing and getting strong video parts."

As impressive as the shot is, Laing still maintains he did not have to look at it like a job," Laing says. "Getting video parts, getting into big magazines and keeping consistent motivation to move forward."

During the cold, snowy winter days spent at Mount Baker and other Northwest ski areas, Laing’s concentration may be completely focused on snowboarding, but in the other three seasons he must divide it between snowboarding and school.

Laing and his roommate, Patrick McCarthy, are two of the very few sponsored snowboarders who attend college.

"About one percent of sponsored riders go to school," Laing says. "We have to compete against kids who don’t have the pressures of studying and being in class.”

McCarthy and Laing spend an ample amount of time together on their snowboards. Being roommates, it is a matter of convenience to carpool to Mount Baker and ride together. Because of this they have a large influence on each other’s riding.

"It’s a good thing that they live together,” says Jason Speers, a friend of McCarthy and Laing, who also tries to balance college and snowboarding. "They’ll get home from a day of filming and compare footage. They’ll push themselves to push each other.

To alleviate some of the pressures of balancing school and snowboarding the two generally do not attend winter quarter at Western and enroll in summer classes to compensate.

"I tried to balance the two when I first came here,” McCarthy, 22, says. "But it was too hard to concentrate on both at once.”

McCarthy says his sponsors are supportive of his decision to pursue an education alongside snowboarding recognition. They consist of Option and NFA, who support McCarthy with snowboard decks and outerwear; Oakley, who gives him goggles; Technine, who keeps him supplied with bindings; and APX, the boot company that keeps his feet warm on the hill.

"I still gotta buck up and get the video part,” McCarthy says. "I have myself, my family and my sponsors all behind me supporting my lifestyle and encouraging me to continue progressing and getting strong video parts."

As a result of his efforts last season, five snowboard videos released this fall feature McCarthy’s riding. The list includes "Couching Tiger,” “General Population,” “In For Life,” “411 Snow Issue #4” and “Changing of the Guard.” Laing also achieved video exposure this fall with footage in “Couching Tiger,” “In For Life” and “Changing of the Guard.”

A photo of Laing was also published in Transworld Snowboarding Magazine. The photo was taken late last season at Mount Baker, the day before summer classes began. He is proud of the picture, and with good reason – it is a full-page shot in what is arguably the sport’s leading magazine.

As impressive as the shot is, Laing still maintains he did not get as much done during the spring.

"Being a snowboarder and going to school is a complementary situation; if I took away either thing from my life I’d just get bored.”

—Pat McCarthy, snowboarder
“I had a tough time last spring,” Laing says. “I focused hard on school and didn’t go snowboarding much.”

McCarthy and Laing agree that spring is a difficult time to be a full-time student and snowboarder. Around March, after the cold winter storms finally relent and the sun makes its reappearance, snowboard filming is in its prime. Warmer temperatures soften the snow, leaving it in a consistently wet and malleable state—a consistency that is perfect for building solid jumps while landing areas remain smooth and forgiving. In the spring, the chance of non-precipitating weather also increases and the daylight hours grow longer, extending filming time.

“In the spring it’s a hard transition to go from complete freedom back to the responsibilities of school,” McCarthy says. “Sometimes school suffers, but as spring goes by I’m glad I made the choice to go back.”

McCarthy makes the juggling act between school and snowboarding easier on himself by studying a subject that crosses over to the world of snowboarding. McCarthy’s collegiate focus is filming and editing video. He plans to complete the new media program offered through Western’s Art Department or pursue a similar course of study through Fairhaven College.

Last season McCarthy took his photo knowledge to the mountains and filmed some 20 or so clips for “Couching Tiger,” a video produced by Sound Strait Productions out of Seattle.

Sound Strait differs from most snowboard video production companies in the way footage is gathered. The riders take turns filming each other, rather than using only a couple of designated filmers. Getting film clips is the rider’s responsibility. McCarthy doesn’t mind. He says after he shoots a clip it is easy for him to just pass his camera to a friend for a shot of himself.

Drawing on his video editing skills, McCarthy condensed all of his appearances in this year’s videos into one short self-promotional film. The less-than-five-minute video features all of his best footage set to a couple of hip-hop songs. It is a representation of McCarthy’s current skill level and a sort of résumé he can send to prospective sponsors.

McCarthy started filming snowboarding, both behind and in front of the lens, during high school with friends he met while riding at Stevens Pass.

These friends eventually created and became owners of Sound Strait Productions. The production company’s first snowboard video, as well as McCarthy’s first video appearance, was “The Temple,” released in 2000.

But before Laing and McCarthy were sponsored snowboarders they met at local contests and at Mount Hood during the summer. The two became friends in 1999, their first year at Western. Both chose Western due in part to its proximity to the friendly natural terrain found at Mount Baker. Laing claims it is the ski area with the most versatile in-bounds terrain; featuring cornices, kickers, cliffs, chutes and rollers—all excellent formations to destroy with a snowboard.

Prior to coming to Western, Laing had grown up competing in regional contests throughout the Northwest. At the age of 12, only three years after starting to slide sideways down hills on a snowboard, Laing qualified for the National Championships and placed first in the age 12 to 13 division.

Three years later, Laing received an invitation to attend the Junior World Championships in Finland. There he competed in a halfpipe contest with some of today’s internationally recognized professional snowboarders, such as Joni Malmi and Roger Helmstadstuen. Laing was from a region where, at the time, decent halfpipes were non-existent because Northwest resorts did not invest in the newly developing pipe grooming technology. He left the Junior World Championships with what he considered a disappointing finish. Laing says that now when he looks back at the experience, he realizes his finish isn’t what matters.

“We have to compete against kids who don’t have the pressures of studying and being in class.” — John Laing, snowboarder
“The contest made me want to progress more; it made me realize what direction I wanted to take in my snowboarding career,” he says.

Laing returned to Washington and began to focus on getting pictures rather than placing well in contests. With K2 Snowboards, GMC Gloves, Borderline Snowboard Shop and Dragon Optical sponsoring him, today he continues to concentrate on getting shots.

Although Laing only competes in about three major contests per year he says the experience helps his snowboarding. He can see what tricks riders at the forefront of the sport are doing.

Laing and McCarthy get most of their exposure through videos and photographs, not contests, although McCarthy placed first and fourth, respectively, at the Nissan Series Halfpipe Contest at Snoqualmie Pass and the Stevens Pass Halfpipe Championship.

In addition to impressing judges, McCarthy’s rowdy, energetic style shows up on film in the way he charges every kicker, cornice or hip jump in his video sections. He has the ability to throw himself upside down and off-axis in every-which-way and still somehow land on his board.

Laing’s riding seems carefully controlled. He uses his stocky build to maintain a tight, solid looking form in the air. It gives his tricks an appearance of effortlessness.

Neither Laing, nor McCarthy regrets opting to attend college out of high school rather than solely pursuing a career in snowboarding. They both recognize that snowboarding will probably not pay all the bills and that they cannot ride forever. McCarthy broke one ankle snowboarding in the spring of 2001 and Laing broke both feet at once while snowboarding at Mount Hood during the summer of 2000.

“When I’m done with snowboarding I want to have an education and not turn out to be a burnout,” McCarthy says. “Being a snowboarder and going to school is a complementary situation; if I took away either thing from my life I’d just get bored.”

Laing says snowboarding takes from his schoolwork and schoolwork takes from snowboarding, but contends that doing them both only adds to his personality.

Having sponsors forces McCarthy and Laing to look at snowboarding like a job at times, but neither of the two worries about getting tired and burnt out due to the stress of performing on their snowboards.

“I started snowboarding for fun,” McCarthy says. “So if sponsorship ever takes the fun out of it, then I won’t worry about it (sponsorship).”

Laing and McCarthy have no plans to abandon the professional snowboard dream. When they are through with college both hope to be able to snowboard full time for as long as their bodies allow. Currently their sponsors cover their snowboard expenses and the two receive a small amount of income from contest winnings and photo incentives. To make enough cash from snowboarding to fully sustain and support themselves they need to be professional snowboarders with salaries from their sponsors.

Laing is careful not to make predictions about his chances of turning pro and supporting himself through snowboarding. He simply states that if he is still snowboarding well and enjoying the sport he will continue to try to make it.

“I’ll just take it step by step and wait and see,” he says.

McCarthy says that after graduation he will use the entire year to focus on snowboarding. Already he has goals for gaining more exposure while still in school this season; he plans to film in Alaska and Utah and increase two of his video appearances from just a couple clips to full-length sections lasting several minutes. Although McCarthy is also reluctant to make claims about the future, when asked about his chances of turning pro, he said, “I can make it.”

“She was the first snowboarder I knew that wanted to make it and then decided to go for it,” McCarthy says. “She’s really dedicated to what she’s doing.”

Laing is careful about her image on film. Although McCarthy is very human and he makes mistakes, Laing feels that portrayals of her on film must be correct. She is not interested in vonage or straddling a bar or doing a nose grab and then landing on her face in the air. She feels she must be portrayed accurately on film in order to be a professional snowboarder.

“Lala and I have to make sure we only get shots in the right context,” McCarthy says. “We can’t do anything that will detract from the professional image.”

Laing’s riding seems carefully controlled. She uses her stocky build to maintain a tight, solid looking form in the air. It gives her tricks an appearance of effortlessness.

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Having sponsors forces McCarthy and Laing to look at snowboarding like a job at times, but neither of the two worries about getting tired and burnt out due to the stress of performing on their snowboards.
For some, the burdens of everyday life can become too much. Cindy Vrieling speaks with Errin Barmore, a woman who is candidly open about her struggle with a depression that led to multiple suicide attempts, and lends a voice to those who are so often silent. Illustrations by Kynde Kiefel.

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, Errin Barmore sits indifferently in the stark room of a hospital care unit, staring down at the envelopes she pounds with a rubber stamp. She has written goodbye letters to her sons at the request of her counselors. Her family will put the letters in safekeeping, hoping the boys will never read them, and that Barmore will never attempt suicide again.

Barmore, 34, is in the Skagit Valley Hospital care unit after her third suicide attempt. She is a Bellingham resident and single mother who works as a cake decorator. Barmore is a perky woman, described by friends as having a jolly demeanor and being the life of the party. She is not a person who appears suicidal. But on this Saturday afternoon, her sandy blond, shoulder-length hair is stringy and gently brushes against her pasty white face. She looks up with dull eyes as she struggles with deep depression and hopelessness.

Barmore first attempted suicide at age 19. She developed a spending habit at a young age, and applied for every credit card she could obtain. She said the credit cards were an attempt for a reward she felt she was missing at home. Her parents thought a change of environment might help her overcome the spending habit and planned to send her to live with her grandmother. She said she was dreading the move and downed an overdose of Tylenol in her desperation. Fortunately, she only became sick from the pills, and no one knew of her attempt.

Life became more complicated for Barmore in 1992, when she married a man she didn't love. She was searching for stability and a way out of her financial problems, and he told her the right things at the right time. The marriage was doomed from the start, she said. Her husband, saddled with child support from a previous marriage, already had financial burdens. The financial problems became worse with the birth of her first son in 1993, Konner, 9. The marriage continued to deteriorate under the financial strain and irreconcilable differences.

In 1996, when Barmore was pregnant with her second son, Hunter, 6, she filed for divorce. She said her husband has had no significant involvement with his sons except for the time he came to sign the divorce papers when Hunter was an infant. He sends a small child support payment each month.

Barmore struggled for the next six years. She said making ends meet was a constant struggle, and to complicate matters, she developed an addiction to gambling that no budget...
could satisfy. She found instant gratification at the casinos and from pull-tabs, but her gambling addiction drove her even deeper into depression.

In April 2002, Barmore said her life became too much for her. She came home from work and called her mother, who cared for her boys after school, to make certain they were safe. She told her mother she was coming shortly to pick up the boys, but instead she took 40 Valium tablets and went to sleep. When she didn’t come for the boys, her concerned mother sent Barmore’s grandmother over to check on her. Fortunately, she said, her grandmother found her in time.

The ambulance rushed Barmore to St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham where physicians purged her stomach with black charcoal. Once stabilized, an ambulance took her to Compass Health in Sedro Woolley, Wash. “This was like a prison,” she said. “They made me strip down in front of two people and take a shower, and all I received was a bed, sheets, pillow and blanket. They took my clothes, makeup, all my personal belongings, even Q-tips, and gave me hospital scrubs, socks and shoes with no shoestrings.”

Barmore said the staff takes all personal belongings and limits what patients can have in their rooms. This keeps patients from using these items to commit suicide. No locks on the doors keep patients from locking out the staff, and the yard is fenced so patients can’t escape.

Barmore said she chose death over being with her boys because she was tired of the pressure of work, the frustration of single parenting, the burden of excessive debt and her inability to overcome her gambling addiction.

After 30 days at Compass Health, Barmore’s insurance ran out, they released her, sent her home with anti-depressants and only minimal post-supervision. Barmore said she tried to put her life back together and went back to her job in a bakery. She soon found herself in the same predicament, she said, depressed, deep in debt and unable to cope with parenting.

Barmore said she was receiving threatening repossession notices for delinquent payment on her Ford Explorer. She didn’t want to believe this could really happen. But one morning, as she was getting ready for work, she said to her son, “Konner, look out and see if our car is gone.” When Konner said the car was gone, she once again sought escape by swallowing 30 Valium pills that she had hidden under her mattress. This time she told her boys to watch television because she was ill and didn’t want to be disturbed, she said. She told the boys they didn’t have to go to school that day. She knew a friend was coming over that would find her boys and keep them safe. But Barmore hoped to be dead before her friend arrived.

“On that morning of Sept. 19, 2002, all I really wanted to do was die,” Barmore said. Fortunately, her friend arrived in time and Barmore was once again taken to St. Joseph Hospital, and again the hospital’s care unit was full. This time she went by ambulance to the care unit at Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon.

Once Barmore arrived, the doctors immediately put her on heavy doses of medication, and she went through intensive counseling and group therapy. Unlike her second suicide attempt, her counselors recommended an intervention. Her family came to the treatment center to help her realize that
suicide is not the answer. She said she doesn't know if the intervention helped or not because it turned into a yelling match between her and her mother.

After three weeks, Barmore went home. Once again, her insurance had run out. But her situation is different this time around. She said her boys are now in the custody of her parents. She is not going right back to work and is on medication. She is working with friends and family to find a way out of her financial problems, and is getting state assistance until she can go back to work.

Today, sitting next to her son, Konner, she quickly grabs an UNO card in excitement as they try to outsmart each other in the game. Her amber colored eyes sparkle and her curly sandy-blond hair frames a smiling face. She is slowly getting back to her perky self, said Barmore's longtime friend, Debra Orchard of Bellingham.

Orchard and other friends and family are hoping they can help Barmore see the value of living. They are trying to ease her stress by taking some of the responsibilities away from her until she is strong enough to cope. Barmore said she needs further counseling and continued help to deal with her spending and gambling addictions.

Barmore's traumatized sons will need continued counseling as well. Barmore said she never thought about what psychological damage the incidences would cause her two boys. Other than making sure her friend would find the boys and keep them safe, she said she didn't care. In her condition, she said, she didn't think of the long-term effects.

"You don't think of anyone else, like your kids," she said. "In fact, you are not thinking at all. You just don't care."

Jim Leamon, a clinician at Compass Health, said this psychological mindset is a true response of a suicidal patient. Most suicide victims have tunnel vision. They are not aware of the long-term affects of how the suicide affects others. He said the issues in their life often don't get resolved, resulting in tunnel vision.

"I don't feel that people (suicide victims) are doing it for attention," Leamon said. "People generally have had earlier trauma in their life, and don't have a sense of self esteem."

Leamon said the patterns to look for in potential cases are:
-Change in sleeping patterns
-Change in eating habits
-Lack of interest in previously pleasurable activities
-Inability to laugh and smile
-An interest in tying up loose ends (bill paying etc.)
-Conversation that seems out of place
-Unexplained mood changes
One concrete pattern that emerges, Leamon said, is an obsession with death. He or she may talk of suicide in the third person, as if someone else is considering suicide.

But Leamon said some people are secretive about their plans and the more private the person is, the more serious they are about committing suicide. Barmore said she was secretive about her plans; none of her family or close friends knew she was stashing pills under her mattress.

Karen Kemper, an occupational therapist who works in the mental health care unit at St. Joseph Hospital, stressed that it takes a team effort to work with suicidal patients. She said the hospital's mental health care team relies on Dr. Paul G. Quinnett's book, "Suicide: The Forever Decision." Quinnett likens a suicidal person to a bug in a cup. The bug tries to crawl out of the cup but keeps slipping back in. Suicidal people are like that bug walking around in a cup, seeing no way out except death.

In the article "Depression and Suicide" located on http://www.emedicine.com, Dr. Louise B. Andrew states "Depression is a potentially life-threatening mood disorder that affects up to 10 percent of the population, or approximately 17.6 million Americans each year."

In her article, Andrew said depression can go beyond the individual's "pain and suffering" to affect their family and work relationships, often causing these relationships to deteriorate.

"The economic cost of depressive illness is estimated at $30 billion to $44 billion a year in the United States alone," Andrew stated. "The human cost cannot be overestimated. As many as two-thirds of the people suffering from depression do not realize that they have a treatable illness and do not seek treatment."

The treatment for suicide attempters is not an entirely serious activity, Kemper said, pointing to a rubber Godzilla perched on a top shelf along with various projects created by patients. The staff tries to restore the patients' interest in life by doing fun activities that are functional and economical, since most patients have a limited income. The staff provides patients with opportunities to create crafts, share their talents and engage in sports activities to help them become interested in life again.

She said one way the care unit encourages the patients to get involved is to have them teach others their special talents. Kemper has learned how to play instruments and do a number of crafts and projects from the patients. Providing activities and encouraging creativity are ways of communicating with depressed people when they do not want to communicate verbally.

Both Leamon and Kemper stressed there are no easy answers. More research and more beds are needed in mental health units, they said.

"This is not an isolated issue," Kemper said, as she pointed to a list of famous people who have had depressive disorders over the years, such as Betty Ford, Princess Diana and Ozzie Osborne. "Depression unchecked can lead some people to suicide."

The challenge is to get people help in time, she said, and make them realize that life's traumas are temporary, but death is permanent.
Valerie Bauman learns the philosophies of running a successful, family-owned grocery store with imports from around the world. Photos by Evan E. Parker.

When Laurie Riskin decided to move to the small town of Van Zandt, Wash., from the bustling Seattle area, there was one important, somewhat unusual factor in her decision. It was a small yellow store almost 20 miles outside of Bellingham on State Route 9. The sign in front says, "Everybody's, The Exotic Grocery."

When Riskin first encountered the store in the summer heat of 1975, the site for organic Popsicles was just what she needed. The store was, and is, the center of the small community, Riskin said. And something about it made her decide to stay. "There's a little bit of everything there," Riskin said. "You're always going to find the best food, incredible assortments."

If the unusual claim on the sign doesn't intrigue out-of-town travelers, the colorful interior of the store and its array of gourmet foods and imports probably will. "People come in and are surprised this isn't a gas station, and we don't have a rack of Hostess cupcakes," employee Andrea Thompson said.

Everybody's may not have Hostess cupcakes, but it has plenty of other treats to tantalize a hungry traveler. When customers walk in the door they are greeted by the smell of fresh fruit. When they leave the store, it is not unusual to see them laughing on the way out. The shelves are stocked with everything from the bare necessities to bizarre little knick-knacks and toys.

Riskin said every time she shops at Everybody's, she leaves with something unexpected. "I always have to make sure I have extra money," she said, laughing.

Plastic tiaras, massage devices, unusual musical instruments and art are among the eclectic items that line the store. The owners still use many of the original shelves that came with the store to stock their products. The old-fashioned look gives the store a mom and pop appeal.

Jeff Margolis and his wife, Amy, fulfilled their dream of a life in the country when they bought the little grocery in 1970 and turned it into a unique shop. "We thought we would open an organic natural foods restaurant," Amy said. "From there it evolved into a grocery store."

The store carries apples, grapes, blueberries, corn and potatoes organically grown on the 1.5 acres of land the Margolises live on. When the season is right, customers may pick their fruit and vegetables right out of the garden. The full-service deli offers 50 different types of cheese. The varieties of German sausages are also a popular item, Jeff said.

Before Boca burgers and pesticide-free fruits and vegetables were popular, there was Everybody's Store. "The (organic) industry was in its infancy then," Jeff said. "I sometimes say we were pioneers in the industry. At the time all you could get that was organic was granola."

The store carries clothing and accessories imported from Thailand and Tibet; drums, harmonicas, jewelry, microbrews and temporary tattoos. It would take hours to explore every odd little item the store has to offer. "We don't just have food, we have other things that are more exotic or crazy," employee Wade Plumb said. "There's no other place I know that has all this stuff under one roof."

Riskin said she is impressed with the herbal remedies the store has to offer. "Amy is very knowledgeable in healthcare," Riskin said. "You can go in there and Amy will go through all the different herbs and medicines."
A customer for about 10 years, Betty Kipp said she shops at Everybody’s for Christmas gifts because they have so many unusual toys, imported jewelry and various musical instruments.

"The people who work there have a great eye for detail," Kipp said. "They bring in well-crafted items from other countries."

Kipp said the store holds something special for everyone.

"I’m a big kid; I love toys ... ever since I first walked in the door, I’ve felt this is a fun place to shop," Kipp said.

Jeff said he and his wife obtain the store’s products from many different sources. Some items are purchased from locals that bring in their handcrafted goods. He said he has to make two trips into Bellingham each week to purchase other items for sale. Many more of the products are obtained from trade shows that have hundreds of vendors selling gifts from around the world.

"You have to somehow intuit what you can sell and what you can afford," Jeff said. "There’s no great formula."

After much discussion about what the name of their community store should be, the Margolis’ daughter, Elea Plotkin, then 7, suggested the name Everybody’s.

The name stuck and the store is here 33 years later, still serving the community the Margolis family has dedicated themselves to.

When Jeff tries to explain why he loves his self-sustaining lifestyle in the countryside, he launches into a song by the 1970s rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears titled "House in the Country."

The title is just about the extent of the lyrics Jeff knows, but he belts it out with the gusto of a man who has realized his dream of a life in the country.

"That’s what I’ve always wanted – I’ve got my business, garden, orchard and my home; we’ve got it all," Jeff said. "I’ve raised my family here. We’ve been able to live our life in a beautiful manner."

Jeff earned his masters degree in political philosophy at Western Michigan University. He said his educational background has influenced his life philosophy and his role in the community.
Amy taught at Amherst College in Massachusetts for three years before the couple moved to Washington seeking a simpler life.

Jeff said they made the decision to be voluntarily poor and go back to the land.

"When we first moved in here, my mother came in with one of her husbands and he said, 'How can you live in this hovel?'"

Despite criticism, they have persevered.

The Margolises were married for eight years when they made the cross country move.

Jeff said working in the store is a way for him to promote face-to-face relationships within the community. He said the store's motto is "Think globally, eat locally."

Jeff said he believes good service and superior products promote commerce as a form of communication between himself and the customers.

"In business, you want customer loyalty because you want customers to return," Jeff said. "You have to reward your customer, you have to fulfill your customer. There's always another store, so you have to do something special."

Kipp said she continues to shop at Everybody's because of the quality and the rarity of the goods the store has to offer.

"I find the Nepalese products absolutely beautiful," Kipp said. "I don't know how long things will be coming out of (Nepal), and I think it's really great that they (Everybody's) have these things."

The store carries fine silver jewelry from Nepal and clothes and decorations from Thailand, Tibet and Pakistan.

Amy said it is the customers that allow the store to survive.

"There just seems to be a lot of people who appreciate us," Amy said. "We sure appreciate everyone who walks in that door."

Jeff said he is proud of everything the store has to offer, but he believes it's the feeling of community and the fact that he knows the names and families of all his best customers that makes it a success.

"It's really easy to lose a customer, and you'll never know why," Jeff said. "The customer owes the business owner nothing. Basically the business owner has to kiss ass. My niche is delicious food, special food and unusual gifts from around the world."

Jeff is active in the community and has been a member of countless local boards and associations. He said he believes it is important to play a role in the changes that affect the town one lives in.

"You want to be a person that is doing good deeds, is paying their bills and makes a contribution to their community," Jeff said.
Most recently, he played a significant part in the preservation of the Van Zandt Community Hall and the erection of the Josh Vanderyacht Memorial Park. Local volunteers built the park in 2002.

The park houses a swing, a jungle gym and a gazebo where parents can sit and watch their children play. In the corner of the park sit two large stones, memorializing the names of local youth who passed away before the age of 21.

"It's called social capital, building social capital — introducing elements into the community that contribute to happiness," Jeff said.

The store plays a huge role in the Margolis' vision of a life where there is a reciprocal relationship between themselves and the community.

Kipp said she has a good relationship with the Margolis and the Everybody's staff.

"I like the people who work there, I consider them friends," Kipp said. "I feel that they are on the same general wave length as I am on life."

While the store is known for its wide assortment of organic food, the variety of edibles and gifts assure Everybody's cannot be classified as just another organic store.

The store sells wild mushrooms that are grown in nearby woods and colorful hats woven by local women out of wool, alpaca fur and mohair. Customers can purchase herbs and other medicines to remedy symptoms specific to the individual or pick out a greeting card designed by the Margolis' daughter Beth.

Beth is an accomplished artist whose vivid pastel and watercolor paintings have been displayed at The Bagelry and in various local art shows. She also happens to have Down syndrome. Jeff said he is proud of Beth's talents and that she has overcome her disability and recently moved into her own apartment.

Beth sells her art through the regional shows she participates in and works at a local grocery store.

Plotkin is a pianist and singer. She has two albums for sale in Everybody's. The albums are entitled, "Little Rockets" and "Behind the Eyes." She is currently working on a project with another local musician.

Everybody's has expanded over the years, particularly in 1996, when the Margolis finished building a house behind the shop, with the help of friends.

Before the house was built, the Margolis family lived in the back half of the store. The space they lived in has now been converted into an office and storage area. Jeff said living in such a small place wasn't all bad.

With several musicians in the family, they entertained each other instead of paying for entertainment, he said.

"One of the really beautiful things of that time is both my daughter and my wife would practice — they're both musicians," Jeff said. "You would come into the store and you could hear music wafting through the wall. That I really miss."

The family and the store have come a long way since 1970.

"We started out with $1,000 worth of merchandise on the shelves," Jeff said.

Since then, Everybody's has continued to expand and find new interesting products to offer its customers.

"There's never been a day when I'm not struggling to make ends meet, or there's never been a day when I haven't wanted more," Jeff said. "I drive an 18-year-old car. This is a nickel and dime business."

Amy said the family has always been frugal with both business and personal expenses, which is one of the reasons Everybody's has survived.

"We just learned to live on a low budget," Amy said. "We expanded as we could pay for it instead of taking out loans."

Jeff said the family drove old cars, skipped vacations and got by without medical insurance.

"You don't borrow money because you don't know if you can pay it back," Jeff said. "You don't buy what you can't afford. Period."

Jeff insists he couldn't possibly be in it for the money.

"You don't even know what you're missing; there's no luxuries," he said. "Our biggest diversions have been music and what I call civic work."

As a board member of the American Museum of Radio, a founder of the Mount Baker Watershed Protection Association and former member of the Foothills Chamber of Commerce, Jeff has devoted much of his life to helping his community.

"We've been here for 33 years," Jeff said. "I went into this business not because I wanted to sell a thing, but rather because I wanted to be a focal point in this community. What a community needs most is personhood — that people know each other as people — that they know each other by name."
It is easy to live in the present without thinking about the future. Jenny O’Brien shares one woman’s struggle with skin cancer and explains the extreme risk of excessive sun exposure. Photos by Alaina Dunn and Kit Shaughnessy.

On a typical, sunny California day, 10-year-old Carol Kraber and her three sisters began their summer routine of lying in the sun during peak tanning hours. Kraber never thought that in the future she would be fighting a threatening case of malignant melanoma, the most deadly and rare form of skin cancer, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD).

Kraber moved to California from Denver when she was young. During her childhood, she enjoyed swimming and outdoor activities, spending countless hours in the sun. As she got older, she did yardwork in tank tops. She even planned her vacations around the sun, traveling to Hawaii and the Caribbean. Once the weather turned rainy or cold, she would hit the tanning salon to maintain her tan.

"I was always a sun worshiper," Kraber said. "However, there is no such thing as a safe tan. It's a myth that getting a base tan prevents burns."

Kraber, now 37, said she began tanning at a salon in her 20s.

"I was hooked," Kraber said. "I went six times a week for four years. I liked the music cranked up, the fan going and having quiet time. I just enjoyed the 25 minutes I had to myself, listening to AC/DC, Kiss and whomever else I was in the mood to listen to. I must admit I am a closet head banger."

After she first started tanning, people began to comment on how healthy she looked with her golden complexion. Although Kraber felt great about her tan, her parents worried.

"My parents used to warn me about my tan and they said I'd get skin cancer," Kraber said. "All I knew is I was dark enough that I no longer needed nylons and my skin was clearer. So when my parents warned me over the years about skin cancer, I told them, 'Yeah right. It'll never happen to me,' and kept on tanning. I thought that I would just have wrinkles. I had no idea you could die from it, no idea."

According to the AAD, there is no known safe way to tan. A suntan is the skin's response to an injury. Over time, tanning causes wrinkles and age spots.

With everyone warning her of the growing risks of skin cancer, Kraber finally decided to see a doctor after noticing a new mole on her left hip. She immediately knew something was wrong.

"Trust your gut instinct," Kraber said. "Call them beepers, your gut instinct, whatever, but trust that inner voice and don't try and talk yourself out of getting checked."

Kraber was diagnosed with malignant melanoma in July 2000, at age 34. She vividly remembers the day she received the phone call from the dermatologist. She said usually it's a 10-year lag time from the time one is exposed to the sun that things will turn cancerous. She tanned most heavily during her 20s.

"I was devastated," Kraber said. "When you hear the 'C"
word, you panic. You think you are going to die. I had the biopsy, where they removed the mole in a scoop manner so they could see the other layers of skin around it, about 10 days before. The doctor's office got the results and they called me at work. "You have malignant melanoma and you have 45 minutes to get to the hospital for additional surgery. That is how they broke the news to me."

Kraber explained that things went into slow motion. She remained calm and tried to contact her parents. "When I finally got ahold of them is when I burst out into tears," she said. "I have no family in the state (Washington) and I didn't want to tell my co-workers that I had cancer."

Kraber said things usually begins as a dark brown or black mole with an irregular shape and size. She also stressed the importance of treating it right away because it can spread so fast. Once the cancer enters the bloodstream, the person is most likely going to die. That is why she had to rush to the hospital for emergency surgery.

The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine states that melanoma is the least common type of skin cancer. However, it is the most aggressive. It spreads to other parts of the body, especially the lungs and liver, as well as invading surrounding tissue.

Art Huntley, M.D. states on the University of California Davis Web site that one in 100 people in the United States can expect to develop some form of skin cancer in their lifetime.

Also, the AAD states malignant melanoma will develop on the skin of 44,000 Americans annually. Every year, an estimated 7,300 Americans will die from melanoma.

After her first surgery, Kraber decided to begin an experimental study in interferon chemotherapy. After removing additional tissue around the first surgery site, Kraber endured her first round of chemotherapy.

Interferon chemotherapy involves injecting naturally occurring interferon directly into the original surgery site. Interferon is produced by cells to inhibit replications of a virus. "I felt it was my way to be proactive and not feel like a walking time bomb," Kraber said. "The doctor I found was doing a study on this theory about treating early stages of melanoma instead of waiting until the final stages."

So far, the interferon treatment has been effective. "I have waist length hair and I was more afraid of losing my hair than dying," Kraber said. "That sounds ridiculous, but it was true. The good news is if I ever had to do the 'traditional chemotherapy' where you lose your hair, I would have a magenta pink wig! Hell, I'd even get multiple wigs - blond, magenta and I think a purple one would be nice. Why not make a fashion statement?"

"So when my parents warned me over the years about skin cancer, I told them, 'Yeah right. It'll never happen to me,' and kept on tanning," - Carol Kraber, cancer survivor.

Kraber is on a strict regime of head-to-toe mole checks every 12 weeks with her dermatologist.

"After beating melanoma, many people are afraid to go back for their 12 week checks," Kraber said. "Don't let fear stop you from making that appointment. It is better to know what you are dealing with than pretend you sense something is wrong with your health."

To date, Kraber has had 29 surgeries in 29 months to remove moles. She maintains an extremely positive outlook and involves herself with other cancer survivors.
She participates in cancer survivor support groups and activities. Michelle Broderson is Kraber's closest friend and has been there for her through the entire process. "CJ (Kraber's nickname) has always been a strong-willed, independent person," Broderson said. "When she was first diagnosed, she was very brave. CJ likes to turn her attention to the numbers and charts and statistics in the hospital; she likes to find out all the facts and then some. I think this helped her through, although I think deep down she was scared to death."

Kraber's family is also very supportive, and helps her to maintain her positive outlook. "My dad coined the phrase that my biopsies are 'insurance-paid liposuction,'” Kraber said. "So instead of being sad or upset about my 'divot' (scooped out surgery scars), it is a way to lose weight. Now I joke with my surgeon that he should take some off my butt, boobs and thighs. It makes the whole process easier mentally. I tell people at this rate, with all these little divots, I'll be skinny by the time I'm 55."

Kraber's scars are small and are scattered across her body, mostly on her arms and back.

The National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Web site says to check the body head to toe. It also warns to check all areas of the skin, even those where sun may not reach. The scalp, back, neck and ears are often overlooked, as well as underneath fingernails. Having a friend or relative check hard-to-reach places may be beneficial. By checking skin regularly, one will become familiar with what is normal for their body. The NCI also states that it may be helpful to record the dates of skin exams and to write notes about the way the skin looks. If anything unusual is found, see a dermatologist or doctor right away.

The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine states that although melanomas are associated with sun exposure, the greatest risk factor for developing melanoma may be genetic. People who have a relative with melanoma have an increased risk up to eight times greater of developing the disease.

Kraber said the future holds great things for her. She currently works for a broadband company in Kirkland, Wash. As the corporate service manager, she maintains a busy and social lifestyle.

"I have three cats that need their mom," Kraber said. "They don't look at me like a cancer survivor or damaged material. I am their meal ticket, toy thrower and playmate. I now make time to watch wild birds. I stop my car to admire a sunset. I am so thankful I appreciate life so much more now. No one knows what the future will bring. My yearly goal is to make it to my next birthday."

Since being diagnosed with cancer, Kraber has changed the way she views the world. "My perspective on life has changed and I am thankful I got cancer,” Kraber said. "I know it sounds hokey, stupid or just plain bullshit, but I mean it."

"Prior to the day I was diagnosed, I used to work 15 hours a day, every weekend and I was a Type A Scorpio," she said. "But now, after all these surgeries..."
"I'm just special and I'm getting scars. But as my girlfriend told me, they are medals of honor, for I've survived cancer."

Carol Kraber, cancer survivor

and chemotherapy, I can tell you I appreciate every day that I wake up. I don't care about company politics or the stock market; waking up alive is all I need."

Kraber said she would like to get a few points across to young people today. "First, there is no such thing as a safe tan, second, information is power," Kraber said.

"Remember, even though you think it's scary to get your moles checked, mammogram, HIV test, whatever, information is power," she said. "Don't let fear stop you from making the appointment that could save your life. If you hear the 'C' word, remember cancer is no longer a death sentence. I'm living proof you can beat it. The trick is to continue to make those appointments."

Last, keep a sense of humor and follow the ABCDs of moles.

"Learn about the ABCDs of moles to prevent melanoma and know what to look for when you check your moles every month," Kraber said. "Your moles should be asymmetric, the border should be perfectly round and even, not jagged. The color should be the same and even, not bluish black and the diameter should remain small and not growing. They don't have to be raised to be cancer. That's the scary part, when the mole remains flat but it grows down. Remember, it's really curable if you catch it early."

Prevention is the best way to deal with skin cancer. Avoiding unnecessary sun exposure, such as sun lamps and tanning salons, is simple. Precautions include avoiding high sun, when the rays of the sun are most intense (usually between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.).

"Sunscreen is really important," said Catharine Vader, South Care Center Coordinator with Prevention and Wellness Services. "With the ozone changes, people need to be careful and tanning beds are just not a good idea."

Vader also added that people must be skin conscious in the winter months as well. "When people go skiing or snowboarding, they don't realize the light reflects off the snow and can burn and blister the skin, causing damage," Vader said.

Kraber said that if she can get one person to get their moles checked by a dermatologist, it would make her 29 surgeries worthwhile. Her most recent surgery was Nov. 6, 2002. Six mole sites were removed during this surgery. Although all of the sites were abnormal, none of them were cancerous. Her count is one malignant, 28 non-cancerous. Kraber's next surgery is in February and the process will continue every 12 weeks until the doctors stop finding abnormalities.

"If you snooze, you more than lose, you die," Kraber said. "I'm too young to do that. My motto is, 'Weebles wobble but we don't fall down.' Everyone as we get older, gets wrinkles. I'm just special and I'm getting scars. But as my girlfriend told me, they are medals of honor, for I've survived cancer."