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Kiko Sola
Western Washington University

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Editor’s Note


This issue of Klipsun wasn’t intentionally subcategorized into these three themes. But after careful examination, the words passion, discovery and perseverance stood out as appropriate descriptions for this collection of stories.

Passion exceeds being just a hobby. Scars and burns from spinning fire are medals of honor. Sharing the most intimate form of art, the human body, is a way of life. A man creates his fine wine by pouring his heart and soul into every glass.

Discovery distributes knowledge. A new technological advancement has advantages and repercussions, while a way to classify personality traits travels across the seas.

Perseverance gives inspiration. These people have been generous enough to let us into their lives, giving us a brief glimpse at what it’s like to experience the aftereffects of war, to have been born too early, or to have life taken away too soon.

We hope you enjoy reading these stories as much as we did. If you have any questions, comments or story ideas please call us at (360) 650.3737 or e-mail us at klipsun.wwu@hotmail.com.

Thanks for reading,

Kiko Sola

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Jaclyn Ruckie
Derek Sheppard
Chris Smith
Niki Smith
Yosuke Taki
Carl Weiseth

Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning beautiful sunset.
Peter Malcolm is a senior journalism major who hopes to graduate next winter, a feeling shared passionately by his parents. He'd like to thank those who went against the old adage and actually played with fire. He would like to send an additional thank you to his girlfriend, Deanna, for her tireless love and support and for lighting his fire. Cheers!

Annie Billington is a junior public relations major. She hopes this article encourages people to look at all lifestyles with an open mind, especially those that are generally misunderstood. She would like to thank the LARC members for their openness, enthusiasm and dedication to her story.

John Maduta would like to keep it simple and keep it short by thanking Al Gore for inventing the Internet and George W. Bush for reinventing the English language. Oh yeah, he would like to also thank his girlfriend Angela for all the snack cakes.

Lisa Mandt is a journalism major graduating in June. She is working to become a police reporter at a well-known newspaper. She wants to thank Paulette Lovely for having the strength to tell people about her husband even though it was painful for her to relive that night.

Alaina Dunn is a senior and will be attending graduate school at Northern Arizona University next year. She'd like to thank Randy Finley, John Boettcher and Michael D'Anna for taking time out of their busy schedules to talk with her. Their passion for the subject matter made the story a pleasure to write.

Jacob Block is a senior at Western Washington University. He spent his childhood in New Zealand, but returned to America in 1999 to be with his family and pursue a degree in journalism.

Niki Smith is a senior public relations major who is in her final year at Western. She would like to thank Jennifer and Dominic Andersen for opening their home and hearts to her.

Yosuke Taki is a native citizen of Tokyo Metropolis, visiting Western, majoring in communication, and hoping to graduate this summer. He has been told from Japanese people that he is a typical blood type B person and indeed, his blood type is B.
The night begins when the fuel is ignited; the heat emitted by the flaming kevlar wicks provides a small amount of warmth to the group of people gathered on the cool spring night. Speakers fill the open space with the music of Tool, but a different sound captivates the ears of those in attendance — the hypnotic whooshing of fire as it moves through the air, accompanying the brilliant serpents of flame that slice through the darkness.

Kayla Traisman, Stacy Simmons and Ryan Smith watch with satisfaction as Matt Laughter dances across the concrete patio in front of the apartment complex nestled between 21st Street and Douglas Avenue. Although Laughter appears to know exactly what he is doing, this is only his third week spinning poi — two flaming coils attached to the wrists or hands by chains or other devices.

"It’s amazing how fast you can pick things up if you’ve got good teachers," Traisman says, laughing, after Laughter notes that she uses her considerable spinning ability to teach others.

Traisman, Simmons, Smith, Laughter and a cluster of others are members of the growing fire-dancing scene. Smith says poi is the most popular of the forms, but others are in widespread use, including long staff, short staff and juggling. The informal group meets as often as several times per week to practice their crafts and have a good time. Smith says the group is in the process of forming a more organized fire troupe.

The ends of Laughter’s poi are no longer flaming, but he continues to spin, seemingly in a trance. Smith yells from the side, alerting Laughter to the fact that the most intriguing part of his performance is in need of revamping. Finally, Laughter walks over to the fueling station, eager to start spinning again.

Traisman, a welding student at Bellingham Technical College, has spun poi for more than a year and a half, making her the most experienced of the small group. She says fire-spinning seemed like her calling.

"The first time I saw it I was so amazed at the dancers’ ability to control the element of fire that I was mesmerized, and I have been ever since," she says, dipping the ends of her poi chains in a half-empty bucket of kerosene. Fire and dancing were meant to go together because fire itself dances, and we were meant to dance with it."

Fire is the most volatile of all the elements. Peter Malcolm investigates the people who harness it. Photos by Evan E. Parker.
Like Traisman, Western junior Simmons says the first time she saw someone spinning fire she was instantly hooked. “I just love spinning for a crowd because so many people enjoy it,” she says. “I remember the first time I spun for my dad it was so cool because it just blew him away. He was like, ‘I thought fire-dancing would be you prancing around with a candle.’ It was definitely a lot faster than he expected.”

Not all the fire-dancers live to be the center of attention. Smith says he prefers to stay away from the crowds that frequent the larger performances held in Seattle and surrounding areas. “This art is not all about performing,” he says, taking a break from a 20-minute staff-spinning session. “Personally, I enjoy doing nice, quiet shows where you can just vibe with the other people there.”

The performance of a fire-dancer is a celebration for the senses, but Smith contends that nothing can compare to doing it yourself. He says his discovery of poi helped him cope with a difficult move here from Michigan. “It’s the closest thing I can get to meditating with my body,” he says. “When I first moved here, it was tough and I had trouble adapting, so I would go down to the park and spin by the water. It really helped me out when I was spending a lot of time alone.”

Smith, a sophomore industrial design major at Western, further advocates fire-spinning by pointing out some of its indirect effects. “It’s a good exercise, gives you more rhythm, it relaxes you, and it’s a good social activity,” he says. “When you spin with others, you can really feel their energy, which allows you to form tight bonds and good friendships. Plus it’s a good deterrent from drugs and alcohol because if you do those things when you spin it’ll be disaster. It helps me stay away from that stuff.”

Simmons promptly rises, puts on a ski hat to protect her hair, dips the ends of the poi in the bucket and searches through her pockets, looking for a lighter she will never find. “Obviously there are some potential dangers when playing with fire,” Simmons says, moments after Laughter lit his pant leg on fire during his poi routine. “I’m sure everybody here can show you at least a couple of scars. I’m still missing some of my arm hair.”

More than two hours after the first flame was lit, it is time to leave. Not because the spinners are ready to stop, but because the fuel supply runs out. “I’ve said it a hundred times: always bring more fuel than you need,” Traisman says as the rest of the group packs up their belongings.

Calm descends over the area where, only moments ago, the fire-dancers were tangoing with one of nature’s deadliest elements. The air is still, the silence tangible and a chill comes across the sky has been extinguished, but the magical performance witnessed tonight will happen again at large venue shows, in private backyards and in cramped apartments. Without a doubt, those who practice this art form will always find a time and a place to do what they love. Assuming, that is, they have a lighter.

As Simmons gracefully spins to the music, Smith takes a break to reflect on the performances of his peers. He says a common thread shared by these fire-dancers is the mutual respect they have for one another. Every dancer has a distinct style, which means everyone can learn something from someone. “Everybody’s got their own style and technique,” Smith says. “I could show the world’s greatest spinner a thing or two, just in the same way that a true beginner could impress me.”

Traisman says much of the fire-dancing scene today can trace its origins back to New Zealand, where the native Maori would dance with poi as a form of meditation and self-expression. Some skeptics voice concern about the safety of the activity, considering any sort of recreation involving flaming objects moving at high speeds has some inherent dangers. Those who practice the art, however, understand the risks and accept that they will likely face varying degrees of bodily harm.

“Obviously there are some potential dangers when playing with fire,” Simmons says, moments after Laughter lit his pant leg on fire during his poi routine. “I’m sure everybody here can show you at least a couple of scars. I’m still missing some of my arm hair.”

“People have to practice the art form as it is done and accept that they will likely face varying degrees of bodily harm,” Smith says. “I’ve said it a hundred times: always bring more fuel than you need.”
It's not your average campground. Annie Billington exposes the naked truth behind the Lake Associates Recreation Club. Photos by Evan E. Parker.
Standing naked on stage in front of a large group and singing karaoke may sound like a bizarre nightmare, but for members of Lake Associates Recreation Club (LARC) in Mount Vernon, naked karaoke is an ordinary activity.

In the audience, about 30 people, most of them naked too, whistle, clap and cheer along with songs like “We are Family” and “If I Were a Rich Man.”

“Take it off! Take it all off,” echoes through the tent.

Gary Young, 56, is the first member to bare everything. He wears nothing but white tennis shoes, athletic socks and a thick, multi-colored cape. As the evening continues, Gary, like others, finds himself more comfortable in the nude — even while singing karaoke.

As guests and members walk through the door of the Spring Fling, a potluck and karaoke night, park co-owner Mike King, 56, insists everyone have dinner, dessert and a beer. White Christmas lights line the inside of the park’s 1,800-square-foot activity tent, flickering candles rest on table cloth-covered picnic tables and an American flag hangs behind the homemade wooden stage.

LARC has about 120 active members who travel from Canada, eastern Washington and cities along the I-5 corridor to participate in the nudist lifestyle. Karaoke is just one of the group’s many nude activities. The club also offers movie nights, dances, nature hikes, game nights and dips in the hot tub.

Members come from different backgrounds, with a variety of education levels and job experiences. The nudists range from babies to grandparents, although the average LARC member is 45.

“The one unifying item is we all want to be a social nudist,” park co-owner Astrid King, 51, says.

LARC is affiliated with the national nudist organization American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR) and the Northwest Nudist Association (NWNA), a regional nudist organization within the AANR.

Across the country, more than 230 nudist clubs are affiliated with the AANR.

Mike describes the mission of the club as providing members with a safe, legal and family friendly place to enjoy nude recreation.

“In actuality, per square inch exposed, a nudist isn’t significantly exposing more skin than brief swimsuits at clothed beaches do, and the swimsuit draws much more attention to the body than going nude does,” Gary said. “That’s really the draw to nudist activities for people with scars, handicaps, being overweight, and many other perceived body imperfections. Nudists are generally much more tolerant than others.”

When first-time guests at LARC step out of their cars and remove all their clothing, body parts that have never been exposed to the sun send off a pale, but distinctive signal screaming, ‘I’m a first time nudist.’

Before entering the grounds of the park, guests and members drive past a sign reading, “This is a clothing optional campground. You may encounter people enjoying nude recreation.”

Through an oversized, white brick wall with a forest green
gate and up a dusty gravel driveway, visitors enter into 65-acres of nudist-friendly territory.

“You could have 100 people here and not even know it,” Astrid says.

The property has two natural waterfalls, as well as numerous hiking trails, all surrounded by trees concealed in moss. Birds and a rushing creek are heard from a distance, creating a serene setting.

“We have a couple of wetland areas, so the deer, birds and rabbits all have a place to live,” Mike says.

A child’s play area, with a playhouse, twirl bars and swings lies on a five-acre sunning lawn. The lawn also features the activity tent, hot tub, full-sized volleyball court and small homes called park models.

On the outskirts of the sunning lawn sits a rental travel trailer and rental house for overnight visitors. Forty-two full-hook-up RV camping sites, a tent camping area and a new shower facility lie across a rusty, iron bridge.

“It’s like going camping anywhere, except you don’t have to wear your clothes,” Mike says.

Members have the opportunity to live at an RV site on the property for $700 a year. Although most members only live on their leased RV sites during the weekends, many have decorated them to look like a permanent residence with flower gardens and extensive plastic and ceramic patio decor.

Gary and his wife Elizabeth, 59, have leased an RV site at LARC for the last seven years.

“Many activities, including sitting around the fire ring and toasting marshmallows for s’mores, happen as it gets later in the evening,” Gary says. “By staying at the site we avoid the extra travel time and gain additional time at LARC. By staying at LARC we don’t have to put our clothes on to travel, even though I often drive nude with a cover-up handy. We also store food and personal items in the trailer and do not have to organize them every time we go. The trailer gives us shelter from the weather when needed and a personal space at the club.”

Mike and Astrid reside on the LARC grounds along with paying members.

When the Kings bought 40 acres there in 1990, the property was camouflaged with logs and brush and had only one road. They purchased an additional 25 acres in 1994 and members helped rake and bulldoze the property until it was ready for use in the mid-’90s.

In 1981 the King’s joined a nudist club in Sultan, located south of Seattle. The club in Sultan, now called Lake Bronson Club, split in the mid-’80s due to member and owner disagreements.

The Kings joined 50 nudists from the Sultan club to form the Mount Vernon LARC nudist community. The members are an essential element of the club’s operation. Everything at the facility is based on member-volunteer efforts, such as helping in the office, maintaining the grounds, cleaning and providing food for events.

“We have a fantastic membership who volunteers their help,” Astrid says.

Mike says members generally are not worried about being gawked at or judged. Guests and members who do not abide by specific rules of conduct are asked to leave the park temporarily or permanently. Sexually related behavior is not permitted within the grounds of LARC.

“We had to let a member go,” Astrid says. “She was warned and warned. She was hitting on every guy who came into the place, practically.”

Many people associate nudist parks with orgies, partner switching and sex. Nudity has nothing to do with sex, Astrid says.

“We are not a sexy bunch of people,” she says.

Astrid says people who come to the facility simply enjoy the free feeling they have when their clothes come off.

“When you take your clothes off, you take your stress off,” Mike says.

He says that people’s true personalities come out when they are nude because they are not concerned with the clothes
they are wearing or the way they look. People do not come to LARC and think, "I need to lose five pounds before I get nude," he says.

Gary says the best aspect of joining a nudist club is the social atmosphere. Many members transform from homebodies to being completely involved with activities and events at LARC, he says.

"We never pressure anyone to take their clothes off," Astrid says. "People come because they really want to try (social nudism)."

Some members communicate openly with friends and family outside the park that they belong to a nudist organization, while others prefer to keep their nudist lifestyle private.

"Some people come (to LARC) and don’t want their neighbor to know, but their neighbors are here," Mike says. "So now you both know."

When the Youngs first became nudists, they shared their new lifestyle with everyone they knew by sending out Christmas cards describing and explaining LARC.

A few of their relatives reacted negatively toward their new lifestyle, but most were tolerant of their new desire to live in the nude, Gary says.

"My mother was very interested in the fact that we bought a trailer for LARC and we talked them into visiting us to see it," Gary says. "It was chilly that evening and they joined a bunch of LARC members — who were all clothed — with us around the fire ring. The nudists were so friendly and normal that, even though my parents would never take their clothes off in public, my mother became a great ambassador in explaining it to others. That was not a result that I ever expected."

Gary’s mother’s reaction to his nudist lifestyle is similar to the reaction he gets from members of his church.

The Youngs are active in their church. Elizabeth has seminary training, is a lay reader and a leader in services; Gary is the Webmaster for their church Web site.

"The reaction we get when talking to church people about nudists is almost identical to that we get at the nudist club when talking about church activities," Gary says. "The gatherings, meetings, potlucks, dances, camping, et cetera, are all almost identical from a social aspect, except at nudist events we don’t have to wear clothes. People expect religion and nudity to be incompatible, but the nudist population can’t be distinguished from the general population at large."

A small Christian Nudist Fellowship meets at LARC on Sundays.

Nudity on the park’s facility is not as popular in the winter. LARC and two other nudist organizations rent out an athletic club from October to March, allowing nudists the opportunity to practice their lifestyle during the winter months.

Renting out the facility offers members the opportunity to socialize with one another, enjoy nude recreation throughout the winter and make money for each nudist organization involved. Members can participate in swims, volleyball, racquetball and other sporting activities at the athletic club.

LARC does not have a clubhouse on the grounds to hold nude winter activities. Within the next two years, Mike says he would like to have an indoor pool built on the grounds to allow nudists an opportunity to practice their lifestyle during winter.

Given that Northwest weather is commonly cold and wet, Washington may not be an ideal setting for a nudist park, but bleak winter months do not prevent Gary from practicing nudism outdoors. He is comfortable nude if the wind is not howling, the rain is not pouring and the thermometer is above 30 degrees.

"I have what they call a nudist handicap," Gary says. "It’s the temperature at which a nudist will take their clothes off. The object is to have a low temperature."

Gary’s high tolerance for seasonably cool weather frequently singles him out as one of the few die-hard nudists during the winter months’ events.

"Once I became a nudist, I realized that wearing clothes is textile bondage," Gary says. "Of course, I’m maintaining my reputation and handicap as a cool-weather nudist too."
John Maduta examines different opinions about pirating software from the Internet. Photos by Erika Björnson.
Piracy on the high seas has been replaced by piracy over high bandwidths. Today's Internet pirates disturb corporate interests much in the same way that seafaring pirates once disrupted commerce. The mouse and the keyboard are the 21st century's rapier and cannon. Battles that once were waged on open water are now taking place in the vast span of cyberspace.

Pirating of computer software and file sharing copyrighted material such as music and movie files has become a common practice on almost every major college campus, including Western. Whether swapping licensed electronic files is right or wrong is debatable. What is not debatable is the fact that sharing copyrighted material without the authorized consent of the rightful holder(s) is 100 percent illegal.

In a way, file sharing is comparable to robbing a bank. Both are felony crimes and either could result in serious fines and a stint of jail time. Under the No Electronic Theft (NET) Act, signed in 1997 by President Clinton, fines range anywhere from $750 to $250,000 and may sometimes be coupled with a five-year prison sentence for those convicted.

Even with these threats in place, Fairhaven student Nick, who requested his last name remain anonymous, continues to download and upload copyrighted files on peer-to-peer networks without much fear of law enforcement.

"I don't feel like I'm stealing, it's more like I'm using, because I don't like the idea of it being called stealing," Nick, 23, said.

Nick said it was unlikely that moderate file swapping would get him or other average users busted. In late April a federal judge in Los Angeles alleviated tension for pirates when he ruled in favor of two online services that allow file swapping; they were allowed to continue operations.

Before that, in late November 2002, the U.S. Naval Academy seized almost 100 computers from students suspected of downloading unauthorized copies of songs from the Internet. Four students at the University of Michigan were indicted in a similar case involving file sharing. In December, representatives from universities and industry groups formed a task force to address the growing problem of piracy through file sharing on peer-to-peer networks.

Nick said rock and electronica music make up most of his library of shareable files, while deeply involved in managing his transfers over a peer-to-peer network known as iMesh.

Nick is a music study student at Fairhaven College and a musician himself. With a head of long gold hair and several dingy guitars it's obvious that he has an interest in music. He claims to have shared more than 10,000 music, movie and software files in the past two years on peer-to-peer programs such as iMesh and Morpheus.

He said these and other popular file-swapping services make it fairly simple for everyday people with Web access to acquire copyrighted material for free.

The U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 has already been amended four times to include new forms of composition and technology, such as sharing licensed files and burning compact discs, CDs. More than a dozen members of Congress have recently urged Attorney General John Ashcroft to prosecute those who distribute files on peer-to-peer services.

Even with the 1999 court-ordered shutdown of the mp3 file-sharing site Napster, an earlier music-swapping software company, college students continue to freely share and download licensed mp3s. Bootlegs of films, copies of DVDs and software programs are fast becoming popular share files on campuses as well.

"I would never go into a store and steal a CD or a DVD, but I don't see a problem with burning a CD with mp3s I got through file sharing." -Nick

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"I would never go into a store and steal a CD or a DVD, but I don't see a problem with burning a CD with mp3s I got through file sharing," Nick explained as he scrolled through a list of unreleased Radiohead songs he had recently downloaded. "Everybody does it, and I know college students probably do it more than any other age bracket, and I never have a battle of ethics with myself over it."

Nick insisted that recording and motion picture industries are making a fuss because they are the ones losing profits, not artists. He said that the same thing happened when tape players and VCRs came out on the market and
both industries believed that sales would drop because no one would purchase originals anymore.

Nick said he keeps up with the current news surrounding file-swapping and recounted reading about several suits against the file sharing forums Kazaa and Gnutella.

Even the recent case, involving Internet service provider Verizon, in which a judge ordered the name of at least one customer to be turned over to music companies for allegedly offering copyrighted music for download, was not enough to deter Nick from file-swapping. He said he would continue downloading copyrighted material but lessen the number of files he lets other users download from his computer library. “With some of the recent crackdowns on college students I thought I would play it safe and lower my uploads because I know they go after people who share a lot.”

Nick may be smart to do so. At a March 13 hearing, Rep. John Carter (R-Texas) suggested that prison time might be the only way of deterring people from illegal downloading. During the hearing Carter was quoted as saying, “I think it would be a good idea to go out and actually bust a couple of these college kids.”

This year the Record Industry Association of America (RIAA) took the battle to a new frontier by filing lawsuits against students at Princeton, Michigan Technological University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, marking the first time the industry had gone after individually identified Net users. The NET Act states that a fine of $150,000 per song may be implemented. The act says anyone with 10 or more illegally obtained copyrighted files in their possession will be prosecuted.

Piracy remains a steady trend, especially with college students such as Nick, despite legal measures from the RIAA to secure copyright infringements over peer-to-peer forums. Some RIAA members include big label record companies such as Virgin, Capitol, Atlantic, Elektra, Warner Brothers, Reprise and Sony.

According to research done in part by Eric Chiang, now an associate professor of economics at New Mexico State University, college students are great candidates for piracy for a number of reasons. College students, as a group, tend to be technologically savvy, have low disposable incomes and often need costly specialized software for technical education classes — all of which seem to add to the appeal of piracy, Chiang said.

Chiang began gathering data on copyright infringement on college campuses in 1996. Through some extensive surveys of undergraduates at several public and private universities during the past five years, Chiang’s statistics revealed the number of students who admitted to using illegally copied “free” software steadily decreased between the 1996-97 and the 2000-01 school years. Chiang attributes this drop in file sharing to some industry initiatives that were aimed at marketing incentives with the purchase of a CD, DVD or other product. For example, a legitimate music CD may contain an Internet password that could let a consumer access entertainment unavailable to non-buyers.

“College students make decisions based on incentives, just like any other individual,” Chiang said in an e-mail. “However, college students tend to be price sensitive to technological and media goods.”

He said the 80 percent drop in price for CD burners during the past seven years, along with the improved ease of using software, has led to the steady rate of college students who infringe on copyright media in some form.

Chiang said several anti-piracy strategies by software makers have started to pan out. Some of these strategies include bundling purchased music with coupons for future purchases or free apparel after a certain number of products are bought. Chiang said the speed at which these strategies are moving is not fast enough to stop file swapping. He said it is hard to beat “free,” no matter what the incentives are for legitimate purchases.

Jackson Long, 21, a Fairhaven audio recording student, has a different view. Long fervently defends his argument for why people should not stop buying music.

Long shares some of the same interests as Nick. They both love music and they both consider themselves musicians — artists for that matter. But Long, who has a longstanding rivalry with people who swap copyrighted music, said that struggling artists get grilled financially when consumers burn instead of buy music.

Long said that CD sales can really help starving artists continue to create music or pay for tour expenses. Long is not insisting that burning CDs should stop all together. He said it is a great way to share music when the artist gives consent.

“If you’re going to be into some artist or some form of music, the least you could do is respect that artist and the work that goes into making music,” Long said.

Long is a member of three local bands and said selling a $10 CD means that an artist could see about $5 back in profit. This profit pays for touring, equipment and band necessities. He said that if nobody purchases their CDs a band would have to scrape by financially to make ends meet. Dishing out thousands of dollars for studio recording time and trying to keep a band together with little income from the sale of legally purchased music may force a band to stop playing, or even break up.

Long knows about the recent steps taken by the record industry and the motion picture industry concerning piracy, but said he wonders how Western feels about file-swapping and burning copyrighted music.

ResTek is Western’s officiating band-
"I think it would be a good idea to go out and actually bust a couple of these college kids."
—Rep. John Carter (R-Texas)

width police. Its job is to ensure high-speed Web access for the residence halls scattered throughout Western's campus. ResTek's extensive Web site contains sections dedicated to file sharing and takes a prudent approach to copyrighted material. It reads, "If you do not have permission to keep or use [copyrighted] files, you should delete them," going on to state, "you should not download, store, use, copy or distribute any file without permission of the copyright holder."

ResTek has an ardent policy on copyrighted material that is extensively detailed, though not much enforcement has taken place to make sure students are not pirating.

Pointers on how to manage popular file-swapping programs are on the ResTek Web site as well. Western Washington University's Acceptable Use Policy states that programs such as Kazaa and Limewire (both popular peer-to-peer programs) violate policy and should not be used on the Western network. ResTek restrictions on sharing over these peer-to-peer services are not clear or effective enough to stop students from trading files.

Turmoil recently arose about Direct Connect, Western's student-run file sharing network, and it may be ordered to shut down. Given the RIAA track record, it is a possibility. The Direct Connect setup is the same as some of the big name peer-to-peer services except that it is designed to serve Western students only. This means that files that get shared can be tracked by the RIAA and it may apply pressure on the college to shut down the service.

Some colleges have complied and shut down their peer-to-peer networks but a good percentage have not, citing freedom of speech or privacy rights. Colleges also hesitate to shut down peer-to-peer networks because their Internet connections benefit from outside servers that relieve bandwidth clogs. Bandwidth is a speed at which information travels over the Internet, the higher the bandwidth the better the usage for students. This also means less work for college network administrators managing Internet protocol.

Jonathan Marianu, 28, a computer network administrator for Columbia Sportswear in Portland, Ore., may know why Western and other colleges do not do anything to stop or apprehend students who file share. In the past, Marianu was a computer systems administrator and consultant for various public schools and places of higher learning including the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT).

Marianu's vast knowledge of anything computer related defies his young age. As a recent college graduate himself, he said he knows what kind of stuff goes on over dorm room computers operating on school servers. He said OIT administrators, much like Western's ResTek, tend to concern themselves with traffic protocol and not with controlling what students do with Web access. "Our main concern at the time wasn't whether trading copyrighted material was wrong; rather it was how the high bandwidth file sharing affected Net access for other students."

Marianu said there were too many loopholes that could not be filled without total restraint on all file sharing by computer administrators. He said there were definite First Amendment concerns when discussions arose about stopping file-swappers. Marianu added that censorship or halting all file transfers between students was impossible, yet he knew that most of the files being traded were copyrighted music, movie and software files.

"The biggest problem with students using school servers to trade or download copyrighted material is not an ethical one, but a technical one, in the sense that as long as the sharing didn't clog bandwidth speeds OIT was OK with it," Marianu said.

Since no central servers contain copyrighted files, it is difficult for legal action to have an effect on popular file sharing forums. These forums do not "openly" promote the transfer of copyrighted material. It is basically up to the user on what he or she will share and download — whether the files contain copyrighted material makes no difference to the peer-to-peer file sharing forums. The ethics behind piracy cannot be reasoned by computers, but by people.

This leaves Nick and others like him free to download without the fear that someone will bust the door down on their dorm room and seize their computer, while people like Long try to explain to others why buying a CD could mean the starvation for a struggling band. ☞
On March 12, Jerome Lovely was the victim of a hit-and-run that left him fatally injured. Lisa Mandt recounts the events of that night and the enormous outpouring of support from the Bellingham community that followed. Photos courtesy of Paulette Lovely.

The Incident

Paulette Lovely sat with her husband in the hospital every minute for eight days, hoping and praying he would regain consciousness. When it was clear he was not going to survive, life support was suspended.

Jerome Steven Lovely died March 20 at the age of 39 after being struck by a car on Cordata Parkway in Bellingham. "He was such a good man," Paulette whispered. "I am really grateful I had that time with him. Jerome had a huge heart. He was my best friend and I could talk to him about anything."

Jerome was a security guard at the Bellis Fair Mall. Even at 6 feet and 260 pounds, Paulette said he was a joyful guy who would walk down the hallways of the mall after hours, singing and bopping to the music. But when a car followed him home on March 12, he didn't hesitate to protect his family.

After driving around for some time to lose the car, they decided to head back toward their house on Horton Street, Paulette said. "As we turned down our street, we saw the car sitting right in front of our house with the lights off," she said. "So I told Jerome to keep driving."

After they turned around, she said the car started following them again. It was at this time that Jerome pulled over and got out of the car to confront the driver, Paulette said.

Jerome walked into the street holding a baseball bat that he had purchased after a brick was thrown through his window a few weeks earlier. Paulette said it was weird that he brought the bat into the car that night because he never had before.

"He (the accused) said, 'you fucking nigger,' and floored his accelerator and hit Jerome. His body hit the windshield and fell to the other side of the street," Paulette said, trying to hold back tears. "It was traumatizing to me," Paulette said, recalling the night of the incident. "I am traumatized right now."

Then the car sped away, leaving Jerome lying in the street with severe brain stem trauma. Paulette tried to flag cars, but she was so distraught that the drivers could not understand what she was saying.

David Richard Scott Jr., a white man, is accused of having hit Jerome with his 1979 Chevrolet Caprice. Scott, 21, pled innocent to second-degree murder and felony hit-and-run. Scott's trial is set for July 1. If he is convicted he could face between 11 and 19 years in prison.

A few weeks before the incident, Jerome had escorted Scott out of the mall for being disruptive, said Herman Swanson, the director of public safety at Bellis Fair.

"It was not a big deal because there was no paperwork filed about the incident," Swanson said.

No hate crime charges have been applied at this time because there is not enough evidence to prove the crime was race-based, said Dave McEachran, Whatcom County prosecuting attorney.

"Hate in your heart doesn't mean it is a crime," Bellingham Police Chief Randy Carroll said. "You can't reach into people's hearts and take the hate out."

However, Carroll said he is turning this case over to the U.S. attorney in Seattle for review before Scott's trial begins to be reviewed for federal civil-rights statutes.

The Man

Jerome spent his childhood in Detroit, but left for the West Coast in the early '90s to start a new life. He found happiness and peace with his wife Paulette. This August would have been the Lovelys' six-year wedding anniversary. "We both knew in our hearts that we wanted to be together," Paulette said.

Pastor Felix Anderson delivered the service for Jerome's funeral at Christ the King Church. Anderson also gave Jerome the one thing he always wanted — a father.

"Jerome asked me to be his godfather," Anderson said. "He didn't have a father figure in his life and asked me if I would be it. It worked out well because I have never had a son."

Anderson said Jerome brought a lot of joy to his life and everyone else's life. More than 200 people attended Jerome's funeral on March 25 to express their sympathy for his family and grieve the loss of a man whom many considered kind and loving. Paulette said that Jerome always found comfort in his faith and spent his spare time at church.

Jerome's 9-year-old son, Challen, flew out to Seattle from Missouri to see his father in the hospital before he died, Paulette said.

"Jerome didn't know who his father was and he wanted to so badly," Paulette said. "Being a father meant so much to him."
When the Bellingham Police Department (BPD) notified Jerome’s mother, Rose Lovely Brown, of the incident, she could not afford the plane ticket from Detroit to Seattle, Carroll said. So officers on the BPD donated money and bought her a round-trip ticket.

Upon her arrival at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, a BPD squad car picked up Jerome’s mother and drove her to Bellingham.

“We wanted to get her here as soon as possible because of the status of his condition,” Carroll said.

The department also assisted the rest of Jerome’s family with transportation and flight itineraries. Kendra Cristelli, the founder of the Officers in Uniform support group, set up a trust fund for Jerome’s family at Washington Mutual.

So far the fund has generated $1,400 from members throughout the community, Paulette said. In addition, support officers assisted the Lovelys with everything, including a shoulder to cry on.

“Through all this situation, I found that this town of Bellingham has so much heart.” -Paulette Lovely

Jerome’s brother William Brown was appreciative of the BPD’s efforts to help his family.

“It was a bad situation and everyone took us in and made us feel at home,” Brown said.

He said his brother called him the day of the accident just to hear his voice.

“He didn’t sound like the same person I talked to on Sunday,” Brown said. “He sounded like he was being choked, like he wanted to say something but he couldn’t.”

Brown said it was as though Jerome knew he was not going to be around.

“He just kept asking me if I would make sure his family was taken care of if anything happened to him. I said, ‘I am the little brother, I always take care of everything,’” Brown said.

He said he plans to return to Bellingham in late June to watch the trial and see his brother get justice.

“I want everyone to know that if I could turn back the hands of time, I would take his place,” he said in a low voice. “That’s how much I love him.”

When asked about her feelings toward the person who took her husband away, Paulette said, “I forgive him because God allows me to forgive him.” But she said, “I feel anger and it’s not a lot because I haven’t been thinking about him. I just keep thinking about how much I miss Jerome.”

Today, Paulette said she constantly replays the events of that dreadful night over and over in her head, trying and hoping to remember the last few moments of Jerome’s life.

“I can’t remember his last words,” she said. “I wish I could.”

“Through all this situation, I found that this town of Bellingham has so much heart.” -Paulette Lovely
Randy Finley left his career in the movie industry to pursue his dream of owning a vineyard. Alaina Dunn discovers the challenges and benefits of being a western Washington wine maker. Photos by Jenny Holm.

The view from Randy Finley's deck is one of quiet passion. It's a collection of nearly bare and somewhat awkward grapevines nestled in a thin strip of land between his wine tasting room and the rumbling Mount Baker Highway. This unassuming flora, known collectively as Vitis vinifera, is waiting for its newest crop, which will eventually fetch several hundred dollars per pound. Finley has poured the last 10 years of his life into these neatly groomed vines, and the work, it seems, is never ending.

When he does get a chance to stop, he likes to grab a glass of wine and put his feet up. It reminds him of what entranced him about the Mount Baker Vineyards more than a decade ago. What he got when he purchased the vines and winery, however, was much more than he had bargained for.

"I thought that I could assume this position on the front porch, sipping a glass of wine, and all I would have to do is manage the money," he said.

Instead, Finley had to immerse himself in every aspect of the winery, from pruning leaves to marketing his vintages. These days he works seven days a week, sometimes as many as 18 hours a day. Finley is one of many western Washington winery owners trying to make a name for himself in an overcrowded and fiercely competitive market.

What makes the process even more difficult is that very few grapes actually grow in northwest Washington, known in the wine world as the Puget Sound Appellation. The grapes grown in the Puget Sound, many originating from Germany, are ideally suited for northern climates. The majority of wineries based in western Washington, including Mount Baker, must buy or ship their grapes from eastern Washington. The percentage of Washington wines grown, bottled and distributed from the Puget Sound is miniscule.

"If you were to think of it as a whole hand in relation to the rest of the state, it would probably be a small portion of a fingernail," said John Boettcher, a wine specialist at the Bellingham Hagen's grocery store in Sehome Village.

Finley did not begin his career in the winemaking industry. As a young man Finley opened The Movie House, the first in a string of 20 movie theaters he owned in the Puget Sound region. But a conflict with a group of movie distributors resulted in an anti-trust case that won him a reported $9.5 million award.

"They called me a mini-mogul in the movie business," Finley said. "And I couldn't stand the people in the movie business, but I absolutely loved the small mom-and-pop restaurants, the little guys."

It was this love of independent restaurants paired with a fluke trip to Bellingham that brought Finley to Mount Baker Vineyards. While on business in the area in 1989, Finley came across the vineyard, which was close to bankruptcy.

"The people who owned it had burned themselves out for 10 years trying to make it work," he said. "But, it was so pretty."

Finley, like the other winemakers in the Puget Sound, had to make the conscious decision to work out of western Washington instead of less expensive and more climatically fitting regions like the Yakima Valley. Finley said the choice had as much to do with quality of life as it did with winemaking. Yakima, he said, has a kind of industrial winemaking and grape growing. Whatcom County, on the other hand, was "cute."

"I came up here and I thought, 'God, this is franchise cute,'" he said. "If a guy could franchise this he could make a fortune on it."

It's certainly not any less expensive to work out of the Puget Sound area. Western Washington wineries have costs that are nearly quadruple those of wineries in eastern Washington, much of these costs stemming from weather problems. Often, Mount Baker Vineyards must remove the leaves from the vines to allow the sunshine to hit the grapes so they can ripen. It's a very labor-intensive process, Boettcher said, and one that does not exist in the eastern part of the state.

"The simple fact is the wineries who have chosen western Washington have done so to play the tourist thing, the tasting thing," Boettcher said. "They can create a winery and a tasting room, and be successful in that fashion."

Chateau Ste. Michelle in Woodinville is a prime example of this trend. The winery grows and bottles all of its wines in eastern Washington, but offers tours and tasting seven days a week at its Woodinville location.

Mount Baker Vineyards has had fewer tourists, the majority of who come through during the summer. Winter sees almost no visitors, Finley said, as Mount Baker Highway becomes a conduit for eager skiers on their way to the ski resort.

"Skiers drive by at 70 miles an hour and drive back down the mountain at 90 miles an hour," he said.

The challenge of running a small winery does not lie just in time commitment and financial burden. An equally important part of the process is getting the wines out the door and onto the shelf. For a winemaker to be successful, Finley
"The real great experience in wine, for me, is finding what I call the match made in heaven — the perfect wine with the perfect dish. And when you make that combination, it makes a meal magical almost."

— John Boettcher, Haggen wine specialist

explained, they not only must make a good wine — they also need someone to buy it.

"I'll quote my accountant verbatim, 'Any dumbshit can make this stuff, but it takes someone else who can make it and sell it,'" Finley said. "Selling it is the hardest part of all. There are just too many wineries and too many wines."

Another difficulty for small wineries like Mount Baker, is that Chateau Ste. Michelle creates nearly 82 percent of the wine made in Washington, much of it sold through its Columbia Crest label. Another 10 percent is created by a single eastern Washington seller, which means many of the boutique wineries become overshadowed by their larger competitors.

"There are 227 of us nuts accounting for 7 percent of the wine made in the state of Washington," Finley said. "We all work hard, and it's a thing of passion. There's nobody in it who's not doing it as a passion, and when you get into these big companies that doesn't exist. That's chemicals and papers and chemistry and nobody cares much about the wine. They're just making plunk."

The statistics are staggering. Last year a new winery opened every 13 days in the state, and experts say this year will be much the same. The sheer number makes many new wineries indistinguishable from each other, Finley said, and many close as quickly as they opened.

"A lot of them are going to fail because there's just no way," he said. "You have to find a rock to sit on."

Mount Baker has found its rock, thanks in great part to the tireless work of Finley and his staff. The winery has created nearly 75 private labels for some 30 restaurants in the Puget Sound area, including six for Christina's restaurant on Orcas Island. Restaurants with private labels can choose to mix their own blends or use a vintage already being produced by the winery, and create a unique label design. Michael D'Anna, owner of D'Anna's Cafe Italiano in downtown Bellingham, carries private labels of both Mount Baker's red and white wines.

Originally from California, D'Anna met Finley in 1999, about a year after his restaurant opened. He went to dinner at Finley's house and has been carrying his wines ever since.

"I was pleasantly surprised to know that we had a local winery that had such quality wines," D'Anna said. "And every new vintage of wine he comes out with, I'm pleasantly surprised with as well."

Mount Baker's house red, D'Anna said, reminded him of the wine his Sicilian uncles and aunts always used to drink. He decided to make it his private label, and even used a picture of his family on the bottle.

"It's a good, inexpensive wine done in the Italian style," D'Anna said. "It's simple, but it's become one of my favorites."

Building such a partnership doesn't often happen so quickly, Finley said, as winemakers nationwide average 15 calls to a restaurant before it will carry their label.

"I'll bet you that I tried to sell wine to Milano's that many times, at least," he said. "It took me five years to break them down. But once you get a few high-profile restaurants, it gives you automatic authenticity."

Many of his conversations with restaurant owners are sales pitches, Finley said.
"There are 227 of us nuts accounting for 7 percent of the wine made in the state of Washington." — Randy Finley, owner, Mount Baker Vineyards

"For god's sake, we could even make lighter fluid, and find two people to come back for seconds," he said. "That's how many different tastes we have. The secret is finding a wine that fits for a high number of people."

While this overabundance is bad news for local wineries, it can be good news for local wine drinkers, Boettcher said. "Times have never been better if you want to try different things," he said. "Prices are going down. People are dumping inventories to make way for new vintages."

Interestingly, while the nation is witnessing an economic slump, the retail wine business is as successful as ever. Boettcher, who has worked in the wine industry for the last 30 years, said that wine retailers are generally recession-proof. The retail business has been quite strong, he said, because people aren't going out to dinner.

"They want to buy that bottle of wine and something really special for dinner, and they'll stay home," he said. "That's really worked for our advantage, but the restaurants have really suffered horribly."

But much of retail's success, he said, has to do with people in positions like his own.

"The idea of finding the right wine at the right price is very important because people aren't willing to spend big bucks," he said. "Some people say that you have to pay a lot of money to get a good wine. But that's my job, especially in this store — to find wines that really are affordable values."

Boettcher takes the search very seriously, nestled in his corner of Haggen, surrounded by his inexpensive green bottles and carefully guarded reserve vintages.

"The real great experience in wine, for me, is finding what I call the match made in heaven — the perfect wine with the perfect dish," Boettcher said. "And when you make that combination, it makes a meal magical almost."

Local wines are popular at Haggen, Boettcher said, with their most popular wines coming from Columbia Crest Winery in Patterson. Washington wines do not dominate sales, however, as roughly 25-30 percent of wines sold come from California, and 20 percent from imports.

Much of the sales of imports, he said, come from people's desire to try new things. They want to discover the tradition and the history of France through its wines. Many French wineries were started before science allowed winemakers to know precisely when and where to plant crops. It took years of trial and error to get a consistently successful yield.

Science, such as the Global Positioning System and soil sampling, has removed much of this guesswork and finessing for Northwest wineries, and has allowed relatively young vineyards to drastically improve their grapes and vintages. As a result, however, many Washington wineries lack the tradition and history European winemakers have earned. Boettcher thinks that eventually the local wineries will catch up.

"It's all about sunshine," he said. "You can only make wine as good as your raw material, as good as the grapes you have to work with. But that's when real winemaking comes into play."

In the end, Finley agrees, it's not the money or the prestige that makes him love what he does. When it's all stripped away, it's the wine that keeps him coming back for more.

"After all my 20 years in the movie business, I don't have a single person ... maybe one ... that I'd go back and visit," Finley said.

Now he spends his time with the people he truly enjoys — the winemakers and restaurateurs. It's a lifestyle that he both enjoys and takes full advantage of. In the past week, he said, he's eaten at five different restaurants for dinner, ranging from D'Anna's in downtown Bellingham, to the Inn at Ship Bay on Orcas Island.

"I walk in there and those guys say, 'Hi Randy, how you doin'?'" he said. "And everybody says it, from the maitre d', to the wait staff, to the owners. And that's what's really wonderful about this business. It's a thing of passion. It's a thing of loving people, of loving what we're doing — food and wine and people."

A customer with too many choices seeks the expert advice of Haggen wine specialist John Boettcher.
Since returning from the Gulf War, Butch Johnston has watched his body slowly betray him. Jacob Block reports on the consequences of fighting for one’s country. Photos by Evan E. Parker. Illustrations by Erika Björnson.
"I can't follow instructions, I can't read very much, can't spell, can't balance a checkbook. I lost all those skills."
—Butch Johnston

In November of 1990, Butch Johnston got a phone call from his wife in Ferndale while he was attending a medical convention in Nashville as an Army reserve. As soon as he heard the words "raging bull," Johnston knew it was time to pack his bags. His unit had been called to active duty in the Persian Gulf.

"Our unit was made up of doctors, teachers, lawyers," he said. "You hope you'll never get called up for something like that, but we got activated."

Except for two weeks each year he spent on duty in the Army reserve, Master Sgt. Johnston hadn't been active since he returned home from his service as a combat medic in the Vietnam War in 1973.

He spent the next few weeks at Fort Lewis, training and getting vaccinations against chemical and biological agents. By January 12, 1991, he was supervising an operating room in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with the rest of the 50th General Hospital.

Johnston said that during his four-month tour, sirens would sound and he would put on a gas mask at least once every night. He had taken shots for anthrax and pills for nerve agents, but the mask was part of the drill when the chemical-sensitive alarms went off.

He returned home in April with an unexplained tumor on his back, but said other than that he felt fine. In the coming months and years other strange symptoms appeared and Johnston began to suspect, like more than 200,000 Gulf War veterans since, that the symptoms were results of exposure to chemical and biological weapons during service in the Gulf. These symptoms have now collectively come to be known as Gulf War syndrome (GWS).

The most common of these symptoms are chronic fatigue, muscle and joint pain and psychological disturbances, said Dr. Steven Hunt, a physician for the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, who has treated Johnston previously.

Johnston said his health problems completely changed his life and threatened to drive his family into poverty.

"When I first got sick, I couldn't work," he said. "My family, you know, we had nothing to live on. We had eight kids."

Johnston's wife Terry said he is a different person since returning home from the war.

"Butch was always very outgoing," she said. "He used to write poetry; he liked to fish. Now he hardly ever leaves the house. When he gets really depressed, he just can't do anything."

Even after exhaustive studies by the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and the Institute of Medicine, no one seems to agree whether the syndrome even exists. While hundreds of thousands of veterans said they suffered from GWS and demanded compensation, for five years Pentagon officials insisted that no chemical or biological agents were used against coalition forces in the Gulf War.

Eventually, it was admitted that the destruction of a Julian "Butch" Johnston served with the Army's 50th General Hospital in Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War. Doctors diagnosed him with Gulf War syndrome after he suffered from various symptoms.
“Butch” Johnston rests on a chair with his three dogs. “Those dogs are a great source of comfort for Butch,” his wife, Terry, said.

“Both was always very outgoing ... Now he hardly ever leaves the house. When he gets really depressed, he just can’t do anything.”

—Terry Johnston

According to the study, “This suggests that Persian Gulf veterans are not experiencing an excess of illnesses of a severity that would lead to hospitalization.”

An Institute of Medicine study, contracted by the Department of Defense and published in 2002, echoes that stance. It reads:

“The point is that existing knowledge of veterans’ unexplained illnesses has not yielded a case definition that successfully specifies a new syndrome. That is why the prevailing medical convention is to resist the popular label ‘Gulf War syndrome.’”

Since returning home from the Gulf, VA doctors have treated Johnston for aching joints, asthma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and fibromyalgia, a rheumatic disorder, among other things. They have also removed more than two feet of his colon as well as numerous tumors and cysts.

These problems have left him legally unable to work and Johnston said he rarely leaves the house anymore except to go to the VA hospital in Seattle. Worse still, electroshock therapy administered by the VA for depression in 1996 caused severe damage to his brain and left a two-month gap in his memory. Struggling to remember the details, Johnston recalls the therapy.

“I was supposed to have 12 treatments,” he said. “But in the seventh treatment, something went wrong. My heart stopped for 34 minutes.”

He rubbed his chest above the breastbone where it was broken during CPR as he explained that he now functions at the level of an 8-year-old.

“I can’t follow instructions,” he said. “I can’t read very much, can’t spell, can’t balance a checkbook. I lost all those skills.”

Johnston said he had none of these problems before going to Saudi Arabia. Now, he takes at least 12 different medications for his various health problems.

At age 58 and forced into retirement, Johnston estimates he has spent more than one year in the hospital since returning home in 1991. His medical bills have probably exceeded $1 million. Luckily, he is one of a small percentage of ailing veterans who receives full disability coverage from the VA, even though it came more than four years after he filed his first claim through a Bellingham VA office.

Eventually he called then-congressman Jack Metcalf’s office. Johnston said Metcalf’s aide, Norma Smith, made a phone call to Phoenix where the VA had told him he could find his medical records. Though he had called the same number himself many times since his symptoms appeared and gotten nowhere, this time his records were recovered within two days. One week later, he said, his claim was finally settled.

Vietnam veteran Jim Pace, a service officer at the Bellingham VA office and the man who helped Johnston file his first claim, said Johnston received compensation because he, unlike many veterans, had found enough of his medical records to make a case.
"If you can come in and prove that since you came back you've had medical problems, you've got a case," Pace said. "The key is documentation."

Johnston's home in Sudden Valley, perched atop a heavily wooded hill, is adorned with American flags, red, white and blue Christmas lights and other patriotic symbols. Despite his condition, he remains steadfastly patriotic, but he said he fears many more soldiers might return and have to face GWS, which he said can be worse than death.

"I look at the parents of these soldiers and think, some of them (the soldiers) might get killed, but the others may as well have been killed," he said.

Johnston said he is not angry with the VA, but rather at the government for what he calls a cover-up.

"I would like to see full disclosure," he said. "What were we exposed to? Are (active soldiers) going to come home the same way? Forgotten heroes?"

Terry said she doesn't think the government is being completely honest with Gulf War veterans.

"They send our sons and brothers over there and they don't admit anything happened," she said. "There are just too many people that come back with problems, and they're always the same problems."

Most VA doctors, however, insist the Department of Defense and VA are doing their best to find out what caused the various unexplained illnesses in Gulf War veterans. One of these doctors is Hunt.

"(The VA) has worked very closely with (the Department of Defense) to make sure we have better pre- and post-war deployment records. The system isn't perfect even yet, but we're moving in the direction of having more immediate responses to veterans after they return from deployment."

One big step was made in 1997 when the Clinton administration passed new laws guaranteeing care for a small list of symptoms and requiring both pre- and post-deployment physicals for soldiers. Previously, soldiers only had to fill out a questionnaire upon returning to base.

"(Clinton's policy) was groundbreaking," Hunt said. "It reflected a policy of support for veterans."

Though he concedes the VA does not have a good track record, citing the delay in response to claims made by Vietnam veterans about exposure to Agent Orange, Pace said the VA and Department of Defense are doing the best they can.

"I remember Agent Orange," Pace said. "It took 20 years after the war for them to recognize it."

As soldiers from the most recent Gulf War start to return, Pace said he expects a new generation of ailing Gulf War veterans will seek compensation for similar unexplained symptoms.

"Maybe (the Department of Defense) learned a lesson from the Gulf War," Pace said. "But it will be interesting to see what problems (the soldiers) come back with."

Johnston said he hopes they won't have to go through what he and Terry have.

"The (U.S.S.) Lincoln came into Everett today," he said. "I had tears in my eyes. I'm just real proud of what they've done and I hope they don't get sick. I hope the American people don't forget about them."
Every day 1,300 infants are born too soon. Niki Smith gives an intimate portrait of a single mother struggling to keep her prematurely born son alive. Photos by Evan E. Parker.
On the front door of Jennifer Andersen’s apartment hangs a laminated piece of paper explaining the conditions for entering her house.

“No rings or watches, no symptoms of the cold or the flu, upon entering please wash your hands at the kitchen sink and no visits longer than 30 minutes unless prior arrangements.”

Andersen, a 29-year-old single mother, raises her only child, Dominic, in an apartment in Lynden. Less than two years ago, the boy with curly brown hair had a 50 percent chance of living. Now Dominic weighs 24 pounds and seven ounces, is 29 inches tall and will celebrate his second birthday on May 15.

Andersen is standing in the kitchen, inserting medicine into Dominic’s IV bag when she hears him rustling in the back bedroom. The only sound when she enters the room is the humming of the humidifier. Dominic lies in his crib gazing up at Andersen as she starts the feeding pump, inserting the tube from the IV bag into his stomach.

Dominic suddenly starts making noises and his mother responds with small talk. The boy has a speech impediment, a result of his premature birth.

“Are you hungry?” she asks as she carries him into the living room.

Andersen puts a movie in for Dominic to watch as she sits down on the couch to collect her thoughts.

In May 2001, Andersen had a regular prenatal appointment and left with the understanding that she was doing well.

“Everything was great,” Andersen says. “I had never done drugs or smoked and I was walking and eating healthy.”

Later that night Andersen went to dinner at her parents’ house. During the visit she started to feel dizzy and decided to lie down.
May 15, 2001  
Born at 24 weeks  
1 lb 10 oz

Nov. 2001  
6 months old  
Dispatched from hospital

May 15, 2002  
1st Birthday

Oct. 2002  
Taken off oxygen

May 15, 2003  
From laying to sitting on his own  
2nd Birthday

“I felt these contractions and looked down at my stomach and noticed it was moving,” Andersen says, moving her hands back and forth, simulating the movement of her stomach.

That night, Andersen was in labor at St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham. The doctors attempted to stop the labor with magnesium because she was 17 weeks premature. Teri Rexroat, a registered nurse at St. Joseph Hospital, says a baby born before 23 weeks of pregnancy has a very slim chance of survival. Magnesium is given to women who have contractions at this stage of pregnancy to relax the muscles in an attempt to stop the labor.

The day Andersen hit 24 weeks of pregnancy, Dr. Hull A. Cook sent her to see specialists at Swedish Hospital in Seattle because mothers must reach 34 weeks for St. Joseph’s delivery room. “We don’t have the equipment,” Rexroat says. “We don’t have long-term ventilators or care. All we have are pediatricians, not neonatologists.”

Andersen developed a 102-degree fever in Seattle. The doctors’ tests revealed that her son, Dominic, was living in a bad environment and needed to be delivered right away.

“The liquid they removed (from the amnion embryo sac) was yellow, like beer, and it was supposed to be clear,” Andersen says. “That’s why I was going into labor. He had been living in an infected environment.”

At birth, Dominic’s anatomy was developed only enough for his lungs to function with the help of a ventilator and to withstand resuscitation efforts.

“The room quickly flooded with specialists,” Andersen says. “Then I asked if I could see my baby, and I knew it could be the chance to see him. He had a 50 percent chance of making it through the night. I said, ‘I love you,’ and he reached his hand toward my voice as they took him away.”

He weighed one pound, 10 ounces. “I could fit him in the palm of my hand,” Andersen says, as she strokes her cupped hand with her fingers. Dominic was 12 and a half inches long and was born without fingerprints, eyebrows, eyelashes or nipples.

Andersen remembers Dominic’s reaction when he first met the world at 24 weeks old. “He made a scream and then instantly turned blue and the doctors had to rush him to the ventilators and hook him up so he could breathe,” Andersen says.

Dominic stayed at Swedish Hospital for six months while Andersen went back to work in Lynden. She visited him on weekends, but had to decide whether she wanted to touch him, make eye contact or look at him with a light on because Dominic was still supposed to be in the womb and too many sensations would hurt him.

Dominic faced many battles during his stay at Swedish Hospital. One night the nurse called Andersen down from Lynden because Dominic’s blood-gas levels were off the charts. “I spent that night in the parents’ room,” Andersen says. “They then told me I better come right now. I just thought I was going to change his diaper.”

That night Dominic was receiving 100 percent oxygen (adults receive 32 percent), the machine’s maximum output. The doctors later switched him to nitrous oxide as a last medical attempt. “I asked them to turn off the machines because we all knew what was going to happen,” she says, as a tear rolls down her cheek. “He was dying, so I asked if I could call the chaplain.”

Andersen and her parents prayed as the chaplain baptized Dominic with sterile water, for fear of infections, but Dominic survived the night.

“When the doctors were making the rounds the next morning, Dr. Terry Sweeney said, ‘We as medical professionals have done everything we could do and I owe Dominic making it through to the prayer,’” Andersen says.

Andersen was allowed to bring Dominic home in November 2001, but doctors told her he had very little chance of living through the winter.
"I had a death talk with the doctors," Andersen says. "They told me not to call the ambulance because they could not do anything for him."

Doctors also told Andersen that Dominic might never be able to stand, walk, or breathe without a ventilator. Andersen refused to accept a life of limitations for Dominic.

During an interview in April 2003, she sits Dominic up and sets a toy guitar on his lap. He picks it up and starts flailing his arms to the music coming from the toy. When the music stops he looks at it in confusion and then starts hitting it. Suddenly, the music starts again and he continues dancing.

According to the National Network for Child Care (NNCC), a typical 2-year-old walks up and down stairs with the help of a railing, scribbles energetically with crayons or markers, feeds himself with a spoon, talks in short sentences and bends over and picks things up without falling.

Dominic does not do most of these things, although he is starting to demonstrate more characteristics of typical children his age. His appetite has lessened and he is attached to his caregiver, which, according to NNCC, is common for a 2-year-old.

"Dominic is fed through an IV which is put into his stomach," Andersen says. "He used to be fed 24 hours but now only needs to be fed 16 hours because he has gotten stronger."

Dominic has several neurological development problems that the doctors are trying to treat through therapy.

"He has overcome a lot," Andersen says, as she looks at Dominic with a smile. "But there are a lot of things being added. He is definitely a miracle."

Andersen used to be concerned with her appearance, working out and tanning, but things have changed since Dominic was born. She is no longer preoccupied with the way she looks, but with the survival of her son.

"I can’t believe I was that materialistic," she says, laughing.

Andersen says she still misses how she used to be able to pick up and go whenever she wanted to, but she realizes that no longer matters.

A skilled nurse supervises Dominic when Andersen is at work. It is also hard for Andersen to find time to run simple errands.

"I never thought I would have to schedule time to do my grocery shopping," Andersen says.

Dominic sleeps with a monitor that reads his oxygen and heart rate at night. He also continues to have numerous doctors' appointments every week. Andersen knows she and Dominic still have a long way to go.

"The doctors can prescribe any kind of medication and we will never know if it will work or not," Andersen says. "The only prescription me and my son believe in is the work of God."
Can't with 'B Negative' 'A Positive' Attitude

When some Japanese companies interview potential employees they want to go a little bit deeper than just their work history. Yosuke Taki explains how a person's blood may shape their life. Illustrations by Erika Björnson.
When Mitsubishi Electronic Co. put together a new fax machine development team, only employees with blood type AB were selected. That's because according to Japan-based Asahi News, Mitsubishi wanted an edge on creativity. In Japan, people believe there is a correlation between blood type and character.

Researchers have studied the correlation between blood type and human behavior for more than 70 years and most people in Japan believe such a correlation exists. In a 1928 newspaper article by Takeji Furukawa, a psychologist reported on his study of children's blood type and behavior. This was the first time this idea became exposed to the public. Then Furukawa's book, "Blood type and Temperament," influenced people to become interested in the topic. It became a popular subject to study, according to Aru Aru Daijiten, a scientific TV program in Japan.

Now, all Japanese people know their own blood type and have a general idea of each blood type's characteristics. Approximately 70 percent of people in Japan believe in the correlation between blood type and personality, according to surveys conducted by Nippon Hoso Kyokai, Japan's national television in 1986 and Aru Aru Daijiten in 1997.

Hitomi Uchida, Risa Shimazu and Koun Kanayama, Asia University sophomores visiting Western from Tokyo through Asia University America Program, all said they strongly believe in the correlation.

"At a party or other occasion whenever we meet new people, we ask each other's blood type," Kanayama said.

Guessing other people's blood type is a popular thing to do.

"When I make a guess about a person's blood type, I get it right 80 percent of the time," Uchida said.

A professor in the Asia University international relation department asks his students' blood type on the first day of class and memorizes them all, Shimazu said.

Jianglong Wang, a communication professor at Western, said biological aspects such as blood type might influence people's behavior.

"I wouldn't say it's (blood type and behavior) directly related," he said. "It's risky to base on one factor and then overgeneralize.

Steve Woods, another communication professor at Western, agreed.

"I think I'm automatically suspicious when there is an attempt to use biology to classify or categorize human behaviors or actions," he said.

JNN Data Bank, a survey institution in Japan, found that people with blood type A tend to describe themselves as careful, serious, pessimistic, patient, organized, other-centered and unrealistic.

Uchida and Kanayama said their
blood type is A and both agreed with these characteristics. "When I put my cigarette pack in my cigarette case, I have to place the side with brand name in front," said Kanayama, as an example of blood type A's organized character.

She also said her mother (blood type A) lays out toothbrushes and toothpastes in specific orders and yells at her when she puts things in different order. Uchida said blood type A is not good at managing stress.

"(Blood type) A just keep accumulating stress until they explode," she said.

People with blood type B tend to describe themselves as self-paced, independent, flexible, optimistic and realistic, according to JNN Databank.

"(Blood type) B are narcissistic and moody," Uchida said.

People with blood type O tend to describe themselves as open-minded, social, cheerful and logical, according to the JNN Databank. They also like to take a leadership role. The history of Japan's Prime ministers' blood types indicates blood type O's leadership characteristics. From the end of World War II to 1998, 22 people had become prime minister of Japan and 13 of them, or 59 percent, had blood type O. Yet only 30.7 percent of Japanese people have blood type O. Uchida, Kanayama and Shimazu said their first impression of people with blood type O is that they have a cooperative character.

Finally, the self-expressed characteristics of persons AB tend to have dual personality types, according to the JNN Databank. People with blood type AB said they're rational thinkers but also romantic. They like to take an important role in society but tend to keep a distance from other people. They strongly seek security in life but have less of a fixation on longevity.

People with blood type AB become flexible and social when they can benefit from doing so, Uchida and Kanayama said. Shimazu said her blood type is AB and she agrees with the idea.

Finding such correlations between blood type and behavior could help predict how others tend to behave and feel, and such knowledge may improve communication skills.

More significantly, by studying the correlation, people can apply the information to improving other areas in their life. A study of traffic violations and accidents classified by blood type was conducted by the Japan Police Department. It is one example of how people may use blood type studies to improve their life.

The study concluded that people with blood type A had more speeding violations and accidents associated with speeding, which occurred especially when they were driving alone. People with blood type B had more traffic light violations and accidents at

Blood Type Characteristics

Type A  Careful, serious, pessimistic, patient, organized, other-centered, unrealistic

Type B  Self-paced, independent, flexible, optimistic, realistic

Type AB  Rational, romantic, creative, flexible, social

Type O  Open-minded, social, cheerful, logical
“When I make a guess about a person’s blood type, I get it right 80 percent of the time.”
—Hitomi Uchida

In order to answer this opposition, researchers are studying the correlation in kids, who are young enough to be unaware of this topic. The scientific TV program Aru Aru Daijiten researched a number of children and their blood type at three theme parks in a day.

The research found that 28 out of 73 lost children were blood type B, which is more than 38 percent and higher than blood type B’s distribution in Japan, which is 22 percent. On the other hand, the least number of children who got lost had blood type A and their rate was 20 percent. Since blood type A’s distribution in Japan is 38 percent, children with blood type A were least likely to get lost.

This result supports the correlation.

JNN Data Bank’s research showed people with blood type B tend to express themselves as self-paced, independent and optimistic. Also, people with blood type A tend to express themselves as careful, serious and other-centered.

However, Woods said he disagrees with this research. Children’s behavior is also influenced by their parents’ behavior, he said.

Uchida has a similar idea. “Although 80 percent of my character is influenced by my own blood type, I think the remaining 20 percent is influenced by my parents,” Uchida said.

In order to achieve more accurate research outcomes, researchers need to study children who are raised by their biological parents, Woods said.

“But you can’t just switch babies in hospital,” he said.