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Paolo Mottola Jr.
Western Washington University

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editor’s note

Klipsun celebrates lifestyles, art and entertainment by telling a variety of stories about people residing in, or connected to, the Pacific Northwest.

My editorial staff and I have evaluated how these stories can be presented more effectively. The result is a reformat ted magazine, which includes more art and shorter stories.

The content of this issue includes hiking, body building, last wishes and rap music — assorted topics that individually delve into a slice of life.

I recommend reading Jamie Trudel’s “Two Men and a Baby” to our readers intrigued by gay rights. Photography enthusiasts should look at Matt Anderson’s “Walkin’ the Rail.” I encourage eco-friendly readers to check out Cara Shaw’s article concerning the U.S. exporting technological waste. These diverse stories reflect our colorful writers, editorial staff and the greater Western Washington University community.

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, call us at (360) 650-3737 or e-mail us at klipsunwwu@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Paolo Mottola Jr.
Editor in Chief

staff writers
Matthew Anderson, Shannon Barney, Mari Bergstrom, Charlotte Chandler, Chrystal Doucette, Melena Eaton, Bethany Gronquist, Tess Hembree, Michelle Himple, Kenna Hodgson, Cheryl Julian, Evan McLean, Lauren Miller, Michael Murray, Cara Shaw, Travis Sherer, Kim Sklar-Fowler, Jesse Smith, Chris Taylor, Jamie Trudel, Ruth Wetzel, Anastasia Wright
Bethany Gronquist
Bethany's incessant need to be outdoors is her inspiration for this article. Her only hope is that it will motivate others to explore this beautiful area. She would like to thank her parents for their constant encouragement and support. She also would like to add that there is no better vehicle for enjoying the outdoors than a Jeep Grand Cherokee.

Lauren Miller
Lauren is majoring in journalism with an emphasis in public relations. She would like to thank all of her sources involved in helping her write her story "under pressure." She also would like to thank her mother, Denise, her father, Herbert, and her twin sister, Shannon — they don't look or act alike — for all their support.

Jamie Trudel
Jamie is a senior journalism minor and English education major. He would like to thank the superheroes who made this story possible — from those who spent hours giving him story ideas he didn't want to use to those who showed him how important it is to shut the gate behind you. Most importantly, he'd like everyone to remember: "If it's not sexy, it's not Klipsun."

Mari Bergstrom
Mari is a senior English literature major and journalism minor looking forward to graduating this spring. She would like to wish Dustin good luck in future competitions and thank everyone who contributed to her story. She also would like to thank Eric for his love and support and Lisa for her inspiration.

Chris Taylor
Chris is a journalism major who hopes to one day become a successful photojournalist. He lives for adventure and, when he finds the time, he loves to road-trip — especially through Cali — in his 1978 Volkswagen Westfalia bus. He would like to thank all the unique VW owners who let him peek into their lives to share what "the people's car" means to them.
Requiring passports for U.S. borders a good idea

By Michelle Himple

By Jan 1, 2008, U.S. citizens wishing to re-enter the United States from Canada or Mexico could be required to present a valid U.S. passport because of new security efforts by the Department of State and Homeland Security.

Everyone should have a passport in this day and age regardless of the potential border requirements. One is expected to show a passport when traveling to Europe — Canada and Mexico should be no different. Passports should be required to travel to or from any country.

Some form of picture identification is required when re-entering the United States from Canada or Mexico. A passport is the best form of picture identification because it has the most security features.

Many people in Whatcom County take day trips to Canada for sightseeing and shopping. If they have passports, a spontaneous day trip to Canada will be like any other before the new security requirements.

This potential national security measure, called the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, was developed to strengthen border security and expedite entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate foreign visitors, according to the U.S. Department of State.

The initiative is not finalized, and the Departments of State and Homeland Security have issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Federal Register. The ANPR will allow comments and suggestions from the public before a final decision is made about whether passports will be mandatory or recommended.

The public is already speaking out about the issue, and many residents are writing letters to express their concern. On April 11, The Bellingham Herald printed a letter from a Point Roberts resident who argued that it would not be fair for families with a limited income to spend money for passports for their entire family. OK, so passports are not cheap, but they are worth it given that it is essentially a security investment: a 10-year investment for adults and a five-year investment for children.

Okay, so passports are not cheap, but they are worth it given that it is essentially a security investment.

According to the U.S. Department of State Web site, first time passports cost $97 for those age 16 and older and will need to be renewed after 10 years. For those under 16, the cost is $82, and it is valid for five years. Reviewing a passport costs $67 for both children and adults.

This cost would go toward increasing the security of our previously threatened borders. Let’s not forget Ahmed Ressam, a terrorist who was caught in December 1999 at the Canadian border at Port Angeles, Wash., with a carload of 130 pounds of explosives to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport.

The Western Hemisphere initiative will help keep out terrorists such as Ressam, who see Canada as an easy entry point into the United States. A passport requirement is a simple, important requirement. It is worthy of a slight financial inconvenience that will increase the safety of the country by creating one more barrier to stop threats of national security.

Okay, so passports are not cheap, but they are worth it given that it is essentially a security investment.
Tried and true travel tips

After four or more grueling years of college, nothing can assert your independence or satisfy your need for adventure more than a trip overseas. Nothing is quite like seeing the glowing lights of Paris or exploring the ancient ruins of Pompeii. A trip abroad will always be an incredible journey. Some, however, may turn out bumpier than others. Here are a few tips I have gathered from my own adventures that will smooth out your next trip.

—Kenna Hodgson

Do the Research: Give yourself enough time to soak up the culture and stay for at least 10 days. It is not important to have an hourly agenda, but plan out which cities you are going to and what are the most important things you want to see. Everything else can be improvised.

Find out as much as possible about where you are going including history, cultural traditions, and geography. Learning a few basic phrases like, “Hello” and “Do you speak English?” can be helpful. Frommers and Rick Steve’s travel guidebooks are excellent resources to help plan your trip.

What to Pack: No one likes to pack, but it is the most important part of preparing for a trip. The most common mistake is over-packing. Remember, you will be carrying your luggage everywhere — onto packed trains and buses and through crowded cobblestone streets.

While boarding a train to Florence, my bag was so heavy that while loading it into an overhead bin, my arms buckled and my bag tumbled onto an innocent passenger. So, make sure you can lift your bag over your head a few times. Luggage that can be rolled and carried is the optimum choice.

Do not pack outfits. Try to pack pieces that go well together and can be mixed, matched, and layered. Europeans dress more formally than Americans, so avoid tennis shoes and sweatshirts, unless you enjoy being gawked at like a monkey in a zoo.

Safety: “...is a big issue when traveling — at least it is for me,” says Dan Lindman, budget assistant for the Office of International Programs and Exchanges at Western. Lindman says to travel with a partner and let people know where you are traveling and when you will be back. He also recommends checking the government Web site of the country you are going to visit for vaccination requirements and travel information.

Where to Stay: The Internet is the best resource for locating accommodations. Youth hostels are a great option for the traveler on a budget, and there are many to choose from. Believe the online reviews; they could prevent you from a restless night. Many hostels provide sheets, but you may want to pack your own. The easiest way to pack a sheet is to fold a queen-sized sheet in half and sew three sides, so it looks like a sleeping bag.

Getting Around: Your main means of transportation will be walking. European cities are pedestrian friendly, in the sense that you can get to most destinations by walking. However, the native driver has the right of way, so pay attention. For longer destinations, the public transportation systems are inexpensive and easy to use.

Money: Contact your bank and credit card companies before you leave and let them know that you will be out of the country. This will prevent them from thinking that your card has been stolen.

ATMs are readily available in most European cities and most credit cards are accepted. This is the easiest way to make purchases and access cash. However, you must know your PIN.

Professional pick-pockets are not a myth, so pay attention. Men should not keep wallets in their back pockets, and women should use over the shoulder purses that sit under the arm. It is a good idea to leave a photocopy of your passport at home in case it gets lost or stolen.

Have Fun: Try to experience and absorb as much as you can on your journeys. If you want to get the most out of a trip, make friends. Talk with local people about their city and culture. Lastly, do not let small setbacks ruin your adventure — they make the best stories.
Seattle rapper on the rise with new album

Boxes of glossy fliers, business cards and piles of CDs cover the living room floor of 23-year-old Seattle rap artist Neema Khorammi, also known as Unexpected Arrival. He wears a black hat tipped low and to the side, as he sits in a sunken recliner.

His girlfriend sits across from him. With black Sharpie's in hand, they frantically scribble labels onto promotional CDs with samples from his new album, "My Life for Sale."

The CD features 19 tracks and guest artists such as Twista, Kurupt, Dia On and Wingo of Jagged Edge. But while the recording is finished, Khorammi's work is far from over.

Khorammi was awarded The KUBE 93 Northwest Artist of the Year in both 2002 and 2003 for his self-titled debut album.

"It’s been three years between albums and, in that time, I went through so much as a person," he explains. "The difference between the two (albums) is that I never really put myself out there before, but now it’s not hard to put myself out there."

Khorammi started rapping five years ago when he was a junior at Inglemoor High School in Kenmore. Western senior Eric Riedmann says he met Khorammi in fifth grade and helped create Unexpected Arrival their senior year in High School.

"One day we were watching MTV when we saw an LFO video, and we thought ‘This is bullshit!’ Riedmann says. "We can do better than this."

Khorammi is a versatile artist switching from double-time to single-time rhymes. In the first track "Hat Low," single-time is 75 beats-per-minute, but he is rapping double-time, which is 150 beats per minute.

Over the course of the last five years, Khorammi estimates playing 250 shows around the Northwest. He headlined a sold-out show at the Showbox, a first for a local hip-hop artist. Khorammi says his goals are to be signed with a record label and to perform shows consistently.

"I know it’s kind of cliché and some people say I’m a dreamer, but I really think anything is attainable," he says.

— Kenna Hodgson

iPods give isolation a soundtrack

And that's fine. I know that if I became rich enough, I would hire Reel Big Fish to follow me around playing "I Want Your Girlfriend to be My Girlfriend" wherever I went. Then I would just stare at various couples on campus in the midst of their public displays of affection until I made them uncomfortable.

But what's on your iPod is becoming your soundtrack for life, more so than interactions with your friends.

Don't get me wrong, I think iPods are great. I love mine (copyright Apple, All Things iPod), but we need to look at these for what they are. An iPod is just another trinket that secludes us from the outside. Televisions, DVD players and Sony's PlayStation 2 keep me firmly implanted into my couch groove and an iPod is no different.

Apple boasts on its Website that a 20 gigabyte iPod can hold up to 5,000 songs and play for approximately 12 hours on a full battery. You could choose to spend half of your day without any human interaction. Even if alienating your friends isn't your intention, it will be your result.

Have you ever tried to get the attention of a friend wearing headphones? Forget about it. Otherwise you'll be that guy who yells somebody's name in the crowd and nobody answers.

Your face will turn red from embarrassment because you think everybody in the entire library saw your friend leave you hanging. So you keep yelling louder until finally everyone not wearing earphones gives you that "why don't you just leave her alone?" look.

These gadgets don't just get your stalkers kicked out of university buildings — they are a bit dangerous, too. In downtown Seattle last December, I saw a man break his neck while walking his dog because he didn't hear a taxi's horn. His name was Jim Anderson, 38, and he had a wife and three children.

Actually, I didn't see that — I made it all up. I don't even know anyone by that name. I don't even know anyone named Jim. But what if it did happen? Then you'd feel sorry for Jim all over again wouldn't you?

All right, so maybe iPods aren't all that dangerous — I just don't like idea of people leaving the house not intending to interact with anybody. If making your friends resort to interrupting a whole library just to get a courtesy wave is what you want, then turn up the Reel Big Fish, because I feel like dancing.
I joined a sold out crowd at the Night Light Lounge April 22 to watch a hip-hop legend. Guru was in Bellingham to perform songs from his new album, "Version 7.0: The Street Scriptures."

Guru (Gifted Unlimited Rhymes Universal) hit the stage spitting old school Gang Starr tracks to start.

At Guru's side was Solar, his protégé and partner. Guru has broken away from Virgin Records after making six Gang Starr records and three Jazzmatazz albums, and created an independent label, 7 Grand.

I spoke with Guru and Solar in the club's green room about his progression, social and music issues and what drives him after 15 years of straddling the fence between commercial and underground hip-hop.

You've been given lots of credit for the emerging underground hip-hop scene. What's your take on its direction?

G: I think it's really great. I think a good track is a good track whether it's commercial or underground. I think that there's a whole misconception about the boundaries of my music. I've been a bridge between commercial and underground since the beginning.

S: Rapper A, B and C are in bed with the corporations. They aren't into the progression of hip-hop. They're selling products, they aren't selling music.

With rapper action figures and mega-budget movies, how do you feel about hip-hop role models?

G: First of all, I think role models are important, and for certain communities that have been devoid of a complete household it's even more important. I think that with a following, no matter what style you do, you should have some sense of responsibility. Some cats are saying it's a form of entertainment, and those are the fools with security guards and concert stage barriers. I take full responsibility for my lyrics.

How about you, Solar?

S: Homeless children are a critical topic that I concentrate on, and was a part of for parts of my life. With men being told that life is all about chains holdin' them down and sex with multiple partners, with no form of responsibility to the children that are left behind, the victims are going to be the children. They languish in institutions. With this album we are going to try and touch lives and organizations to help these kids.

Guru, didn't you get a day named after you?

G: Feb. 16 in Austin. That was cool. There were a couple of students into hip-hop that were community activists. They followed my career, the positivity that can come from hip-hop and the life support that can be put into music.

You picked up some great rappers for the new album. Tell me about these features.

G: The chemistry was there, the enthusiasm was there — we all had mutual respect. I brought in people who I thought would help out the album's sound and message. B-Real, we hung out with anyway because he's such a great person. We got Talib Kweli, Styles P, Jaguar Wright, Jean Grae and Doo Wop.

Do you develop the tracks with these artists by giving them cuts to rap over?

G: We sent out cuts for these guys to check out and see if there was mutual collaboration available. We heard Jean Grae in a pizzeria in Manhattan and had to have her. Talib, well, we hang out anyway so I just called him up on the cell.

S: Most of these situations were not us featuring these people on our tracks but hangin' out as friends then collaborating tracks. I hate to be beatin' the same drum, but rappers, fuckin' make a real album, stop being full of shit. Get out of your secure little bull shit worlds and meet people, talk to them. Be somebody, don't be a caricature you can sell.

On a personal note, do you have any suggested reading?


G: I like books that fall off of the required reading lists for schools, like "Stolen Legacy." I like philosophical books.

Is there anything else you have to say?

S: This is a labor and an endeavor in love for the people. Don't let us down, because the rest of the world is getting this. They're getting behind us and others stepping outside of the label.
Looking for a day-long outdoor excursion close to home? Bethany Gronquist scouted Whatcom County and shares her favorite places to take a packed lunch and explore. Photos by Bethany Gronquist.

**Railroad Trail**

Railroad Trail, near Lake Whatcom and Alabama Hill, provides a variety of scenery such as ponds, trees, waterfalls and views of downtown Bellingham.

The five-mile trail is perfect for running, walking and bicycling, as it is wide, mostly flat and well graveled. Small signs mark where each segment of the trail leads and include how many miles to that area.

Railroad Trail passes wildlife reserves such as Scudder Pond, a wonderful place to see a variety of birds and an occasional frog. The trail also passes Derby Pond, a larger pond where ducks and geese often gather. Further west, the trail passes the Whatcom Creek Fish Hatchery and Whatcom Falls Park. One end of the trail leads to the Alabama Street bridge, where you can witness incredible views of downtown, Western and Bellingham Bay.

**North Lake Whatcom Trailhead**

The best way to enjoy the beauty of Lake Whatcom without getting wet is to hike along its banks at the North Lake Whatcom trail. The three-mile walk is on a wide, well-maintained path that doesn’t stray far from the water’s edge.

The start of the trail briefly meanders through a wooded area before it reaches the lake. The beginning of the lakeside section of the trail is marked by a large entrance made of logs. From this point on the trail is moderately straight. This walk is also popular among bicyclists, because it is relatively flat.

Boasting incredible views of the lake, the trail also has small waterfalls, big cliffs and a bridge that crosses a creek. Several places along the lake are swimming areas, one of them complete with a rope swing dangling from a nearby tree.

**Larrabee State Park**

Larrabee State Park, located off of the famously scenic Chuckanut Drive, has hiking trails with sweeping views, as well as camping and picnicking sites. The views seen from the trails and cliffs of Larrabee are worth the $5 parking fee.

A main trail runs west beneath a train trestle, between a covered picnic place and an outdoor stage. This trail forks shortly after stairs on the other side of the trestle. The right trail leads to the beach, and the left to rocky cliffs with unobstructed views of Chuckanut Bay and the San Juan Islands.

The beach route provides plenty of room for walking along the shore and across rocks in low tide. This is a great place to find starfish on the rocks. Follow the main trail to large boulders, which are popular places to sit and take in the views of spectacular sunsets.
Lake Padden Park

A local favorite for walking, bicycling, golfing, rowing and swimming in the summer months is Lake Padden Park. The park is located off of Samish Way near Yew Street.

The park features a 2.6-mile trail that circles the lake. The trail is wide, well maintained and has quarter-mile markers for those who want to monitor their distance.

Most of the trail is relatively flat and near to the bank of the lake. The back side of the lake, however, is heavily wooded with steeper hills, offering a shady reclusion from the summer heat as well as a view of the lake from higher ground.

Lake Padden also has trails that divert from the loop, as well as horse trails and a place dogs can run off-leash. The south entrance to the lake is also the entrance to the popular Lake Padden golf course and driving range. The park features tennis courts, a basketball court, baseball field, play structure and picnicking areas as well.

Fragrance Lake

The trail to Fragrance Lake is more of a hike than a leisurely walk. Do not attempt this hike without a few hours to spare — it is approximately two miles uphill. Like Larrabee State Park, there is a $5 parking fee at this trailhead.

The hike to Fragrance Lake is steep, switchbacks ease the gain in elevation. The gain is more than 1,000 feet, according to "Hiking Whatcom County," by Ken Wilcox.

This trail is mostly shaded. A viewpoint that lies less than a mile off the main trail provides a view of Chuckanut Bay and the San Juan Islands. Toward the top of the trail, other trails connect. Stay straight to get to the lake.

Fragrance Lake is small and placid. Occasionally the sound of a fish jumping can be heard. The lake is surrounded by a loop trail that stays close to the water, although sometimes gets hilly providing views through the trees of the lake from above.
Bellingham bike messenger works by riding on beautiful trails and past stunning sites delivering mail around the city — albeit with a severed finger along for the ride.

Henkel says she decided to start the business 13 years ago on Earth Day, beginning with only her delivering mail around town.

Today, Henkel works with Anne Heller, 38, a fellow biker at Mad Dash along with three other employees.

"I met Anne a year later after I started. I approached her on her bike and asked her to join," Henkel says, smiling at Heller.

Before receiving contracts from businesses throughout town, Henkel took one-time jobs for whoever needed the business, leading to some strange deliveries.

Henkel delivered bagels for the Bagelry, and when she had a contract with Casa Que Pasa she delivered knives for sharpening.

"It was weird to be riding around with huge knives," she says.

The daily dash

Mad Dash remains a small business, Henkel says. Its messengers work with eight to 10 daily contracts with on-call deliveries filling the remainder of the day.

Their day starts at 9:30 a.m. at the Bellingham Post Office on Prospect Avenue. One of them picks up all of the mail for the day's delivery, although Henkel says some days are more cumbersome than others.

"Mondays tend to be our heaviest mail days," she says. "Sometimes I might have to make two trips to the post office, and some days I'm just determined to make it all fit."

When Henkel gets through the door, she immediately gets to business. The post office is bustling with people going to claim their mail at one PO box. Meanwhile, Henkel bounces back and forth among a number of boxes picking up mail for businesses in Bellingham.

Keeping within the city limits, the bikers of Mad Dash ride 30...
to 35 miles each day. They deliver mail to attorneys' offices, real estate offices and Squalicum Harbor businesses.

"Every day is different, but you tend to know in the morning what your day is going to look like," Henkel says.

Heller then adds, laughing, "Some days I find I'm eating lunch on my bike — trying to eat a sandwich and get to my next destination."

At the end of the day it can get a little rushed, both Henkel and Heller say. They return to many of the businesses in the afternoon and pick up any deliverables, Henkel says.

“We get into tight boundaries at the end of the day,” Henkel says. “You often have to rush to the bank to make deposits before the bank closes and send off certified mail at the post office before the end of the day.”

**Being a bike messenger**

Rain. Wind. The snow that kept students in their homes on and off in January. It didn’t stop the bikers of Mad Dash from working most of the week wearing lots and lots of gear, Henkel says.

“We deliver every season. We have bikes with studded tires we use when it snows,” she says. “However, if it’s too extreme or if it’s not safe we stay off the road.”

Henkel isn’t the only one who has uncertainties about those bad weather days. Her husband Steve, 41, has his worries.

“I do think of her on those cold, wet, rainy days and snow days — especially snow days,” he says. “I worry about her on those dark, cold winter days, but my worries, fortunately, never led to anything.”

But he says he is used to his wife’s duties and he helps her out however he can.

“I do the best I can to support her work. I do bike maintenance. When I used to work in Bellingham, sometimes I’d have to go rescue her when she was on the side of the road, but that was around the time when she was starting up,” he says.

On her days delivering, she arrives back home late, so Steve helps at home by picking up the children at school and getting dinner ready and served, he says.

**On the receiving end**

Carmen Bean, the human resources manager at Trident Seafoods, and Jan Knutson, the secretary at Bellingham Cold Storage, get mail deliveries from Henkel and the other bikers at Mad Dash. Both find the service more efficient than sending one of their own employees out to pick up the mail instead.

“It’s just not cost effective for someone to drive uptown to find a place to park, pick up the mail and then drive all the way back,” Bean says. “[Henkel is] wonderful, friendly and incredibly dependable.”

Henkel finds building good relationships with businesses helped her business to grow.

She worked as a messenger in Seattle one summer, while attending Western from ‘81 to ‘86. Still in her biking clothes, a purple windbreaker and yellow sunglasses atop her head, she recalls her previous experience in Seattle.

“I’ve been able to build a rapport with customers here, not like in Seattle where I would be biking to Queen Anne one day and Ballard the next,” she says.

**Going to the limits**

The job of a bike messenger doesn’t always consist of biking freely through the streets of Bellingham admiring the scenery.

“One has to be in good physical shape and ready to play that mental game when dealing with the elements,” says Henkel, with some of the day’s rain still evident on her sunglasses. “Your interpersonal skills are the most important.”

“Sometimes you are smiling because it’s wet and cold and you just want to go home, but you can’t look that way,” Heller says.

People want to know what the bike messengers are up to with bags of mail and packages tied to their bikes.

“We’re not on bikes just riding around,” Heller says. “There is a lot of weight on our bikes — up to 50 pounds. We like it.”
Bellingham police officer Rich Holdridge never goes on patrol without a tennis ball in his pocket. Officer Jon Gutierrez paid $14 to have his partner's name stuck to the side of his patrol car. Officer Craig Johnson once cried while on duty.

No, they're not like other cops. But neither are their partners.

Johnson's partner is an 85-pound German shepherd named Nitro. They've toiled together for six and a half years, and Johnson hasn't regretted a moment of it.

But he does remember the day his partner brought him to tears.

They were hunting a suspect like they'd done myriad times before. But this time was different. The moment Johnson saw a car strike Nitro, his heart sank, he says.

"Initially, I was concerned about whether he'd survive," Johnson says slowly, as though he's considering each word before he sets it free. "Then I was worried about his recovery, whether he'd be able to work again. It's like losing a member of your family. It's hard to put into words. I shed some tears there. There's an emotional bond you can't deny."

The four guys and four dogs (the other pair is Officer Shan Hanon and his dog Thor, a German shepherd) who compose Bellingham's canine officer unit are jocular fellows. They like to rib each other and make jokes. They're physically imposing, too — not the sort of men you'd want to scrap with.

But when they consider losing their partners, these officers' shells of invincibility flake away.

They need their dogs. They relax with them, catch bad guys with them, even live with them.

Gutierrez, 30, has three children: one who's 3, another who's 3 months and Crash. An asphalt-black German shepherd that Gutierrez says looks more like a wolf than a dog. Crash is trained in human scent detection and is being taught to expose narcotics. He's big, looks mean and will shake his dad's cop car on its suspension if he wants to get out. Gutierrez loves him. He boasts of Crash like he would of a favorite son, and he likes to think that the dog calls him "dad."

Unlike Crash and Nitro, Rookie is a dedicated narcotics dog, trained to locate marijuana, crack, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin.

Holdridge, 32, demonstrates the golden retriever's abilities by hiding black-tar heroin behind the door of a trailer inside the Deemer Street Fire Station.

Trying to locate the scent, Rookie pinwheels about the room like a mad djinni, his feet scrabbling on the polished concrete floor.

Suddenly, he stops. He lifts his busy nose, and with a sound Holdridge likens to someone rapidly flicking the switch of a vacuum cleaner, Rookie sniff's the trailer and then corrals his energy. He parks himself, calmly, and faces Holdridge. He found it.

Gutierrez translates Rookie's proud posture: "Hey, dad, I found my stuff," he says. "I won."

Not just anyone can be a canine cop. These officers first had to prove themselves on patrol and then attend a special school for canine handlers. When they finally laced up their shoes as canine officers, they became the latest in a 37-year line of canine cops in Bellingham.

Formed in 1968, Bellingham PD's canine unit is the longest continually operating canine program in the state.

These men consider themselves fortunate to be where they are. They don't take their responsibilities lightly, and they know this gift won't last forever.

"It's something I've wanted to do since I was 10 years old," says Johnson, 33. "It's been all I've imagined and more."

Johnson's dog Nitro is 9 years old. Nitro's dad, Major, retired when he was 9 1/2, and holds the BPD record for longest tenure. Johnson knows Nitro's time to retire is soon.

"I'm hoping to work him through 2006," Johnson says. "After that, I'm kind of undecided."

He's considered continuing as a canine officer with another animal, but he doesn't think his current dog would appreciate it.

But for now, Nitro's still a member of the force. He's not as fast as he used to be, and he's getting a tad gray under the nose. But he still smells well, and he's crazy for the job.

"He can't wait to get in the car, can't wait to go to work," Johnson says.

—Matthew Anderson
Pet psychics to the rescue

In a large room on her property with more than 10 dog-occupied kennels, Denise Costanten, executive director of Brigadoon Assistance Dogs, leading Colin, a 2-year-old Collie, to the center of the room.

She secures a blue vest onto his back and pulls the straps taught. For 14 years she has professionally trained dogs in Bellingham and since August 2004 has trained service dogs.

To teach a dog to resist running out an open door, she puts the dog on a leash and if he or she tries to go out the door first, she closes the door.

"Usually by the third attempt the dog will look at you first," she says. "He has figured out if he wants to go through the door they need your permission."

But, with all of her experience training dogs, she says she would not discredit the alternative form of communicating with animals telepathically.

Six years ago, she says a friend used telepathy to accurately predict the future characteristics of a litter of her puppies.

Dr. Lynne Seibert, veterinary behaviorist at the Veterinary Specialty Center in Lynwood, says no scientific explanation exists for telepathic communication.

"Most aggression happens as a result of miscommunication," Seibert says adding that humans often do not pick up on what an animal's behavior means.

If a dog is growling with its ears pinned back, for example, this signals fear and defensiveness, she says.

Some credentialed psychologists ascribe legitimacy to telepathic communication.

September B. Morn, dog communicator and educator, has a bachelor's degree in psychology and 35 years of experience professionally training dogs.

Although she agrees that animals communicate nonverbally, Morn says telepathy is the most subtle form of communication.

With a Ph.D. in physiological psychology, Dr. Agnes J. Thomas says she can communicate telepathically with animals.

When concerned owners call her with a question about their pet, such as, 'Why is my dog biting? Why is my cat peeing?' Thomas will ask the pet over the phone and then translate the animal's answers to the client.

"I see a dog three feet in front of you a little to the left playing with a red ball. Is that your dog?" Thomas says using this as an example of what she might say as she begins to tune into an owner and a pet to validate that she is in contact with the right animal.

Thomas has a client base of approximately 3,000. Seibert says she has seen approximately 8,580 new clients since her practice began in 1994.

The practice remains popular in spite of the fact that telepathic communication is not studied in mainstream psychology, Seibert says.

— Ruth Wetzel

Finding the perfect place to call home

Because Bellingham is a college town, the summer is the best time to find a place to live. Do not wait until the last second to find a place because only the unwanted units will be available and you'll find yourself paying $800 a month to rent something the size of a tent.

Look for a location within decent proximity to school or work. Places are usually less expensive the further away from campus, which works fine if your apartment is on a bus line. Also, check and see if public transportation is easily accessible.

Make a list of measurements of things such as your bed, desk, dresser and furniture. Then bring a tape measure with you when looking at units to make sure everything would fit the way you would like it.

Property manager and owner of Apex Property Management, Phil Maxwell, says that college students make up 95 percent of their business and the usual concerns students have when renting an apartment include parking issues, lease term, noise threshold and security measures.

The lease term can also present an obstacle because students often want to rent for only the school year, whereas many property management businesses, including Apex, require a full-year lease, Maxwell says.

Maxwell also says that students should be aware of what kind of environment they are moving into, before what one person considers loud, another person does not. He also suggested asking about security features such as having locks changed before moving into a new apartment, that way it ensures no former residents will have access.

Maxwell says for the most part college students are great renters, but the only issue students could use help on is the anatomy of moving out. He says students often do not get their damage deposits back because they do not take the time to properly clean their apartment when they leave.

Also, remember that most landlords and property managers will check your credit history, income and rental references.

— Michelle Himple
Two Men and a Baby

Washington is one of nine states that allow gay couples to adopt. Jamie Trudel talks to a gay couple about their conviction to adopt, the restrictions they overcame and their transition to parenthood. Photos by Jamie Trudel. Design by Aaron Apple.

As he passes through the gated picket fence in front of his house, Benjamin makes sure his father closes it behind him. The sun is bright and light clouds sail slowly by, miles above Benjamin as he begins his journey down the street. As he passes another gated fence he stops, concerned. With one chubby index finger he points at the open gate and says, "Uh oh." Looking up expectantly at his father, Seattle resident and Western graduate Geoff Tallent, 38, Benjamin waits for him to close the gate.

"He has a strong sense of order," Tallent says, reaching for the latch.

"Which he certainly didn't get from us," Benjamin's other father, Michael Cousins, 36, chimes in.

Just a year and a half ago, Tallent and Cousins were anxiously waiting for a child to come into their lives. Now, with 15-month-old Benjamin, they have started a family.

Tallent and Cousins, together now almost 12 years, say they began thinking about adoption five years ago. Tallent says they thought it would be great to have a family and it was the next step they wanted to take in their lives.

Upon hearing the news of their plans to adopt, Cousins' stepfather Terry Marshall, 58, a heavy equipment operator from Gales Creek, Ore., reacted with surprise.

"My first reaction was 'What in the hell are they thinking,'" Marshall says with a laugh, adding that he initially thought the adoption plans were a joke.

Marshall says the couple was confident in their decision, was intelligent about it and knew what they were doing. He says he found the idea of an adoptive grandchild for his gay stepson and his partner to be enticing especially since it was his only chance for a grandchild.

Cousins says over the next couple of years, he and Tallent began looking at various adoption options. Their search led them first through state adoption and international adoption. He says they found state adoption did not fit their needs and also ruled out international adoption. He says international adoption was not an option for them due to the fact that same-sex couples cannot legally adopt.

Cousins says if they chose to go that route only one would have legal adoption rights, the other would be considered a "roommate."

"We didn't feel like setting up our kid's life as a lie," Cousins says.

One agency that does not allow openly gay couples to adopt a child, even in Washington where gay adoption is legal, is Bethany Christian Services, which serves Bellingham.

John VanValkenburg, Bethany Christian Services Public Relations Coordinator, says through 60 years of experience and expertise, and based on Biblical beliefs, Bethany Christian Services chooses not to offer adoption to gay couples. VanValkenburg says 94 percent of their client-base is married couples, with the remaining six percent being single parents.

After ruling out other options, the couple found themselves at Open Adoption.

Gillian Freney, an Open Adoption counselor at the Portland office says many homosexual couples come to them for help starting a family. She says about 30 percent of Open Adoption's pool of families waiting for a child is gay and lesbian.

At Open Adoption, a relationship between the birthparents and adoptive parents is strongly encouraged. The birthmother ultimately has complete control over who will adopt her child.

"To develop a relationship that's intended to last a lifetime — that philosophy very much appealed to us," Tallent says.

After going through interviews and background checks with Open Adoption, Tallent and Cousins were ready to put themselves into the pool of adoptive parent hopefuls. But one more obstacle remained.

Part of the decision-making process for the birthmother includes reading a "Dear Birthparent" booklet containing letters written by the prospective adoptive parents in which they discuss themselves and why they want to be parents.

"We had to do this letter and we sort of went into paralysis," Cousins says. "How do you put your whole relationship, way of life and philosophy on parenting into one page?"

Cousins says a great deal of pressure exists for the adoptive parents in this situation because they want to appeal to the birthmother without representing themselves falsely.

With an honest and carefully crafted letter submitted to Open Adoption, all that was left to do was wait.

Tallent and Cousins say that waiting to hear that a birthmother had selected them to raise her child was the most challenging part of the adoption process. They admit they started getting about nine months into the wait.

Freney says that for the '03-'04 fiscal year, gay and lesbian couples spent about 12 months on average in the waiting process compared to the all-client average of nine months.

"It's hard to give up any semblance of..."
Western graduate Geoff Tallent and son Benjamin in their Seattle neighborhood.

control — you kind of have to wait for things to happen," Cousins says. "It’s not like going into Target and pulling a carton off a shelf. There’s actually a lot of human messiness around it."

The call they waited for for nearly a year for finally came the day before Thanksgiving of 2003. Hailey Byers, 19, from Portland, Ore., then a 17-year-old high school student, had selected Tallent and Cousins to raise her unborn child.

Byers says she chose Tallent and Cousins through Open Adoption because she found closed adoption to be upsetting and she wanted to have a hand in raising her child. She says she and her boyfriend, Robin Balmer, 19, also from Portland, Ore., chose Tallent and Cousins because they were calm, friendly, well-natured and their interest in travel would allow their child to visit places she never had the opportunity to visit.

"We had a gut feeling about Geoff and Michael when we met them," Balmer says. "I know we’ve given our child the best family we could find."

Byers and Balmer say one thing that caught their eye in the letter "Dear Birthparent" written by Tallent and Cousins was when they professed to have a wonky sense of humor," a line Tallent and Cousins worried about soon after the letter was submitted.

Byers was due to give birth at any time, so the adoption proceedings began immediately and the couple went down to Oregon to participate in a mediated session with Byers and Balmer.

Two days after Christmas 2003, Benjamin was born and his life with Tallent and Cousins began.

Before heading back to Seattle with Benjamin, both sets of parents took part in an entrustment ceremony in which he was officially handed over to Tallent and Cousins. In the proceeding, both couples said a few words to each other, a difficult task, Tallent says, as he remembers crying the entire time.

"It was the most emotional, nerve-wracking and tearful moment of our lives, and I think it was for Hailey and Robin, too," Tallent says, even now getting choked up.

Byers says that she was told that giving up her child would be the worst part of the adoption process, but she found it to be quite the opposite.

"I didn’t think twice about it," Byers says. "I was just happy to be giving a couple a family."

Balmer says he felt the same.

"I saw it as a big, happy family," Balmer says. "We were gaining family members instead of losing one."

Now that they finally had the child they had been hoping for, Tallent and Cousins had to acclimate their lives to raising him.

"I think after we adopted, people most often said, ‘What do you mean you can’t go to dinner at 9 o’clock at night?’ " Cousins jokes.

Two men and a baby may seem a strange concept to some people, but Tallent and Cousins say they have encountered little opposition to their new family. Cousins says he can think of only one incident where someone was outwardly opposed to them. He says Benjamin was
"We had a gut feeling about Geoff and Michael when we met them. I know we've given our child the best family we could find." - Robin Balmer, Benjamin's biological father

playing with another boy in an airport, but once the boy's mother figured out his parents were two gay men she did not want her child to play with Benjamin anymore. Cousins says Benjamin did not care and continued to play as he had been.

"I'm actually surprised there hasn't been more of a pushback than we've seen," Cousins says.

Cousins, a marketing director for the Washington state lottery, says his co-workers, ranging from uber-conservative to liberal, actually held a baby shower for them. They left with about 50 outfits, among other gifts.

Tallent, an environmental planner, recognizes that some people may not be supportive of his family.

"I'm sure there are outside people that don't approve," Tallent says. "But once you start spending time with other parents, it becomes much more about the challenges of parenting, not about who should be parents or not."

Cousins' mother, Karen Marshall, 59, a retired schoolteacher from Gales Creek, Ore., says she has experienced some resistance to the couple's adoption.

"It has caused some family contention with siblings," Marshall says, adding that some relatives' reactions have been supportive.

"A kid should have role models, both women and men, and Benjamin has those; we make sure he has those," Tallent says. "Clearly a kid needs nurturing, guidance and mentoring; all the things a mother or father could provide. It's making sure you provide all those things."

Clinton Anderson, a gay, lesbian and bisexual concerns officer at the American Psychological Association says that research indicates that children of gay and lesbian parents are at no disadvantage socially, sexually, in gender roles or in school performance compared to children of heterosexual parents.

Dr. Joseph Hagan at the American Academy of Pediatrics echoes that idea, and says children who grow up with gay parents fare as well in emotional, cognitive, social and sexual functioning as children with straight parents.

When the time came for Tallent and Cousins to return to work full-time, they faced the same issue heterosexual parents have dealing with work and children.

"We are an extraordinarily middle-class couple — a modest house in a modest neighborhood," Tallent says, referring to the struggle of working and raising a child. "I think most parents in this day and age go through a lot of challenges with supporting a family."

When deciding how Benjamin would be encouraged in his maturation away from home, Cousins says at first he hated the idea of daycare but now he sees how much it has helped Benjamin develop. In the structured environment, surrounded by older children, Cousins figures Benjamin has advanced more quickly than if he spent all his time with his parents.

"Watching him grow has been the best thing," Tallent says, echoing Cousins. "He's gone from a little lump that just sat there on your chest to this toddler who's running around the house."

"I'm in awe of this headstrong, very bright kid that wants to be into everything and is constantly exploring," Tallent adds. "I'm fascinated by how fast he picks things up. There's a new word every couple of days and a new skill. He never looked twice at a puddle two days ago — yesterday he jumped in one for the first time. Now every time he walks past a pool of water he has to jump up and down."

Cousins found raising a child comes with some worries as well as fascinating moments.

"One of the challenges is watching him and trusting that he's not going to hurt himself and if he does that it will be a learning experience for him."

Looking back, Byers and Balmer, now in college, say they do not regret their decision to place Benjamin with Tallent and Cousins.

"He's such a happy baby who I get to be somewhat of an automatic grandmother to," Byers says with a smile. "I can spoil him when I visit and when he gets poopy he goes back to his dads."

Marshall says he has seen Cousins and Tallent become more in tune with each other since they adopted Benjamin, saying their commitment to each other has been strengthened.

For now, Benjamin's two dads are taking their life with him one day at a time, learning along with him.

"I think I anticipated that there would be something different about raising a kid as a gay couple, but so far it has not been different at all; talking to other couples about getting up in the middle of the night and feeding him. There's nothing different, we're raising a kid, it's just normal," Tallent says.

"Of course, it helps that we had no life before we had Benjamin, so spending an evening watching him play on the floor is better than watching television." 🌈

Gay adoption is legal in nine states: California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin - as well as D.C. - according to Lambda Legal.
Walkin’ the Rail
Photos by Matthew Anderson
Design by Kelsey Parkhurst.

The sun has a drastic impact on the character of Railroad Avenue. In its presence, the street bustles with activity as college students, families, children and the elderly visit the street’s many shops and restaurants. At night, the street’s bustle is of a different tenor. Students visit the bars and vagrants troll among them for loose change as the police roll slowly down the road keeping their eyes on things.

a | Western sophomore Daniel Skaggs practices the art of contact juggling at the Bellingham Farmer’s Market. “I have big plans,” says Skaggs, who intends to major in French. “I want to go to Paris and juggle for American tourists.”

b | Courtney Calhoun, a psychic at the Bellingham Church of Divine Man, sips her drink while waiting for change inside Avellino Coffee.

c | Balloon man Brit W. Anders places a cat balloon bracelet on the wrist of a young girl at the Bellingham Farmer’s Market.

d | Peadar MacMahon plays the guitar and hanzo in the group Peadar MacMahon and 6 Hand Reel. He says he hopes to make enough money in six months to spend the rest of the year on the road, touring the country and playing wherever he feels like playing.
Kataya Urquhart tries to make her dog Nisha look fierce while tempting to sell her art on the sidewalk. Urquhart, who lives in Maine, hitchhikes to town on the weekends and hops from house to house at night until she has to head back home.

Just before the bars close, Amanda Munzanreder and her mom Robbie hug outside Rumor's Cabaret after a long night of drinking and dancing.

Brian Gochenour sweeps the floor of Little Cheerful at 2 a.m. He should have done the cleaning earlier, he says, but he was out all night. Now, he must make sure he gets the restaurant sparkling before it opens Saturday morning.

Long after stores have stopped selling alcohol and the bars have sweated out their patrons, Mark Harmon drinks a beer at his favorite spot, which he's named "the black tile."
Imagine studying for a biology test two months in advance. In a way, Western sophomore Dustin Jensen Reiber, 20, does just that. Instead of studying a textbook, however, Reiber studies his body in hopes of achieving perfect symmetry and muscular development for his next bodybuilding competition.

Few people match the intense dedication and extreme lifestyle of bodybuilders. Reiber spends most of his time at the gym and follows a strict high-protein diet. He's committed to sculpting his body like a work of art.

The workout

The pungent smell of fish sautéing on the stove saturates the air in Reiber's dormitory in Buchanan Towers. Instead of empty pizza boxes and potato chips, the small kitchen he shares with his roommate is filled with vegetables and protein powder.

A black and white poster of Arnold Schwarzenegger flexing his biceps is taped neatly on Reiber's closet door. His energized voice speaks volumes when talking about his passion for bodybuilding.

At 5 feet 4 inches tall and 175 pounds, Reiber, who can bench press 360 pounds and squat 560 pounds, tries to drop to 164 pounds for a competition. Therefore, he forgoes sleep for early morning cardio.

"You get your metabolism revved in the morning so you are burning calories throughout the day," Reiber says of his daily routine. "I like to get to the gym before 8 a.m. to do my 45 minutes of cardio, but if I can't, I get it done right after my 8 a.m. class."

Placing seventh out of eight competitors at the Vancouver U.S.A. Natural Classic on April 2 was an accomplishment for Reiber, considering he decided to compete only a month and a half before the show. His first competition served as a learning experience for his next show, the Emerald Cup Championship in Seattle, he says.

"The biggest thing I wanted to change for the competition was flexing my glutes more," Reiber laughs while steaming two cups of broccoli for his lunch. "That is one thing that makes a guy look bad onstage because when you're flexing everything, that is the one area you always forget to do."

Reiber, who is an exercise science major, says a bodybuilder should ideally start preparing for a competition two to three months in advance. In order to train for the Emerald Cup, which was the last weekend in April, Reiber worked up a sweat at the gym six days a week. However, he could still be found riding the bicycle or perfecting his sculpted abdominals on what he considered his "off day."

"The one day I don't work out, I still do my 45 minutes of cardio in the morning," says Reiber, whose large toned biceps reflect his serious dedication. "I also work out my secondary muscle groups, like a couple sets of calves or traps and maybe some abs. It is not very strenuous, so it is really like an off day."

Being surrounded by people with fitness-oriented lifestyles is motivating, says Reiber, who also works at the Wade King Student Recreation Center 14 hours each week.

Reiber's roommate, Western sophomore Cody Franzen, 20, started
A strict diet of vegetables and protein combined with a drive for physical perfection keeps Dustin Reiber on track to becoming a champion bodybuilder. Mari Bergstrom reveals the dedication and self-control contending bodybuilders encompass to keep motivated and sweep the competition. Photos by Amanda Woolley. Design by Kelsey Parkhurst.
lifting weights in sixth grade. Reiber says Franzen, who has been competing in bodybuilding competitions for two years, was one of the people who inspired and encouraged him to become a bodybuilder.

"It was fun working with Dustin because just from reading magazines he had a general idea about bodybuilding," Franzen says while taking a break from studying at his desk in his room. "He had the drive to do it, but just needed to be provided with the right information."

Franzen, who is also an exercise science major, says he wants to be a personal trainer and motivate others who are training to be bodybuilders.

"It is kind of frustrating to work with people who don't have the drive or don't understand at all because they have no idea how hard it is physically, mentally and emotionally," he says of bodybuilding.

Although Franzen is not preparing for a show right now, he still sets aside time to work out regularly despite his busy school schedule.

Maintaining the strict lifestyle of a bodybuilder is difficult, but having good time management helps, Reiber says while seasoning his lunch with limejuice and pepper.

Kelli Piggee, a Lifequest personal fitness trainer and instructor, who placed first and overall in the over 40 masters figure division at the 2004 Emerald Cup, says the mental preparation for bodybuilding competitions varies from person-to-person.

"You have to be very focused, committed and level-headed, but at the same time enjoy the process which is not a simple task," she says.

Piggee, who wants to continue to compete, says there are many sacrifices made while preparing for a competition. Having a support system is crucial, whether it is family, friends, co-workers, other competitors or your trainer.

"A lot of time and effort are put into the process so you may fine that you won't spend as much quality time with your friends and family," she says.

The intense physical lifestyle of bodybuilding can be exhausting. In order to carve his body into the desired symmetrical perfection, Reiber cannot afford to take a day off because he feels tired.

"I get dressed and walk out the door without thinking," he says of how he overcomes being worn-out. "You have highs and you have lows. I just think about the competition and what I want to look like."

The lifestyle of a bodybuilder, however, goes beyond lifting weights and early morning cardio. Without a strict diet and a good tan, achieving goal of placing first in a bodybuilding competition would be difficult.

The diet

For most people, having a treat would mean eating a chocolate chip cookie or an ice cream bar. Not Reiber.

"Every now and then, I cheat and eat a can of tuna fish and some egg whites at night if I've had a really strenuous workout," he says in between bites of broccoli. "But I try not to."

Reiber's diet is about precision. He eats the same food, at about the same time, every single day (see sidebar).

Reiber believes sacrificing fast-food — which he has not eaten in two years — along with soda and ice cream is necessary in order to achieve his goal of placing first in a bodybuilding competition.

Piggee says the restrictive diet has a potential negative affect on the time spent with family and friends.

"For example, holiday gatherings, wedding receptions, going out to dinner aren't the same when you are restricted from eating the foods that are available to you," she says. "Family, friends and other acquaintances usually don't understand why you can't eat what they're eating and are often offended."

Explaining to family and friends why you follow a specific nutrition regimen can be challenging, Piggee says.

"You shouldn't feel like you can't be a part of a fun event just because you have some restrictions," she says.

Even though water is calorie-free, it too is restricted to precise amounts before a competition because extra water weight conceals a bodybuilder's chiseled form.

"Right now, every time I'm sitting down not doing anything, I'm drinking water, which is about every 10 to 15 minutes," he explains. "Two days prior to a show, I can only drink one gallon of water (each day). And that's when you start measuring exactly how much to drink. The day before the show, I only drink half a gallon of water along with my half of cup of oatmeal, which gives me more volume onstage."

Although Reiber says his diet is less restricted in between competitions, he still does not fall back to eating fast-food and candy.

"After a show, I eat a lot more," says Reiber, who currently eats about 2,000 to 2,500 calories a day. "I eat all the fruit I want and all the carbs I want."

During his off-season, Reiber says he eats about 4,000
to 5,000 calories a day.

"I still will be eating healthy food, but just a lot of it," he says laughing.

Like anyone, Reiber does have cravings. However, his cravings are not what you would expect.

"The biggest thing I deprived myself of is rice," he says of his carb-restricted diet that he maintains in season. Prior to the Emerald Cup, Reiber says he looked forward to the Azteca restaurant after party so he could eat "a big burrito with black beans and two or three side dishes of rice."

Although eating the same healthy food everyday becomes monotonous, the results are worth it when striking choreographed poses in front of the scrutinizing judges at a bodybuilding competition.

"Every bodybuilder has to be a perfectionist so they see every flaw in themselves," he says of the stringent lifestyle. "They tend to be more strict about everyday life."

The competition

Performing in front of an audience judging the way you look is intimidating. The hour before a bodybuilding competition is crucial for the mental and physical preparation needed prior to getting onstage. The hour before Reiber's first show, however, left him feeling rushed and tense.

Before Reiber could compete at the Vancouver Classic, he took a polygraph test to verify he was not using steroids. Although he knew he would pass, taking the test only 30 minutes before having to be on stage increased his nerves, Reiber says of the experience. Once onstage, however, he tried to block out the audience and judges to focus on flexing his muscles.

"I hadn't brushed my teeth, put tanning lotion on my face or oiled up. I did that all within 10 minutes with my mom's help," he says of getting ready before the competition.

Natural shows, such as the Vancouver Classic, which does not allow steroid use, are becoming more popular as more money is being invested into them, Reiber says.

"The guys who are putting the money into bodybuilding don't want their kids to aspire to be guys who are big because of steroids," Reiber explains of the shift.

However, there is still fascination about unnaturally huge bodybuilders, Reiber says.

"I don't know if it will completely shift to natural shows because those big massive guys look like superheroes," he says of the open shows that require no testing.

"You don't see guys normally walk around like that."

Although gaining muscle mass naturally may be more difficult, Reiber's hard work shows in his etched body. And as long as he is having fun, he will continue to live the strict lifestyle of a bodybuilder, he says.

When considering the intense workout and precise diet, a successful bodybuilder has to be willing to make sacrifices in order to achieve the perfection desired. Without the right mentality and desire to work each muscle like a sculptor works a piece of art, chiseled abs are but a distant dream.

Morning:
1/2 cup of oatmeal with 1 cup of water
2 scoops of protein powder equaling 40 g
1 tablespoon of flaxseed oil
1/2 cup of almonds

Snack:
Protein shake
2 chicken breasts 1/2 cup of almonds
1/2 yam

After school:
2 fish fillets
2-3 cups of broccoli
Dinner:
8 oz. of steak
6 asparagus
bag of bean sprouts

After workout: Protein shake

Reiber's diet before competition
VWs have evolved into fun, trendy, personalized cars. Today, vintage Volkswagen collectors treat their vans and buggies like irreplaceable best friends. Chris Taylor discovers why VW fanatics feel so passionate about their cars and how they name them with care. Design by Kelsey Parkhurst. Photos by Chris Taylor.

a) Owner of Northwest Vee Dub Steve Vail, stands outside his office after rallying his 2001 dune buggy. The buggy shell, which Vail designed and sells, was made in 2001, but the engine block, now a mildly built-up 1915cc, is from a 1970 Beetle.

b) Photographed from the passenger seat of the dune buggy, Vail flies down Guide Meridian Road showing the power of his engine.

c) Derek Pawlak, 46, smiles as he kneels next to his stage 1 restored Beetle. Stage 1 is a full body restoration. This is Pawlak’s first bug.

d) This 1968 Karmann Ghia is owned by Debbie Fox and is waiting to be fully restored. Karmann Ghias were made from 1956 to 1974.

e) Vail talks to his neighbor, Andy Valog before he rallies in the nearby field. Vail credits Valog with providing him with opportunities to help him pursue his passion for VWs.
As I pull off Guide Meridian Road, I see several lines of old Volkswagens sitting ahead of me, one next to the other, each with a different color and tone along the sides of the gravel driveway. I walk into a yard full of slug bugs and other vintage VWs.

My attention turns to a white dune buggy with two burly back tires picking up the back end. With little round head lights peeking up off the hood, it looks as if it has real eyes. I continue walking toward the buggy where a tin-yellow sign sticking out from the side of the garage reads “office.”

Sliding on his sleek-looking black shades and black leather biker hat with a red leather stripe running down the middle, Bellingham resident Steve Vail, 42, is an old Harley and vintage VW guy. He is the owner of Northwest Vee Dub, a restoration service and custom build VW shop in Bellingham that focuses on vintage Volkswagens.

He puts on his driving gloves and straps his rally driving harness around his shoulders, locking it with a large metal clip. The key turns and the dune buggy starts right up with a little roar. Without warning, and pulling out in front of several cars heading straight at us, Vail guns it, peeling out of his driveway and fish tailing onto the road as gravel sprays behind.

“Vintage Volkswagens” are classified by VW enthusiasts as the first cars made by Volkswagen that had air-cooled engines placed in the back of the vehicle, Vail says. According to Vail, these engines were seen in the United States as early as 1949, with the first import of the Beetle, to 1979 when VW made many different air-cooled vehicles in the line. The air-cooled engine stopped production in the United States in 1979 with the invention of a newer, so called “more efficient” water-cooled engine that is fuel-injected and is used in all cars today, Vail says. Air-cooled engines are much different, Vail explains, because they have one main difference — no water to cool them down while the engine is running. They just use air.

“VWs have a spirit and energy to them carried by the people who own them,” says Andy Koch, a professional entertainer who is a clown, puppeteer and musician for the local band called Badd Dog Blues. Koch owns a 1968 Bus called “Bubbles” that he uses as his band tours around the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

With a smiling grin across his face, Vail continues to floor it as we speed down the Guide. As we come to a gravel turn-out on the side of the road, he finally lets off the gas and slows down. We pull off the road and come to a complete stop. Vail takes a brief glance behind him and throws it into reverse, turning the wheel and swinging around the front end in a 180-degree motion, so we end up facing the street again.

“Don’t worry,” he says. “I know the neighbors.”

Maxine, Karma, Mint Me, Gray duck, Van Morrison, Bubbles and Fast Eddy are just a few among the many names Volkswagen owners have named their VWs.

“These old vintage Volkswagens are not just vehicles, man — they’re friends. You know what to name your VW because it just comes to you,” Vail says with a wide smile across his face as he remembered how he named Karma, his 1966 Westfalia camping bus.

“I was looking for a Westy (Westfalia-camping bus) for a while and it was just plain karma that this one fell into my lap,” Vail says as he looks at a photograph of the bus.

Lovers of vintage VWs won’t sell their cars to anyone. Looking to buy a vintage VW can be quite a feat, and if one is found in good condition, it probably won’t go to whoever offers the most money. Many owners go through an interviewing process.

“Frannie wasn’t looking for just any bus, she was looking for one that hit her,” says Rick Anderson, 40, the previous owner of the Vourlou’s tomato red bus named “Van Morrison.” “My van hit her.”

After being divorced twice, Anderson bought the bus because he felt like the way he was living was not heading him in the right direction.

“I’m now in a different place in my life,” Anderson says. “The bus was there for me and it helped me along with my journey.”

While being offered $8,000 for his bus a year earlier, Anderson decided that something more than money would have to influence him to sell it.

Some vintage VWs may not be in top condition, but still attract a VW lover, says Dave Vitt, 25, who has been a Bellingham resident his whole life and owned 10 vintage VWs. Fast Eddy is a 1974 Transporter bus Vitt picked up for $900. After going to check it out, Vitt made the owner an offer.

“How do $500 and a couple of doobies sound?” Vitt said as he laughed. “The kid said ‘That sounds sweet’ and sold Fast Eddy to me.”

These vintage cars with engines in the back instead of the front have created an underlying subculture of VW lovers.

“They just look different,” Vitt says. “You know when you see a Volkswagen.”

“It’s pretty common to get a wave from people driving other VWs and from people who aren’t,” Vourlou says. “It brings a smile to my face every time it happens.”

From the original Beetle to Kombi, Transporter, Westfalia (camping) and Sun buses, Karmann Ghias, Squarebacks, Notchbacks, Fastbacks, Dune Buggies and many more, vintage VWs can still be found on the roads today.

VWs have touched the lives of many people, and one thing is for sure — these cars seem to find people with the same character as the car has it self.

“I have met a lot of cool people who own VWs and they all seem to have cool hobbies, neat jobs and have been a lot of places,” Vitt says. “The people who own VWs are just as cool as the VW itself.”
U.S. must stop dumping electronic waste

By Cara Shaw

Somewhere in China, a young child walks barefoot through a landfill surrounded by toxic waste. He is sifting through electronic waste that once had a home in privileged offices, homes and college dorm rooms across the United States. With his bare hands, or a hammer if he is lucky, he will scavenge computer scraps to earn whatever money he can to support his family. This scene describes a picture taken in Guiyu, China, a city that many computer landfills call home.

By 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates more than 500 million computers will become obsolete and inundate landfills across the country. America’s lands are not the only ones becoming a hazardous waste dump. Instead of taking full responsibility for solving its own problems, the United States exports 50 to 80 percent of its electronic waste to developing countries across the world.

The United States must stop exporting electronic waste to developing countries. It is unethical for one of the most developed countries in the world to place the burden of cleaning up U.S. hazardous waste on countries that do not have the resources to do so.

Computers are not designed with recycling in mind. Recyclable materials in computers are fused and mixed together with other materials such as plastic, which makes it hard to separate the recyclable materials. As a result, a majority of electronic waste is dumped in landfills.

A 2002 article written by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition and the Basel Action Network, an international organization that seeks to prevent the globalization of toxic chemicals, cites the city of Guiyu, China as an example of how landfills affect the environment.

Guiyu has been “recycling” electronic waste from the United States for six years. Toxic chemicals from landfills have crept into the city’s drinking water supply. As a result, drinking water must be imported from town Ninjing, a town 30 kilometers away.

The land is not the only thing affected by electronic waste. Recyclers and people who live in cities spotted with landfills are exposed to toxic chemicals and polluted drinking water, causing serious health concerns.

According to a Nov. 23, 2002, San Jose Mercury article, some of the toxic chemicals found in computers include lead, barium, hexavalent chromium, phosphorus, beryllium and mercury. Exposure to these chemicals has serious health risks. These chemicals can hinder brain development, cause lung cancer, skin disease and damage the heart, liver, spleen, nervous system, kidney system, blood system and reproductive system.

A solution needs to happen on many different levels. The United States must ban the trade of hazardous waste. The Basel Convention created a global treaty that would prohibit the export of hazardous waste for any reason from developed and industrialized countries to all developing countries. The Basel Ban was introduced as an amendment to international law in 1995. Since then, 55 countries have ratified the amendment, but seven more countries must sign the treaty before it becomes law. The United States has not signed the treaty.

In addition, we must hold computer manufacturers responsible for cleanup of old computers. This type of solution would most likely mean a fee for consumers when buying a new computer. California has already passed legislation instituting a mandatory State Environmental Fee for consumers starting Jan. 1, 2005. Fees range from $6 to $10 depending on the size of computer. Such state legislation is helpful, but as a nation-wide problem, introducing a federal policy is necessary for national change. Another solution is to redesign more recyclable computers making them easier to separate and dismantle.

As long as the United States is able to dump its waste on poorer economies, there will never be an incentive to find alternative ways of recycling electronic waste. With a free trade of hazardous wastes, the United States is forcing the poor people of Asia to choose between the less of two evils — poverty or poison.
A Gonzo death wish

By Tess Hembree

Terri Schiavo's case killed the mood, so to speak. While the Schiavo disaster was raging, you probably missed a much more interesting story about Hunter S. Thompson's death and last wishes.

The pioneer of Gonzo journalism, Thompson shot himself in the head on Feb. 20. In August, Thompson's wife will fulfill her husband's last wishes by shooting Thompson's ashes out of a cannon mounted inside of a 53-foot statue, according to reports.

For those of you who have read Thompson's work and know a thing or two about his life, you understand how well these last wishes reflect who he was. If you haven't read any of his work, stop reading this and get yourself a copy of "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" immediately!

"If my life and death ever becomes the topic of debate, do the exact opposite of what Republicans want to happen to me."

I don't want my family torn apart over whether I should be taken off life support, nor do I want my remains shot from a cannon. I would like to take the opportunity to publicly declare my last wishes which truly reflect my personality.

First, I want to make it clear that if my life and death ever becomes the topic of debate among politicians, do the exact opposite of what Republicans want to happen to me, particularly if they are members of the Bush family.

When I'm gone, I don't want my family subjected to a long, drawn-out Catholic wake, followed by a long, drawn-out Catholic church service, followed by a long, drawn-out Catholic gravesite service. We've been through that with other family members and it's not fun.

My wishes are simple. Since I will probably die without seeing everything I wanted to see, I want to be taken to the following places "Weekend at Bernie's"-style: Italy, France, Switzerland, Iraq, Jordan, Vietnam and Iran. After I've seen all those places, what happens to me is not important. In fact, I wouldn't be upset if I was forgotten in some random country.

Death can be such a complicated issue when the deceased don't make his or her wishes clear, as we've learned in the past few months. Schiavo did not think ahead, and her family has paid dearly. Thompson did and his family is intact thanks to his foresight.
Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning "beautiful sunset."