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An exploration of Bigfoot and local believers of the myth

Restless?
The curse of insomnia — and the toll it takes on a Western student

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OUT OF THE FIRE
A Bellingham man finds his creative spirit — and a profession — by blowing glass
Editor’s note

I read somewhere how the greatest gift in life is having the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things you can, and, most importantly, the wisdom to know the difference.

Granted, it’s easier said than done, but in life we do make choices, and each one is part of a bigger picture. Therefore, make each choice with courage and conviction — without looking back.

You never know where your choices will lead you. They could direct you to a career in glass blowing, into the depths of the sea in a submarine, or into the great Northwest in search of Bigfoot. Klipsun touches on these topics, and I encourage you to read about them.

So, make your choices with courageous conviction because no real security lies in what isn’t meaningful.

Thanks for reading,

Shannon Barney
Editor in Chief

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Fewer than half of the industrial design premajors actually make it into the program, leaving the rest to find new majors their junior year. By Ted McGuire

Hot Shop
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Big Foot or Big Myth?
A look into the Bigfoot myth reveals more than just creature sightings; one believer says he has met psychic, interdimensional Sasquatches. By Nic Riley

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SNEAKERHEADS

Since the dawn of time, humans have worn shoes to protect their feet. Crafted from animal skins tied with rope, these sandals were uncomfortable, bulky and unsightly. During the Industrial Revolution, the sandal evolved into the sneaker, a solid rubber sole attached to an upper made of canvas. Now sneakers, with their air pumps, high-tech materials, give the illusion that rubber sole attached to an upper made of canvas.

Modern times have given birth to a rare breed of shoe wearers: sneakerheads.

The mentality of a sneakerhead is simple: collect the rarest, most sought-out sneakers possible. Sneakerheads appreciate the aesthetic appeal of sneakers whether they are encrusted with diamonds, spray-painted with camouflage patterns or dusted with 14-karat gold.

Western senior Ryan Scott collects all types of sneakers, but especially those with unique textures, colors and designs. His shoe shelf looks like a rainbow, with more than 70 designer and one-of-a-kind sneakers that together retail for an estimated $5,000.

His most prized possessions include his sleek, sophisticated, red leather Pumas stamped with the Ferrari logo, a pair of Timberland boots lasered with the brand's logo and a pair of Nike Air Max 95 he purchased in February.

"My shoes represent me; I'm in touch with my style," Scott says. "I love wearing shoes for the first time because of the possibilities of outfits."

Scott satisfies his sneaker fix every time he goes home to Bellevue, where he trusts only Bubba, a shoes salesman from Nordstrom who gives him the inside scoop about when a sneaker is slated to come out.

"My mother jokes that if a girl wants to find the way to my heart, she needs to buy me a pair of sneakers," Scott says.

The first thing Western junior Whitney Pilz notices about people is their shoes, but don't call her shallow — she just appreciates a pair of fresh kicks.

"You can tell a lot about a person by their shoe," Pilz says. "You can dress nicely, but if your shoes don't look good it shows carelessness."

Pilz, who owns 20 to 30 pairs of sneakers, is a fan mainly of Nike Dunk SBs and Converse shoes because of their versatility and bright designs.

"I love Converse because they come in every color. It is amazing," Pilz says. "They look great with jeans, shoes or a skirt."

Pilz's favorite Converse sneakers are her bubble-gum pink high-tops with black stars down the heel, and a pair of plaid low-top sneakers in yellow, blue and green. She will let herself indulge in a pair of funky shoes, whether they are ultra-sexy stiletto heels or her favorites — Nike Heineken Dunk SBs.

A year and a half ago Pilz's boyfriend surprised her with the Nike Heineken Dunks for her birthday. Roughly 1,500 pairs exist, with a retail value of $450 a pair. The Dunks, modeled after the Heineken beer logo, are green and white leather sneakers with a red star stitched on the outer side and red laces. They are such a hot collectors' item that some Web sites advertise bootleg versions of the sneakers.

"I feel confident when I wear cool shoes," Pilz says. "They have to say something special for me to wear them."

"Everybody's got shoes," Pilz says. "I wanted his shoes so bad, but I couldn't afford them."

When Warsame turned 17, he saved enough money to purchase his first pair of Nike Dunks. He now owns 68 pairs of sneakers and says it's no mystery why sneakerheads collect shoes.

"Why do people collect paintings or stamps?" he asks. "People will shell out millions of dollars for a Picasso painting not because it's worth that much but because someone saw value in it."

Surprisingly, his favorite pair of sneakers are not his flashiest shoes but his most comfortable ones — Nike Dunk SB Vampires, supercushioned skater shoes with black suede, red shoelaces and red soles.

A pair of Nikes can sell for thousands of dollars, considerably more than the cost of making them, depending on their uniqueness, condition and make, Warsame says.

“A true sneakerhead doesn’t buy shoes because everyone has them. We buy them because they catch our eyes,” Warsame says.

Warsame says he is inked by sneakerhead imposters who buy shoes for the wrong reasons. "Sneakerheads refer to these people as 'hype beasts' because they jump on trends after seeing celebrities wear certain shoes or because they are expensive," Warsame says.

Warsame doesn't know if he will ever grow out of his sneakerhead days. In a way, the sneaker nostalgia will never leave him because he will always wear shoes.

"Everybody's got shoes," Warsame says. "But I got sneakers."

"My shoes represent me."

— Ryan Scott, Western senior

Above: Ryan Scott holds his Burberry plaid sneakers; Left: Whitney Pilz's Heineken Dunks and pink Converse all-star high tops. PHOTOS BY KATHRYN BRENZE AND BRITTANY GREENFIELD
Some Western students face the reality of spending two years working on projects around the clock only to find out their hard work was for nothing. Ted McGuire explores the extremely competitive major of industrial design. Photos by Ted McGuire. Design by Elana Bean.

Standing, bending and cutting pieces of aluminum, seven students methodically build their projects in an isolated studio on the third floor of the Ross Engineering Technology building at Western. The industrial design premajor students line the long, dirty tables of the sophomore workroom. Many of them will be here all night as they ready their projects for the next day's faculty review. The atmosphere is friendly yet tense. The reality that plagues their every waking moment is that 65 percent of the students in this room will have to find new majors in the spring.

Thirty-four students make up the sophomore class of the department of industrial design at Western. Only 12 of them will continue on to their junior year.

Making the cut depends on hard work and personality. A student must also have the ability to tirelessly conjure the creativity essential to impressing the faculty.

Taking off his glasses and wiping his tired, red eyes, Marty Ripp, an industrial design premajor, has been up all night — again. He was initially interested in industrial design because it combines two of his interests: art and industry, technology, manufacturing and engineering.

"I've always been fascinated by art and the way things are made," the 30-year-old says. "It is a creative field that marries the two very nicely."

Industrial design is the professional service of creating concepts that improve the function, value and appearance of products and systems for the benefit of users and manufacturers. Majors are trained to prepare clear and concise recommendations through drawings, models and verbal descriptions.

Ripp started at Whatcom Community College with the full intention of getting into the industrial design program at Western. Every student who wants to become an industrial design premajor first has to make a portfolio. Ripp's consisted of artwork, some 3-D sculptures, computer art he created using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, photography, an electronics project, and a physics lab report he did just to prove he had the technical skill needed to be an industrial design student.

To graduate, however, students must
30 students applied to be industrial design majors last year.

12 students are accepted into the major each year.

Students applied to be industrial design majors last year. In June, Ripp will find out if his hard work will pay off. All industrial design sophomores are subjected to the dreaded sophomore portfolio review. A sophomore class can have anywhere from 26 to 38 students. Out of those students, only 12 will make it to their junior year. Two years of late nights, long hours and dedicated work gets boiled down to a moment of acceptance or rejection.

The odds are against them from the beginning.

"Students put so much emotional effort into it that it's difficult to see them so upset when they don't make it," Ripp says. "Part of the issue is that it's a very competitive field. When you get to the professional aspect of it, you're competing with your peers for contracts."

Arunas Oslapas, associate professor and program coordinator for the department, smiles when the topic of the sophomore review is brought up. He says a student who completes the freshman and sophomore classes is ready for the sophomore portfolio review, which takes place once a year in June.

The faculty looks for the students who possess exceptional creativity, presentation skills and the ability to cooperate with their peers. It is vital that each student mixes well with the other students. Teamwork and a cohesive environment are essential to an industrial design class. The faculty considers their temperaments, their strengths and their weaknesses when deciding the junior class.

The dynamics of the 12-student studio are important because they will spend two years together, collaborating on projects. As if that were not enough, the junior class will be determined partly by a faculty member few students have ever met. Although all three faculty reviewers will have an equal say, Del King, the department's senior lecturer, will base his opinion only on a 15-minute presentation given by each student.

The weeks after the review are the toughest, Oslapas says. The faculty has counseling sessions for all students who are not chosen. He says that is the toughest part of the job for him. From this point, the 12 students who do make the cut move to the studio experience of the junior and senior years.

A few things stand out on the third floor of the Ross Engineering Technology building. Last quarter's sophomore, junior and senior projects line the walls. Superfuturistic industrial prototypes of sandals, belts and iPod cases are displayed. The waxed floors sparkle with a mind-numbing, cornea burning shine. An obviously exhaust-
ed student is sprawled out and dead asleep on a single couch that sits at the entrance to the stairs. Another walks by with a French press full of coffee in one hand, a towel in the other and a toothbrush in his mouth. One might get the idea that the students actually live here.

The studio experience is a key aspect of the program. Oslapas says the students have 24-hour access to a space where they can work, learn and exchange ideas.

"They become lifelong friends," Oslapas says. "Ten years from now they'll be hiring each other."

After four years of all-nighters in the studio, Western alumna Julia Carlson says it was a satisfying experience. She is now the category manager at Roxy Hardgoods, a division of the snowboarding company Mervin Manufacturing, in Seattle. And although the major was more difficult than she had ever imagined, she says Western pushes students to do their best work. This may be tough at times, but she doesn't think she could have been as successful any other way.

Carlson graduated from Western with a degree in industrial design in spring 2004. She has been working at her current position for almost two years, designing women's snowboards, boots and bindings. She says the late nights and hard work gave all of the students in her class a stronger portfolio and better job prospects and gave the department a better reputation.

"Your entire sophomore year is basically a gamble," Carlson says. "Then you only get 15 minutes to present your portfolio, which isn't a lot of time considering they want your life story, too. It's a lot of pressure."

Oslapas says only 12,000 to 15,000 industrial designers work in the United States. Boeing alone employs that many engineers. Through a good-humored grin, one of the sophomores sarcastically mentions the existence of more working hip-hop artists than industrial designers in the United States.

"It's competitive out there," Oslapas says. "We try to make it competitive here, too."

One of the reasons students choose to put themselves through something as grueling as the sophomore review is that Western has such a good design program, says Chris Benson, 27, an industrial design premajor at Western. Like all of the other students, Benson knows he'll make the cut. As he sands the handle of a piece of cutlery he designed, he says the high standards and the fact that an industrial design student at Western will graduate with a Bachelor of Science, and not a Bachelor of Art like at many other schools, attracted him to the program. He had a lot of friends last year who did not get in.

"It's hard," Benson says. "I don't know how I am going to feel personally until the sophomore review is over."

If he doesn't make the cut, Ripp says he has other options. Several degrees have a similar foundation to industrial design. Ripp says it would take him only a year to graduate in his contingency major, industrial technology, if he were ever cut, but it would still be a second choice and not what he is truly passionate about. With enough hard work and perseverance, he feels he will be one of the 12 students in his class who make it to the next level.

A little reluctant to speak about any aspect of the program, Wesley McCain, 27, an industrial design major and junior at Western, has pain in his eyes and grimaces when trying to describe his own sophomore review experience. He says the realities of the program are like gravity — a constant. Besides working as hard as they can, students cannot control these realities. He would never do it again, but the portfolio review was a great experience for him.

"Life's not fair, work's not fair," he says. "But that's the way it is."

Holding a thick piece of white cardboard in one hand and an Exacto knife in the other, C.J. Frederickson, 22, a sophomore premajor, says he was initially interested in industrial design because of the creative side, as well as the side that benefits other people. As he stares at the perfect square he has cut from the cardboard, he reflects.

"Design means so much more to the world than many people truly understand," Frederickson says.

The question is whether Frederickson will make it to his junior year. At the mention of being cut from the program, the whole studio of sophomore students falls dead silent. What was a lively conversation suddenly turns uneasy and tense. The inevitable circumstance hangs in the room like an approaching rain cloud. Frederickson sighs and bends forward in his seat. He puts his hands on his head and grabs his hair when contemplating what he will do if he does not make the cut.

"I don't know, man," Frederickson says. "I think maybe I'll take some time off and just do my thing."
Adam Brown immerses himself in the expressive art of glass blowing and its growing popularity as an art form expanding throughout the Pacific Northwest. He meets with local artist Christopher Morrison, who shares his passion for glass blowing.

Photos by Kathryn Brenize. Design by Jaclyn Trimm.

Clad in protective goggles and heavy leather gloves, Christopher Morrison huddles over a furnace heated to 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit, blowpipe grasped steadily in hand. A fluorescent orange, molten concoction bubbles and swirls with the consistency of honey just inches from his artisan fingers. The glass sculptures he creates are visually exquisite, but the ancient art of glass blowing allows for no second chances.

Morrison, 44, has been a glass blower for 24 years. Eight years ago, he opened his own glass studio, Morrison Glass Art, on Ohio Street in Bellingham. Morrison studied glass art at Hartwick College in North Carolina before attending what is widely considered the Mecca of this creative medium: Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, 50 miles north of Seattle. "The first year I was there was amazing," Morrison says as he fondly recalls the summer of 1983, when he attended the first of his three stints at the school. "[Pilchuck] has become world renowned and has grown into its own entity."

Morrison says initially he was drawn to the colors in glass and the fluid, sculptural nature of the medium. Just before he opened his studio, also known as a hot shop, he honeymooned with his wife in Costa Rica and found vast artistic inspiration in the rain forest.

"I try to work with a conceptual, universal, global theme," Morrison says. "You can't fix all the screwed-up things in this world, but you can talk about them using your creative spirit. If people put more value on the creative spirit instead of complaining, things will change. My purpose as an artist is to emphasize the value of relationship and process."

A process that has been around for centuries, glass art has evolved into its current form because of Dale Chihuly, who brought innovation to the medium in the 1970s. Known as one of the pioneers of modern glass art, Chihuly founded Pilchuck in 1971 with the support of art patrons John Hauberg and Anne Gould Hauberg. Chihuly received a $2,000 grant from the Union of Independent Colleges of Art for a summer glass workshop in the Pacific Northwest. He got permission from local art patrons to use an old barn north of Seattle for the workshop, which was supposed to be a one-time deal, Pilchuck public relations coordinator Erin Moore says.

Near the barn, Chihuly came upon a meadow that overlooked Puget Sound and instantly knew this was where he would set up shop, Moore says.

"There was no electricity or running water, but he created a hot shop there in two
weeks,” Moore says. “Glass blowing was a new studio art discipline at the time, as most glass was made for production, not art.”

After the initial summer workshop concluded, Hauberg asked Chihuly what it would cost to continue with the courses and decided they would pay the bills. In 1976, after several successful summers, Pilchuck incorporated as a nonprofit organization and evolved into the nation’s center for glass art, Moore says. Its Web site boasts that Pilchuck is the “largest and most comprehensive educational center in the world for artists working in glass.”

“Dale pushed the medium and the marketing of it to new levels,” Morrison says. “A lot of great people came out here [to the Northwest], went to Pilchuck and stayed here.”

Chihuly is recognized as the primary innovator in glass art, which led to the 2002 construction of the Chihuly Bridge of Glass in his hometown of Tacoma. The 500-foot-long pedestrian bridge soars 70 feet in the air, connecting downtown Tacoma with the Thea Foss Waterway.

Pilchuck now offers five sessions, each 17 days long, from May to September. Moore explains that Pilchuck is not a degree-granting institution, so students may attend for just one summer or continue for as many as they like. Getting into the prestigious school, however, is more difficult than simply wanting to attend.

“We discourage people from applying if they want to blow glass just for fun,” Moore says. “Pilchuck is intense immersion in glass. We want you to leave here with a notebook full of ideas instead of just a car full of glass.”

Pilchuck has a scholarship program that grants partial financial assistance for approximately one-third of its students, Moore says. Students without scholarships pay between $2,800 and $3,400 for a 17-day session, depending on which classes they take and which residence they choose during their stay.

The array of equipment available to Pilchuck’s students includes a 1,600-pound continuous-melt furnace with a 2-ton reservoir of molten glass that students can access from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m., six annealing ovens to process the glass, manual blow pipes and garages. In the past 20 years, Pilchuck has expanded to include kiln casting and hot casting with a melt furnace. Also part of the expansion is a cold shop for sanding and engraving, and a flat shop for neon glass, mosaic glass, stained glass and lamp work.

“Hot glass is not the end all, be all here,” Moore says. “Little by little we added to the shops, and part of this evolution has been changes in material science.”

She explained that glass in the 1970s was chemically different from today’s glass. Innovations include Pyrex, which was developed for chemistry labs and can be formed without being annealed, and dichroic coatings that split light into constituent forms, giving the glass an iridescent appearance.

Computer technology has made furnace temperatures easier to regulate, which gives the artists more time to be creative, Moore says.

“Despite all of the new technology, glass remains rooted to ancient traditions dating back more than 1,000 years,” Moore says.
"We want you to leave here with a notebook full of ideas instead of just a car full of glass."

"We still use folded-over, wetted-up newspaper regularly, so it's an interesting combination of high technology and ancient tradition."

Morrison is glad to be able to leave his furnace unattended sometimes thanks to the new technology.

"My computer automatically pages me if the power goes out so I can rush here and fix it," Morrison says. "We used to have to sleep next to the furnace if there was a storm coming in, so it's a lot easier now."

Along with his melt furnace, Morrison's shop includes two reheating chambers — affectionately known in the glass culture as "glory holes" — turned on during the day. He also has a cooling oven that heats to 915 degrees Fahrenheit.

Morrison teaches classes in glass blowing at his studio for $125 per seven-hour session. Students can gain basic experience and leave with a couple pieces of their own glass art.

Working in the hot shop with three to five assistants, Morrison can turn out three to 10 medium-sized pieces in a day. He says he is extremely picky about who assists him because of the volatile nature of the product.

"Most pieces I do, I make a few of them and pick the best one," Morrison says. "It's hideously expensive."

Morrison crafts a variety of pieces, from vases to ornaments to glass harps to yellow submarines. He stays away from the lucrative field of making bongs and pipes because, he says, it detracts from his art, and his client base would look down on it. His favorite work is the giant chandelier that hangs in Village Books, in Fairhaven. The piece took him more than three months to complete.

Village Books employee Krista Hunter often gazes at the hanging masterpiece at her work. The chandelier is approximately 10 feet tall and two feet wide with red and gold sparkling off its complex base. She says many people come into the store just to look at the piece.

"It is absolutely beautiful and fits the space beautifully," Hunter says. "Morrison is tremendously gifted to conceptualize something like this."

Morrison remains humble about his talent, though he does recognize the importance of his art form.

"It is my vision to create elements in art that give us a pause so that we can connect with elegance," Morrison says. "I'm doing my part to bring beauty into the world."

As a member of the Bellingham Arts Commission, Morrison takes pride in supporting the local art community. He works with groups such as Allied Arts, the Renaissance Celebration and the Bergsma Gallery at The Hotel Bellwether. He donates at least $10,000 worth of his art to charity auctions each year.

While the glass sculptures Morrison creates are fragile, the art of blowing glass has grown strong in the Northwest. With intensive training from Pilchuck, dozens of new artists emerge each summer, each as unique as the curves in the translucent medium they meticulously mold. 

Above and below: Christopher Morrison works on a vase with furnaces raging at 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit. Morrison studied at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood before moving to Bellingham and opening Morrison Glass Art, his workshop on Ohio Street.
Ryler Dustin is staring at himself in a bathroom mirror. The man staring back looks scared and serious. Dustin leaves his reflection and begins to pace outside the venue. People stare as he whispers lines under his breath. After circling a few blocks, Dustin returns to the venue. He is now ready to perform in a poetry slam.

Dustin, a Western junior, reads in poetry competitions, called slams, in Seattle. After winning a preliminary slam in January, he traveled to New York for the third annual Individual World Poetry Slam Championship, where he represented the Seattle region and competed against 75 poets.

The 22-year-old started writing novels almost 15 years ago. Feeling confident with fiction, he started four novels he never finished.

"When I was in about seventh grade, I knew that I wanted to be a famous writer," Dustin says. "I just wrote all the time."

Dustin's poetry writing, however, started in the past two years. He says poetry is a natural art form that fits him at the moment, and he has urges to write that can last until 4 a.m.

While studying creative writing at Western, he says he expects to become better at sustaining his creative energy, thoughts and ideas.

"I found poetry really intimidating ... things like line breaks," he says. "There were all these unspoken rules about what was good, and you weren't allowed to break these rules unless you were a genius."

Dustin reads during poetry night every Monday at Fantasia Espresso & Tea, a coffeehouse on Cornwall Avenue. The event began at Stuart's Coffee House in 1996, but, when Stuart's closed last year, the event moved to Fantasia, says Robert Huston, poetry night organizer and host.

"I started slowly reading as I wrote, and the reason I did was because of poetry night, which is very street level," Dustin says. "It's just an open mic when people are invited to come and share poetry. It was really freeing and counteracted the constraints of formal education of poetry on me."

Some find inspiration from the readings, while others just come to watch or read their piece.

"People can do some amazing things with words," Dustin says. "When people hear of poetry, they think of Frost or [T.S.] Eliot. They don't realize there are people who are still alive or who have been writing for a few years and are writing amazing stuff that sounds nothing like Robert Frost. Poetry is still progressing."

Poetry is a variety of writing, he says, explaining that anything with words, including song lyrics, journal entries and short stories, can be classified as poetry.

Dustin's poems often focus on death, transience and romance, especially the word "love." Dustin says that "Joel Book," a poem he wrote two years ago, focuses on his family members, religion, God, sex and everything else in his life.

"I realized anything can be poetry if you call it that," Dustin says. "I started getting up and reading pieces of fiction I had written, and people treated them like poems. My language used in fiction has always been weird and unusual, so I found out that I had been actually writing poetry for some time but wasn't allowed to call it poetry."

Dustin says he has always wanted to perform his poetry, but is prone to nervousness. Big crowds, he says, make him less nervous because they become faceless. It's the small groups that make him uneasy.

"When a friend says, 'Hey, read this poem for me,' it's like, OK, let me go and become someone else, and I'll be back in a little bit," Dustin says. "It's a weird, awkward feeling ... [I will] read this poem about my soul or about the fear of death, and then we'll keep talking about a comic book afterward."

Dustin, along with his two poet roommates, often plays host to poetry readings and shows with local poets and bands in the basement of his house on Ellis Street.

His ideas, once written down, take on a life of their own. Dustin says poetry is a rebellion against the isolation of seeing something but not being able to share it. Words help him capture his thoughts and share them with the world.

—Blair Wilson

PHOTOS BY KATHRYN BRENIZE

PHOTO BY KATHRYN BRENIZE

APRIL 2006 11
Nic Riley explores the tales and questions of Sasquatch sightings. Bellingham resident and Bigfoot enthusiast Jason Valenti tells of his encounter with the primate, while researcher and author Jack Lapseritis shares his science-fiction-sounding revelations and conversations with the species. Illustrations courtesy of Paul Smith. Design by Jaclyn Trimm.

The Pacific Northwest, revered for its wildlife, excessive rainfall and natural splendor, is also home to one of the most pervasive legends in the world. Though many who live here are familiar with the mythical “Bigfoot,” or Sasquatch, as a commonly chosen mascot for sports teams and businesses, some live with the persistent idea that proof is only a few footprints away, somewhere out in the vast expanses of forests that cover Washington.

The wide spectrum of Bigfoot researchers varies from those who make frequent expeditions into the woods in search of clues to some who claim to have forged relationships with entire families of Sasquatch.

Jason Valenti, a self-proclaimed “Bigfooter,” has dedicated most of his time to the search for proof since moving to Bellingham from Florida in 1999. It was back in Florida, he says, in the Apalachicola National Forest near Tallahassee, that he was introduced to the Bigfoot phenomenon early one morning in the spring of 1996 when he caught sight of the creature. “My whole belief system was blown away,” he says. “I like the way Gandhi said, ‘Yesterday I had the truth. Today I have a different truth.’”

Valenti says people here seem more receptive to the idea of an elusive primate around Bellingham than back in Largo, Fla. “It seems like eight out of 10 people I talk to here have something to say about it,” he says. And although his Bigfoot contacts in the Northwest consist only of audible experiences, he says he has identified some interesting areas he frequents with other Bigfooters.

In 2004, Valenti started a Web site, sasquatchresearch.com, to meet people who shared a similar experience or a common curiosity about the phenomenon. In 2005, he organized a Sasquatch research conference in Bellingham that drew more than 300 people.

Despite his conviction, Valenti realizes that most scientists don’t share his enthusiasm or belief in the phenomenon.
The Sasquatch have told me and others they were brought here millions of years ago by their friends the Starpeople.

Geology professor Thor Hansen teaches part of the integrated studies course “Monsters” (Geology 204/English 238) at Western. The Bigfoot legend, he says, is “one of the oldest and most pervasive” myths around.

Believers like Valenti argue that, despite mankind’s high regard for human capabilities, plenty of mysteries remain in the world. “There’s so much wild country out there,” he says. “You can drive just 45 minutes from here, and we can walk in places where no human foot has ever traveled.”

Hansen says, however, that the forests in this region wouldn’t produce enough food to support a large animal like that. “What’s it eating?” he asks.

Hansen points to the fact that people who have reported Bigfoot sightings include sheriffs and experienced park rangers, who would seem to be credible sources. “They seem almost embarrassed to bring it forward,” he says.

Some Bigfoot researchers attribute the creature’s elusiveness to psychic abilities and interdimensional travel. Jack Lapseritis is one such researcher. He calls himself “Kewaunee,” a name he says comes from the Apache Indian language, though he declined to give further explanation.

Lapseritis, 62, says his encounters with Bigfoot started when he was a teenager in the late 1950s in Massachusetts. In 1979, he says, while living in Wisconsin, he had his first telepathic contacts with the Sasquatch.

Following a face-to-face encounter earlier that year, Lapseritis says the creatures began talking to him, slowly revealing more information about their species, their paranormal abilities and their relationship to the human race. “They started to astroproject to me,” he says, defining astroprojection as “soul travel, you know, when people leave their body.” He says they began to appear frequently in his bedroom during the night and daytime. “They’d always say, ‘Wake up, my friend; we’re here.’”

He says the Sasquatch provided him with details of their entire history. “I saw every wrinkle on their face, the pupils of their eyes, and you could feel their overwhelming presence at the time. They were letting me know that they were interdimensional beings,” he says. “They’ve told me and others they were brought here millions of years ago by their friends the Starpeople.”

Lapseritis says the Sasquatch retain an ongoing relationship with the Starpeople. “Some people have reported seeing them on spaceships with the E.Ts [extraterrestrials],” he says. “They go off and mine minerals in the wilderness for the E.Ts to use.” E.T.s have a constant need for gold and other minerals, he says, and although he adds that he has no idea what type of technology they use, he believes they can travel because of quantum physics.

The Sasquatch make their homes not only in the forests but also in another dimension, from which they monitor the human race. They’ve learned different languages to allow for better communication with people.

Lapseritis says, “They share spiritual information. They are trying to hold the light. The light is dimming on this planet because of negativity.” Negative emotions, he says, are destroying the world, and the Sasquatch, who don’t believe in the capitalist system, are waiting for the right time to intervene in world affairs.

“In five to 10 years, everyone will say, ‘Hey, he was the first one to discover that they are a people.’ They are highly intelligent beings. They’re more intelligent and wiser than we are, although they have an animal-like body.”

Lapseritis admits his claims sound suspiciously like science fiction, but insists that everything he says is true. “The paranormal is normal to me now,” he says. “I’ve been living with this for 27 years.” He adds that his experiences with the Sasquatch “opened me up.”

He says he learned to communicate telepathically with a snake, a wolf, a bear, two hawks, three ravens and his black lab, Comanche, who is now deceased.

He says science has a long way to go toward understanding interspecies communication. “Am I crazy? Am I a little more evolved and highly intelligent? The psychiatrist would say, ‘I know what the problem is,’ but see, the psychiatrist is uneducated. The scientists don’t read about the quantum physics that are involved here. I’ve never taken a quantum physics class, but if you read physics, you’ll find out about a lot of this stuff,” he says.

In 1998, Lapseritis released his first book, called “Psychic Sasquatch and their UFO Connection.” It was based, he says, on his own accounts, as well as those of 76 other people who claimed to have telepathic contact with the creatures. “By now I’ve documented 134 people,” he says. “People call me all the time after reading my book. They try to stop crying, I say, no, let it out.”

Other researchers, he says, will never find the validity in his work without a change in their approach. “They have no personal experience with Sasquatch. All they see is something big and hairy they want to exploit by taking pictures.”

The Sasquatch, he says, don’t like anyone who is too scientific. “They choose you by how open your heart is. If you have a pure heart and you’re a kind person, they’ll know it,” he says. “If you have a gun or a camera, they’ll know it.
and stay away from you.”

Lapseritis says there are actually seven races of Sasquatch worldwide. They include the Yeti, the skunk ape and the ancient ones. The ancient ones, he says, have more human-like features. They were the first inhabitants of Earth after the Starpeople dropped them here. Over the years, they developed a secret society, maintaining their distance from humans but occasionally establishing relationships with some out of necessity.

“They told me that they inbred with certain Indian tribes, and with runaway slaves during the 1800s,” he says, adding that such miscegenation continues today. Lapseritis lectured to 30 people Feb. 18, 2005, at Wise Awakenings in Bellingham and told a story of a man he knows in western Washington who received an unexpected visit from a female Bigfoot. “She knocked on his door and told him she wanted to mate with him,” he says. Lapseritis told the audience that when the Bigfoot got out of the man’s bed, she gave him a curious glance and walked through his bedroom wall on her way back to the forest.

“They are aware, I think, through the Starpeople, that they need to strengthen their gene pool.”

Lapseritis is writing his second book, “The Sasquatch People,” he says, and plans to meet with a group of ancient ones in April in Oklahoma.

“The chief of the ancient ones told me to come to this particular place in the wilderness. He said, ‘We will walk and talk of many things.’”

Whether motivated by actual experiences or simply a strong belief in the paranormal, Bigfoot enthusiasts seem resilient enough to continue their work until they find an answer. Valenti says he is working on a book himself and developing a foundation called the Hominoid Research Foundation for the further studies of hominoids.

“There’s no such thing as a Bigfoot expert,” Valenti says. “We haven’t even scratched the surface of this thing.”

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Paul Smith is a lifelong artist living in Lacey, deep in the heart of Bigfoot country. He became interested in Bigfoot art after moving to Washington in 2000. He draws his sketches out of an avid interest in the creature, but also because he can render images of it with a bit more authority than others.
Blair Wilson explores the restlessness of insomnia and the effects it can have on a person's brain and daily routine. She follows the sleep struggles of a Western student and discusses the disorder with doctors. Photos by Taylor Williams. Design by Jaclyn Trimm.

After the sun goes down, Alice Crowley carefully pulls back her floral comforter on the bed she made this morning. As she climbs under the covers, Senbi, her 18-pound male tabby, quickly jumps on the sheets. Senbi falls asleep immediately. Crowley's sleep, however, does not come as easily.

"My first bout with insomnia started when I was 15, and that was a really bad stretch," says Crowley, Western senior and biology major. "At that point depression and insomnia came together. I couldn't separate them; they fed each other. I was miserable so I wasn't sleeping, but I wasn't sleeping so I was miserable."

The disturbed sleep pattern classified as insomnia is sleeplessness that continues for more than a month, says Dr. Sara Cuene, who practices at Western's Student Health Center. Those with insomnia, more than 10 percent of the population, wake up too early, have trouble falling asleep or have trouble staying asleep.

"I have trouble falling asleep, but more often
wake up about four times a night. I wake up than not I have waking issues," Crowley says. 

"It tends to be started by something [like] a stressful episode. For me, it got started from bad jet lag, I had to finally convince myself that this isn't bad jet lag still, this is insomnia again."

Jet lag, Cuene says, is one in a list of many causes of insomnia. The list includes going to bed at varied times, consuming caffeine or nicotine late in the day, experiencing pain, dealing with emotional disturbances such as depression or anxiety, having respiratory problems and using certain medications and recreational drugs.

"The thing with insomnia is that you are exhausted and you want to sleep all of the time," Crowley says. "It's miserable because then you end up sleeping at the wrong time."

When students notice a decrease in their quality of life – grades or job performance start slipping, and they start missing class or work – they should seek professional help, Cuene says.

Crowley says that at age 16 she had her longest spurt of insomnia, which lasted five months. Her insomnia spurs, however, usually last one or two weeks.

Being tired, Crowley says, makes her irritable and forgetful and gives her a disoriented and hazy feeling.

"It gets to a point where you're not sleeping, you're not paying attention the right way, you have odd holes in the day that you've forgotten and you start losing things," Crowley says.

Worry, stress, anxiety, emotional upsets and depression are the most common causes in the students Western counselor John Jordy treats for sleep disturbance. Everyday life, including school and roommate problems, can add to sleep trouble, he says.

"Often people have too much going on in their brain, and it prevents you from sleeping," Crowley says. "Stress is one of the highest factors that contributes to the insomnia, but also seasonal differences, not getting good exercise, not having enough sunlight and therefore not going outside and getting the full daily routine in order to get the full nightly routine."

Crowley tries to exercise daily, avoids caffeine completely, intentionally takes naps and keeps track of how much sleep she gets to control her spurs of insomnia.

"I try and do things naturally, and doctors recommend that too," she says. "The more stressful times, I exercise more. I intentionally run for two hours. It helps to wear my body out to the point where it's not questionable whether I need sleep, but sometimes it still doesn't work. During finals I'm getting three hours of sleep because it's a lot of stress. Most people during finals week are downsing caffeine, and I can't or I'm not going to sleep."

**Lifestyle Changes**

Choices people make during the day can interfere with their sleep, Cuene says.

"Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol in the late afternoon and evening," she says. "Exercise regularly but at least three hours before you plan to go to bed. Don't nap during the day, have a regular relaxing bedtime routine and don't use your bed for anything other than sleep and sex."

Using the bedroom for sleeping only and not lying awake in bed are extremely important, Webb says. He suggests behavioral modifications that include not watching TV, not reading excessively, not using radios or computers excessively and not eating while in bed. These are nonsleep activities that train the brain to be awake in the bedroom.

"Once stress has improved, the insomnia may continue, usually because the bedroom has become a place for insomnia," he says. "The room itself becomes the trigger for insomnia."

Getting out of bed after lying awake for 20 minutes, and watching TV or reading in another room until drowsy will make falling asleep easier, Webb says.

Crowley has found this tactic beneficial to clearing her mind. After lying awake, she often gets out of bed and reads, sends an email, or goes to another room until drowsy.

"The thing with insomnia is that you are exhausted and you want to sleep all of the time."

– Alice Crowley, Western senior

What Is Insomnia?

Insomnia, defined as trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, is a common problem. Occasional insomnia is experienced by more than a third of American adults, and chronic insomnia is known to affect more than one in 10.

There are three types of insomnia:

- **Transient:** An inability to sleep well during a period lasting fewer than four weeks. Causes: increased excitement or stress.
- **Short-term:** An inability to sleep well for four weeks to six months. Causes: ongoing stress or medical conditions.
- **Chronic:** Poor sleep every night or most nights for more than six months. Causes: mostly physical ailments such as breathing troubles or abnormal muscle activity.

How to Get a Full Night of Sleep

Sleepless nights can cause increased irritability, decreased motivation and memory, and a greater likelihood of problems such as an upset stomach or headaches.

Here are several steps to avoid symptoms of sleep loss:

- Reduce stress that can cause sleep loss. Exercise regularly, but not within two hours before bed.
- Keep your sleep/wake clock and external cues in sync. Keep to a regular schedule for meals, bedtime and rising. Sleep in a dark room — darkness is a sleepiness cue.
- Avoid substances that disrupt sleep. Don't have caffeine before going to bed; similarly avoid alcohol, which causes drowsiness at first but can keep one awake later in the night. Diet pills also often contain ingredients that disrupt sleep.

Sources: American Insomnia Association, Association of Sleep Disorders Centers

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**HOW TO GET IN SHAPE**

Late spring showers are how you want to be treated. And that’s rain, not a doctor’s prescription. More students sport black North Face Denali jackets. The signs are obvious. Spring is coming. With warming temperatures, hiding your body’s winter insulation under bulky clothes becomes less possible. It’s time for a healthier lifestyle before spring arrives.

**Getting Started**

Ron Arnold, fitness and instruction coordinator at the Wade King Student Recreation Center, says to get started, commit now and keep with it.

- Begin with more walking. Arnold says this is a good starting point because it increases muscular strength and aerobic capacity, two major components of fitness.
- Choose to walk home, to class or to your car at every opportunity.
- Buy a pedometer, an instrument that measures the number of steps taken while walking. Ten thousand steps a day is the minimum goal for health benefits.

**Healthy Lifestyle**

Enhance your hard work with healthy eating habits inside and outside the gym.

Western dietician Jill Kelly has five healthy eating tips:
- Eat five or six small meals a day rather than three or four larger ones.
- Read food labels and measure suggested serving sizes to become familiar with the portions.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables or raw, unsalted nuts between meals.

**Staying Confident and Motivated**

These tips and resources can help keep perspective with your efforts:

- Keep a list of your fitness and lifestyle accomplishments.
- Start with a buddy. Go on walks around campus together. Studies have shown that people who exercise with a partner or group tend to stick to a fitness program longer than those who exercise alone.
- Visit campus counselors and rec center fitness trainers when you have questions or feel discouraged.
- Stop looking at magazines or television shows that make you feel negative about your body.

Most importantly:

Have realistic beginning expectations because you won’t see change immediately; results can take a few weeks to recognize. Continue incorporating small, lasting changes every day into your schedule.

—Shannon Hutchinson

**Right: Anne Mayovsky, 21, lifts weights at the Wade King Recreation Center.**

**PHOTOS BY TAYLOR WILLIAMS**

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e-mail or writes down her thoughts.

"You want to lie in bed, and you want to get to the point where you are going to fall asleep," she says. "But after lying in bed for an hour and it's not going to happen, you can't keep laying there because you get frustrated."

**Treating Insomnia**

To counteract her insomnia, Crowley has started taking natural over-the-counter medications such as valerian root and melatonin.

"Melatonin is produced by our own body and is one of the signals that it is time to go to sleep," Cuene says. "Taking melatonin [medication] helps with that signal."

The sleep medications, Cuene says, are best used short term to avoid becoming dependent. "Our main treatment goal is to treat the main cause of the insomnia problem and not cover it up by using a sleep medication," she says.

Using medications to help with insomnia is the common approach, Jordy says, but strategies that help someone calm down and practice relaxation techniques every day can lower the heart rate, relax muscles, change brain waves and lessen sleep problems.

"I intentionally try not to ever take Ambien and Lunesta, the things that are habit-forming," Crowley says. "People don't get normal sleep that way."

Webb says making a list in the evening before falling asleep helps clear the mind. He suggests his patients write a list of things they have to do the next day that they are worried about or will wake up thinking about.

"There's a lot that can be done, but at the same time derailing it [insomnia] completely is almost unheard of," Crowley says. "No one really knows how to do that."

Senbi, like most cats, does not like to be disturbed when he is sleeping soundly. While Crowley tosses and turns during her restless sleep, her dedicated companion patiently sleeps next to her. Crowley wakes numerous times during the night and often leaves his side. When she returns, for yet another attempt at sleep, he will be there waiting.
Bellingham resident Sonja Wingard uses horses as emotional therapy for at-risk youth. Sarah Berger tells how the program puts horses and youth together to teach respect, trust and encouragement. Photos by Kathryn Brenize. Design by David Wray.
practice such social skills as cooperation and patience that are essential for meaningful and successful relationships. The staff, volunteers, and clients sign a behavior contract based on mutual respect to keep one another physically and emotionally safe.

In this environment, Wingard says, people often are empowered to make new life choices. Many clients are encouraged by the immediate positive feedback they receive from working on their relationship with their animal partners.

Perhaps no one understands that connection more than a former client who writes about her experience in a memoir to Wingard. (It is the policy of Animals as Natural Therapy to protect the identities of its clients by keeping them anonymous.) Of her experience, the person writes:

"Medications and hours of clinical therapy may deal with symptoms, but they cannot reach the root of the human being, the very core of existence and need. I was more than a case or statistic, more than a self-injurer or a suicidal teen. I was a person and I was in pain. [The horses] saw me for me. They did not judge my past or my present circumstances, and that made all the difference. They helped me to remember the purest and simple joys of life. I don't think they will ever know how much of a difference they have made in my life."

Wingard says she wishes everyone could feel the hugs, hear the stories and see the looks of excitement when a client discovers a solution for the problem at hand.

"The time we spend with the animals and the earth reconnects our souls, and we can in turn be better companions to our human friends," Wingard says. "I personally feel a great honor to be able to share this healing ground and these wonderful animal teachers with so many."

Wingard runs summer and after-school programs that allow children to meet and work with the animals. As the children learn about the animals’ behaviors, fears, likes and dislikes, they learn to develop respect for themselves and for other people and animals. She says horses can help people learn life lessons, such as trust.

One such teacher of trust is Wingard’s horse Patriot, a 17-year-old Tennessee Walking Horse. Like many of the at-risk youth with whom Wingard works, Patriot is a survivor of abuse and has had to learn to trust others just as the students learn to trust him. Patriot was once a Reserve World Champion, and Wingard describes how some trainers used to apply acid to the legs of horses like Patriot to get them to pick their feet up higher so they look more graceful. This type of cruel handling, she says, negatively influences a horse’s ability to trust humans. Because horses are vulnerable to humans, they have keen intuition that allows them to sense human behaviors and moods. People who work around animals must constantly be aware of this.

In this way, Wingard says, horses respond far differently if a person exhibits aggression and dominance rather than peace and respect. One of the best gifts the horses offer is getting people to be in touch with the moment at hand, Wingard says.

One such teacher of trust is Wingard’s horse Patriot, whose size made him intimidating, but the horse was drawn to the woman.

"Patriot came right up to her and stood right next to her and rubbed his nose really gently to her," Wingard says.

When the woman went to look at the other horses, they simply sniffed at her and went away. Meanwhile, Patriot stood by the fence, waiting for her and watching her.

"She realized it was Patriot she needed to work with," Wingard says.

To better understand the lessons kids are learning, Wingard works specifically with youth in "What, So What, Now What" sessions. These sessions are designed to get kids to talk about what they learned that day while working with the animals, why it matters and how it will help them in their future. One former Animals as Natural Therapy client, a 15-year-old girl Wingard calls "Jan," writes in a memoir to Wingard about her recent lesson in leadership.

"I was riding my horse, Patriot, when he rushed up behind my friend and her horse, Lucia," Jan writes. "Lucia swung her head around, laid her ears back and glared at us. My friend got mad at me and my horse and told us to keep farther away from them."
Jan writes that she realized the experience parallels how she acts with her friends.

"I am not a leader," Jan writes. "I just follow along and get into trouble because of my friends' ideas and their use of drugs. I can't afford to be like that anymore. I have to be in control of my own life, just like I have to be a leader for Patriot."

Jan writes that the experience parallels how she acts with her friends. "I am not a leader," Jan writes. "I just follow along and get into trouble because of my friends' ideas and their use of drugs. I can't afford to be like that anymore. I have to be in control of my own life, just like I have to be a leader for Patriot."

Despite the joy that comes from being a part of such a remarkable organization, the need for funding, as with many nonprofits, is always an issue. The 2006 budget for Animals as Natural Therapy is $104,000 and that does not include $120,000 worth of volunteer time donated. The organization seeks donations and grants from the community, and scholarships, $225 each, to send low-income children to summer camp.

Windy Acres also offers day camps and year-round weekly sessions for families living in homeless or abused women shelters, outreach programs for institutionalized elders and service-learning opportunities.

As the day comes to an end, and the volunteer horses complete their work with the youth, the horses are set free in an open field. In the dim light of the setting sun, the horses run free, kicking their hind legs in the air and playfully tossing their heads at one another.

"We all have an important place in this world," Lunde says. "I work together with people and horses in order to create a moment in time where we are all connected, at peace and growing toward self-confidence and self-worth. Animals as Natural Therapy helps people discover that they do have dreams and, more importantly, the ability to reach them."
Twenty excited, anxious and a little confused students landed Feb. 20 at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. After flying for more than 10 hours, they will stay in Washington for five months. As hundreds of people at the airport bustle around them, they can catch only snippets of conversation — single words or phrases. These students have a new school, new people, new country and new language to look forward to.

From Asia University in Tokyo, this group has come to study at Western as part of the Asia University America Program, or AUAP, which is also active at Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University.

In the AUAP office in High Street Hall, Japanese and English conversations bounce back and forth while the speakers flow between languages. Art and pictures from previous years cover the walls. Rooms are packed from floor to ceiling with books — course-material, cultural, language, reading and recreation books. Sometimes the office area is empty; sometimes it is bustling with excited students.

More than 3,000 participants from Asia University have come to Western since 1988, when the AUAP program began. While here, these students study the English language, American history and topics related to their major. Most importantly, however, they form new relationships, making connections with one another and Americans.

“We help them grow as people,” AUAP instructor Tom Nicholas says.

Every academic year, two cycles of AUAP students come through Western. Cycle one arrives near the end of February. The students in this group are not fulfilling academic requirements, so they are here optionally. They are law, business or economics majors and will stay at Western until mid-July.

Cycle two arrives in September and stays through mid-February, which is the end of the Japanese school year. All the students in this group are international relations majors, and participation in AUAP is a requirement of their majors.

“I don’t say goodbye, I say mata ne.”

That’s what Hitomi Nakazawa, a cycle two student, said just before she left the United States to go back to her hometown in Japan. “Mata ne” is Japanese for “see you later.”

This year, cycle one brings 20 Japanese students, the smallest group Western has ever hosted as part of the program. AUAP director Bill Pech says participation fell for all international exchange programs after Sept. 11. Also,

Above: Saiko Sugiyamu, Thomas Yount and Nami Isato pose for pictures at the welcoming ceremony.
the demographics in Japan have changed, so the universities are getting smaller in general. While here, AUAP students do not take classes, except physical education, with enrolled Western students. Instead, Western has developed a specialized curriculum that fulfills credit requirements at Asia University. Students are in class 20 hours a week, with classes on conversational English, American studies and English courses related to their major. All of their classes and activities are taught in English.

For most of the students, however, the high points of their experience at Western result from their interactions with the people they meet. "Students find that what happens outside of the classroom is more important," Pech says. AUAP students can choose to be assigned campus and community friends, who choose to spend time with one AUAP student as volunteers. The primary goal of this part of the program is to initiate friendships, Pech says. "Their number-one goal is to make American friends and improve their English," AUAP student services assistant Rosemary Bales says.

Every friend they make and every person they meet helps to improve their English. Kaigei Chou, a cycle-two participant, says she talked with American students every day and tried not to speak Japanese, which Pech says is typical of the students.

To help with immersion, the AUAP students live on campus in the residence halls. Each hall is assigned a few students, depending on available space. The students are also assigned to an international peer adviser, who is a Western student employee. Each adviser has approximately 10 AUAP students in his or her group and lives in the same residence hall. The advisers provide assistance to the students and organize activities and trips.

"The most rewarding thing is seeing them become adults," says Anthony Castillo, a Western senior who has been an adviser for three cycles. Castillo says that because the students come to Western when they are freshmen or sophomores, watching them grow while studying abroad is one of the best experiences he has had.

Thomas Yount, a Western sophomore now in his second cycle working as an adviser, says he enjoys helping the students and being the go-to person — the students in his group come to him for anything from culture shock to health issues.

"What's rewarding is being the special

We learned not only English but also human relations.

— Yurina Kosaka

one to be there for the students in times of need," Yount says. Along with being the one to help, advisers organize events for the students to attend while at Western. At a Seattle Mariners game early in the year, dozens of AUAP students stood near the top of the bleachers holding giant letters to spell out "Go Ichiro." Students take trips to Seattle or Vancouver, British Columbia. They ice-skate at the Sportsplex in Bellingham and ski or snowboard at the Mt. Baker Ski Area. Advisers also arrange karaoke nights, international cooking nights, henna and yoga nights and dances.

"You make 50 best friends each cycle," Bales says. Like the teachers in AUAP classrooms, most of the advisers do not speak Japanese. Pech says some of them may be studying Japanese, but it is not a requirement. Because they don't speak Japanese, Yount says it becomes necessary to develop new techniques to communicate.

"I use elementary grammar so they understand but make it complex enough so they get the right message," Yount says. Being aware of how to shape vocabulary and pace speech when speaking to a person who doesn't know English well is important, Yount says.

Although the program includes activities outside the classroom, measures are in place to ensure students do not ditch all their classes. If students miss 35 classes, they are sent back to Japan, or repatriated, Bales says. "We had one student who had 30 absences by October 21," Pech says. The student arrived in Washington in mid-September. "We were sure he wasn't going to make it, but he did."

Students can also be repatriated if they receive two strikes, Pech says. A strike can be getting caught with alcohol in the residence halls or missing 20 classes. Pech says that in the 16 years of the program, only two students have been repatriated from Western, both for missing 35 classes.

With campus and community friends, advisers, roommates, residence-hall dwellers and classmates, the AUAP students fulfill their goals of making connections and forming friendships. Bales, Castillo, Yount and Nakazawa all spoke about the friends they made here and the joy of the program.

"We learned not only English but also human relations," cycle-two student Yurina Kosaka says.

— Melanie Valm
Sawdust fills the air and wood particles rest on everything in sight. The sound of drilling echoes across the room as workers peer through foggy goggles and crowd around a computer screen. Eyes are focused on the monitor as the college students prepare to operate a precise cutting machine.

Fourteen Western students find a new way to learn by constructing the first submarine built on Western’s campus.

The members of the Submarine Team Club work on the “wet submarine” in the Ross Engineering Technology building as they prepare to compete this summer in the Human Powered Submarine Contest in Escondido, Calif.

Nicole Larson, submarine adviser and Western engineering technology professor, encourages innovation and teamwork with the submarine project.

This is Larson’s second time advising such a project. She took a group of students to a wet submarine competition in Maryland last year when she worked at Edmonds Community College. Larson says she had an enriching experience and wanted to do it again.

By joining the club, anyone can take part in building the submarine. “It’s a completely open membership, regardless of your major,” says Dave Gertler, Western junior and Submarine Team Club captain. He says he wants to encourage more students to help with the project.

The wet sub, which is filled with water, is easier to build than a dry sub.

“It’s safer if there’s a leak because you the water must be scuba certified.

Energy to move the sub is generated by pedaling a device similar to a tandem bicycle. At 16 feet in length and with a diameter of approximately 28 inches, the sub is about one-sixth the size of German U-boats shown in World War II movies such as “U-571.”

The drivers’ pedalling speed and ability to breathe through oxygen tanks will determine who is chosen. “It’ll be like being crammed into a tube underwater,” Holt says.

By presenting their ideas to companies and local store owners, the club members don’t have to make everything watertight,” says Randy Holm, Western senior and Submarine Team Club member. The sub is human-powered and built to hold two drivers. Those who are interested in pedalling the sub or being one of the four support people when the sub is in work to convince possible investors the project is worthwhile.

“It’s like we’re following rainbows and looking for pots of gold,” Western sophomore Wes Petersen says. The supplies donated by these companies and local store owners constitute the bulk of the construction materials for the sub.

For Petersen, building the sub is a way to enhance his résumé as well as work toward his dream of designing and constructing a sailboat someday.

“In this day and age, just getting a degree doesn’t really say much,” Gertler says. He also says he believes building the sub will improve his résumé. More importantly, a human-powered sub is a thing of the future, and using human power will improve the environment. As an industrial technology major and bicycle mechanic, Gertler says he has faith in human-powered energy.

Western senior Martin Otto says he joined the club because he wanted a challenge. “I had spare time and I wanted to be productive,” he says.

The Human Powered Submarine Contest this summer is an opportunity for the Submarine Team Club to present its sub for various engineering awards, including awards for design, construction and innovation.

The team also is preparing to compete in a second competition. The International Submarine Races will take place in Bethesda, Md.,
in June 2007. This is where club members plan to display the speed and maneuverability of the sub. "Our goal is to create an operating sub that works," Holt says.

The Submarine Team Club members continue to make small accomplishments, Gertler says. They started working on the sub in October 2005, and are preparing to test it in the water in early June.

"That's the way putting this stuff together goes," Gertler says. "It is not a quick process."

The team continues to dive into the depths of education through hands-on learning. Students such as Holt, Gertler, Petersen and Otto go beyond reading a textbook. The Submarine Team Club members are gaining real life experience by constructing something that blows most school projects out of the water.

— Jamie Badilla
Several years have passed, but Sally Ledgerwood can still recall the stench of burning flesh. Ledgerwood's friend, baking a pineapple upside-down cake in a cast-iron skillet, mistakenly touched the metal with his bare hand. Ledgerwood ran to the kitchen as the skin on her friend's hand burned and shriveled, the ghastly odor filling the room. With the scorched, aching flesh wrapped in a towel and ice, they settled onto the kitchen floor in silence. They placed their hands above the mangled appendage and, summoning all of their strength to ignore the horrific scene, began to channel energy using reiki, a Japanese healing therapy.

After an hour of intense concentration, Ledgerwood and her friend withdrew their hands and prepared to look at the sight. "When he pulled the towel and the ice away, there wasn't a mark on his hand," Ledgerwood says. "That's probably the most miraculous thing I've seen in my years of reiki."

Though its origins trace back hundreds of years, reiki is relatively unknown in the United States, especially compared to the popularity of other Eastern therapies such as acupuncture. However, those who use the therapy find it beneficial for their health not only physically but emotionally and spiritually as well.

"For many people, it's hard to believe something they can't see or touch," Ledgerwood says. "It's easier to take a pill than look within."

Ledgerwood, 54, describes reiki as a "hands-on healing modality" centered on the belief that everyone and everything constantly emits energy that can be influenced by thoughts and emotions.

"It's not my energy," Ledgerwood says. "Whether you call it God or cosmic energy or electromagnetism, it's just energy."

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, classifies reiki as a biofield energy therapy, a categorization of therapies that intend to affect energy fields that purportedly surround and penetrate the human body.

Ledgerwood uses reiki nearly every day as a reiki master, licensed massage therapist and the owner of Green Touch, a Bellingham business that offers holistic products and services. Ledgerwood says in reiki the practitioner's role is to help clients direct energy to ailing regions within their bodies.

"I'm not healing someone," Ledgerwood says. "I think of it as facilitating their healing process by bringing in something they can use."

Many events have supported Ledger-
WOOD’S BELIEFS ABOUT REIKI SINCE SHE BEGAN PRACTICING IN THE 1980S. WHILE LIVING IN THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS, SHE MET A WOMAN WITH WHOM SHE BECAME FRIENDS. HER FRIEND’S HUSBAND WAS DIAGNOSED WITH MALIGNANT MELANOMA AND GIVEN SIX MONTHS TO LIVE. LEDGERWOOD SAYS THE MAN STARTED TO RECEIVE REIKI, ALONG WITH CHANGING HIS DIET AND WAY OF LIVING, AND THE CANCER WENT AWAY. HE IS STILL ALIVE TODAY.

“It’s just incredible to watch someone be at death’s door and come back and live,” Ledgerwood says.

Individuals learn how to administer reiki through any of three attunement levels taught by a reiki master, or teacher. Ledgerwood is a reiki master, meaning she has completed third-degree reiki attunement, the highest level, and has learned to pass attunements to others.

Bellingham resident Linda Edwards, 65, is another proponent of reiki. She received first- and second-degree attunements in 2001 and 2002. She uses reiki for therapeutic and relaxation purposes.

“What I like is that I always feel a lot better after I have a treatment,” Edwards says. “Self-administering treatments can be very nice indeed. Reiki is just a nice way to calm the energy in the body.”

Ledgerwood says the length of time for healing through reiki varies, depending on what the individual wants to heal and whether the body is ready for healing to occur.

Bellingham resident Wanda Maddox began using reiki in 1988 while living in Columbia, Md. She says she had an interest in energy and the transfer of energy before she and her then 5-year-old daughter received first-degree attunement. Maddox quit practicing reiki as her life became consumed with other things, and did not receive her second attunement until she moved to Bellingham.

“It’s a free, life-supporting source that is there, and it’s a beautiful experience to tap into,” Maddox says.

One perk of reiki, Ledgerwood says, is that it can be practiced anywhere, under any condition, for any amount of time. At Green Touch, soft music echoes down from the ceiling. In the back where the massage tables sit, earth-colored cloths are wrapped around the business’s fluorescent lighting, casting a soft glow upon everything nearby.

To receive reiki, Ledgerwood’s clients lay fully clothed on a massage table. Clients often remove jewelry because stones and metals have their own energy that could interfere. Reiki focuses on directing energy to the seven major chakras, which are located at the base of the spine, the pelvic region, the solar plexus (a cluster of nerve cells behind the stomach), the heart, the throat, the brow and the top of the head. Ledgerwood says she typically begins at the head until clients unconsciously guide her on where to proceed.

“Usually they’re telling me on another level what they need working on, where they need energy,” Ledgerwood says.

While working with her clients, Ledgerwood usually feels the physical sensation of heat in her hands, which is sometimes accompanied by tingling. Ledgerwood’s clients commonly feel relaxed during the one-and-a-half-hour treatment.

Despite its supporters, some individuals and groups are skeptical about reiki and other forms of complementary and alternative medicine. According to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Evaluation and Research Web site, most doctors do not oppose complementary and alternative medicine, but rather are wary of exaggerated claims made by some alternative medicine practitioners. According to the foundation, individuals should work with their doctors when considering complementary and alternative medicines to learn the risks and benefits of various treatments.

While reiki has no religious affiliation, some religious groups are suspicious of its use. According to the Catholics United for Faith Web site, a private association dedicated to support, defend and advance the Roman Catholic Church, reiki users expose themselves to dangerous involvement in the occult practices of divination and magic.

Edwards says that while she recommends reiki to her husband and some friends, she does not advocate it to everyone because she knows that not all people can relate to reiki and may be resistant to it. Maddox also does not tell many about her experiences.

“I don’t proselytize because I don’t feel like I have a mission to save the world,” Maddox says. “I think reiki, like most important things, is something that people come to when it’s right for them.”

Reiki practices continue to be utilized throughout the world. Though some people may find the process foreign or difficult to accept, those who use reiki believe it to be an effective measure to heal not only the body but the mind and spirit as well. For those who use reiki, the practice of giving and receiving the therapy is deep-rooted, all the way down to their chakras.
They’re doing Western’s plumbing, Web hosting, law enforcement and management. They’re whom people call when a geology grade goes missing or a sprinkler head busts. They are Western’s staff. As opposed to professors’ work, theirs is not always associated with creative expression or freethinking. But they do more than just their jobs. They make musical instruments, jewelry and drawings. They sculpt, turn, blow and paint.

Western’s Staff Arts and Crafts Show takes place once a year in mid March to showcase the finest in creativity that the custodians, technicians and assistants of Western have to offer. The show, in Viking Union from March 13-17, was open only to Western staff. That means no professors or art students. Some of the participants study art, some just like it and others use art to relax, meditate or deal with grief. What seems to unify the applicants is the significance art has in their lives and the unexpected talent they have to offer.

**PIPE DREAM**

The submissions to the staff art show are as diverse as the professions of the submitters, including that of Western plumber John Mueller. Observers at the staff art show might find themselves making a remark that is rarely heard: "That sure was a nice mountain dulcimer the plumber made."

A mountain dulcimer is a folk-music instrument that looks like an upright bass with hips and an attitude.

Mueller is exactly what people would expect from a plumber — though it should be noted he keeps his pants and belt at the common professional level. A large man with a firm handshake and a welcoming personality, Mueller says he has had a knack for woodworking since he was 12. His wife, who plays the guitar, bugged him to make her a guitar, but the task always seemed too daunting to Mueller. One night, he was watching a how-to show on mountain-dulcimer making and decided to give it a whirl.

"We’re more than just our job.
— John Mueller, plumber"
“One thing I’ve learned is that you don’t have to be a musician to build instruments,” Mueller says.

Each instrument takes Mueller approximately 50 hours to complete. Mueller has since made six, and yes, his wife is slowly learning to play the dulcimer. Mueller does not play.

“It’s a great way for me to focus,” Mueller says. “The steps involved are so exacting; you really have to focus your mind on what you’re doing and how it’s going to affect every step down the road.”

PRETTY ROCKS

Chris Sutton is the academic department manager of the geology department at Western. Sutton found herself turning to jewelry making after some of her friends no longer wanted to be friends with her. She needed something to energize herself. “So I sat home and pouted for a while, and while I was doing that I started making jewelry,” she says.

Sutton grew up with an interior designer for a mother and a painter for a sister. Sutton went to interior design school for about eight months but dropped out. She thought maybe the family art gene skipped her. However, Sutton made so much jewelry, it started piling up around the house. She rented a table at vendors row on campus to see if people would buy her jewelry. After selling $300 in bracelets and earrings in one day, she says she realized she had a knack for art after all.

Making jewelry is something she gets to do for herself. “My job [as a department manager] is basically being an adult babysitter. I have a mother in a nursing home; I have seven animals and a house and husband I take care of,” she says. “[Making jewelry] is just for me.”

Despite working in the geology department, Sutton still can’t find appreciation for the scientific view the professors take toward aesthetically pleasing stones. “I love pretty rocks. I’ve always loved pretty rocks,” she says. “You’ll show a geologist one and they’ll give it a scientific name. You just kind of go, ‘Pshhh. Go away.’”

Sutton says all of the female staff and faculty in the geology department have a shining example of her work.

SNAPSHOT

Like Mueller, Randy Godfrey is a staff member who finds challenge and meditation outside his job at Western. Godfrey is the lead gardener at Western. But his love for the outdoors stretches beyond mowing lawns and ordering fertilizer. Godfrey is a color landscape photographer, doing most of his work on backpacking trips through places such as the Olympic Peninsula and the northern Cascade Mountains.

Godfrey uses photography to focus himself. “It is a meditation,” he says. “I love traveling to wilderness areas and natural settings. It really slows me down.”

Godfrey says that at one time being a professional photographer was the plan for his life.

“When I was married — I was married for 15 years — we had a plan that once my wife got through school she was going to support me as I pursued my photography career,” he says. “We divorced. I never got there.”

The stories of these staff members are only a glimpse into the talents of the more than 60 participants in the staff art show. To students and visitors at Western, the artistic talent of the staff isn’t visible. Nobody knows the gardener is a photographer. Nobody knows the geology department manager sells jewelry. Nobody wonders if the guy fixing the clog in the drain also builds mountain dulcimers. It just doesn’t cross anyone’s mind. But Mueller explains the need for a staff art show. “We’re more than just our job. [The show] gives us an opportunity to show what we do in our spare time and to show we have more talent than just what we do here.”

—Andrew Sleighter
Mutated Perceptions
Film’s money-making ventures hurt the disabled

It's alive!” Dr. Frankenstein made these words famous after creating his severely misunderstood monster. This creature, though fictional, exemplifies how horror films and television portray one minority of the population: the disabled. The crux is, anyone can join the fluid ranks of disability, God forbid this should happen.

The media portrayal of disabled people as weak or evil human beings adds to the stereotypes born out of society. The recent horror film “The Hills Have Eyes” depicts people who have mutated because of nuclear testing into horrifying monsters that prey on normal people. Movies, especially horror films, often portray people who look different as having severe mental trauma that causes them to commit unspeakable acts. This tradition is longstanding; just look at horror films such as “Freaks,” “Frankenstein” and “The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.”

Directors and screenwriters sometimes combine physical differences with insanity to create terrifying monsters in horror films, such as the ones listed above, says David Brunnemer, the director of disability Resources for Students at Western. Mixing these two elements creates issues such as stereotypes, biases and stigmas for people with disabilities, he says.

“It [society] has come a long way, but it still has a heck of a long way to go,” Brunnemer says. “Disability was pretty much seen from a cultural perspective as an untouchable, something you just didn't want to recognize as existing many years ago.”

Ryan Shupe, a Western sophomore who lost his right leg to rhabdomyosarcoma, a form of soft-tissue cancer, reflects back to middle school, a time when many people go through challenges in their life. The disability of missing his leg, he says, made it even more difficult.

“It [cancer] came right at the end of elementary school,” Shupe says. “It was at the last half of fourth grade and then through fifth grade that I missed. So I went straight into middle school and that was hard. I mean, middle school was hard for most people.”

Depictions of disabled people in television and movies can create incorrect assumptions in society. Those assumptions slip over easily into real life, especially when people think television and movies accurately represent the world. Shupe says he feels the media singles out not just people with disabilities. Some media, specifically television and movies, make it hard for anyone to feel normal. Shupe says the media creates an unattainable image for everyone.

“It's that image of the perfect body, and the perfect image that they put out there,” Shupe says.

Jim Gamble, a doctor at Stanford Hospital in California who has done academic research on social interpretations and historical perspective of the disabled, says he feels the news media today is going in the right direction. Movies have a different agenda than the news media. Gamble says, so of course the portrayal of people with disabilities in movies is skewed.

“The film industry is an entirely different media,” Gamble says. “The function of film is twofold. It is to entertain such as the ones listed above, says David Brunnemer, the director of disability Resources for Students at Western. Mixing these two elements creates issues such as stereotypes, biases and stigmas for people with disabilities, he says.

Depictions of disabled people can create assumptions in society. Some media even make it hard for anyone to feel normal.
Graduation is just around the corner, and let's face it — what students remember will not be what they learned in the classroom but rather all the time they spent leisurely with friends.

More than 50 Western students have revealed their favorite pastimes to Klipsun. The following list reflects the sense of adventure and passion for Bellingham for which Western students are known. Many of the activities listed will not be surprising — what would be surprising, in fact, is if this list didn't resemble what students would have said 50 years ago. In a place as progressive as Bellingham, some things always stay the same.

—Sarah Berger

1. Watch the Sunset at Boulevard Park.
2. Hike Oyster Dome. Appreciate the views of the islands and the bay.
3. Spend a Thursday night bar hopping on North State Street. Stay out all night, then hike up Schome Hill for the sunrise.
4. Have a beer @ Boundary Bay. Sit outside.
5. Cliff jump at Whatcom Falls. (Not for the faint of heart)
6. Nurse a hangover over breakfast at the Little Cheeser.
8. After hitting the bars, spend a late night at The Horseshoe Cafe. Be afraid of the Cheesy Fries.
9. Eat at the Russian dumpling place downtown, the one whose name no one can ever remember. It's Pel'meni.
10. Stop by the Bellingham Farmers Market. Buy local.
11. Hike the arboretum trail up to the lookout tower. Make out with someone.
12. Hang out & read at Village Books, then have dinner at the Cohoan Cafe.
13. Take in the spectacular powder at Mount Baker. Stop at the North Fork Brewery for beer and pizza on the way home.
14. Attend a live show at the Wild Buffalo.
15. Study — or at least look like it — at Tony's in Fairhaven.
Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning “beautiful sunset.”