I remember sitting in AP English Literature during my senior year of high school with six of my closest friends. We were discussing each of the seven deadly sins in regard to their reference in Dante’s Inferno. Being a typical high school filled with cliques and teenage angst, it did not take long before a nickname surfaced labeling my group of friends The Seven Deadly Sins. By the time I graduated, my friends and I were haunted by other nicknames such as The Heathers and Mean Girls.

Now, this is not a story I am particularly proud of. In fact, it is rather embarrassing in retrospect. But when a student suggested the theme of ‘vices and virtues’ for this issue of Klipsun, my high school reputation was the first thing that came to mind. We can be quick to judge others for their vices, but whether we like to admit it or not, we all do things we are not proud of. It is difficult to admit your own vices, but I think sometimes it is even harder to recognize others for their virtues.

The cardinal vices, also known as the seven deadly sins, are identified as lust, pride, greed, envy, sloth, gluttony and wrath. Respectively, the seven heavenly virtues that oppose these sins are chastity, humility, charity, kindness, diligence, temperance and patience.

This issue of Klipsun features amazing stories that personify a selection of vices and virtues. I would like to thank my hardworking staff of editors and writers, as well as those who were willing to share their stories.

Thanks for reading!

Jennifer Oato
Editor-In-Chief
Between the Sheets
Megan Brown

Virtuous Virginity
Anne Maertens

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Gabrielle Nomura

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Ali Le Roy

Tips for Tuition
Cejae Thompson
Student Emily O'Brien makes a living by managing and dancing with the Candy Box girls.

Humanitarian Hunks
Kathryn Bachen
A look into the lives of local firefighters and Vashon ferry riders as they undress for charity.
Heat radiates from hair straighteners and curling irons while makeup bags line the bathroom sink. It's a typical Friday night for Sarah and her suitemates, who are ready to escape the dorms. To avoid seeming desperate by leaving too soon, the girls waste time by contemplating the best party option. Finally, it's 8 p.m. Between bursts of excited laughter, Sarah voices her desire to get some action, then belts out lyrics to one of her favorite pump-up songs, "No, the party don't start till I walk in," she sings.

Students have become more liberal over time in regards to sexual behavior and attitudes, according to research by Kathleen A. Bogle, author of "Hooking Up: Sex, Dating and Relationships on Campus." Sexual appeal is increasingly present in mainstream media and promiscuous shows featuring alcohol and sex, like MTV's "The Real World," reinforce a more accepting concept of casual sex. To some, an uninhibited sexual craving, or lust, is a sinful indulgence, or vice. For others, sex is a natural and expected activity.

"Sex is a part of life," says Western sophomore Sarah, who wishes to have her last name withheld. "It's just like eating. It's just like working out. People just have sex, and I think that's great."

A hook-up can be any sensual activity, as innocent as a kiss, or as intimate as intercourse, according to a November 2008 article in U.S. Catholic. Donna Freitas, author and associate professor of religion at Boston University, says in the article that alcohol and limited talking are often involved, but the defining conditions of a hook-up are: casual and unplanned, with no commitment.

So, in a society that seems increasingly accepting of sex, has hooking up become the new handshake?

The casual hook-up culture has become more normative than when our great-grandparents were in college. A respectable young man no longer calls upon his love interest in the parlor of her family's home on a Sunday afternoon, Bogle writes in her book. The formality of traditional dating is still important for many college students looking for that special someone.

But for people like Sarah, casual sex is a vice worth embracing. Sarah says she considers hooking up to include making out, groping over or under the clothes, hand jobs and oral sex. Since splitting with her boyfriend of 2 1/2 years in May 2009, she says she hooks-up, on average, about three times per week. Her partners are typically acquaintances, but not people in her direct circle of friends. Sarah says college is a time to have fun, and she does not want to settle down until she is 35 or 40.

"Relationships are like a big mud pit," Sarah says. "You get in and then you just sink and sink and you're like 'crap how am I going to get out of this?' And then even after you get out of it, and you start walking away, there's like a mud trail and it doesn't fade away for a long time."

Standing 5-foot-5-inches, Sarah has ash-brown hair, and her round face is dotted with a playful nose ring. While she may not resemble the high fashion characters from the television series "Sex and the City," Sarah says she identifies with Samantha because she does not get emotionally involved with...
hook-up partners. Sarah would rather be devoted to herself than to a man, and wants to be crazy for as long as possible, she says.

One perk of hooking up in college is that talking about school with a new acquaintance can break the ice, Sarah says. Bogle states in her book that while college administrators may like to believe college is about academics, many students value the social aspect equally, if not more.

"Many college students referred to college as being a time to 'party' or a time to 'let loose,'" Bogle writes. "Several students, particularly men, spoke of picturing college life to be like the film 'Animal House,' which portrays an alcohol and party-centered lifestyle."

Parties are one place where Sarah meets hook-up partners. Typically, she uses alcohol to loosen up before hooking up with a new partner. Following their initial encounter, alcohol may only play a minor role, she says. Besides being flirty, making eye contact and acting interested, Sarah says she does not have a specific technique to reel the boys in.

In her book, Bogle asserts that life on college campuses contribute to the hook-up culture due to the close proximity of men and women to one another. With few restrictions on campuses to discourage male/female intimacy, most college environments are conducive to hooking up.

"The point is that this atmosphere of trust and familiarity makes hooking up easier," Bogle writes. "Without such an air of familiarity, the hook-up system would likely break down."

Sarah, who says she is the most promiscuous of her suitemates, says hooking up is always in the back of her mind as an underlying goal of the night when networking at parties. Birth control is one way Sarah practices safe sex, but she also has a goody-bag fully stocked with condoms, lube, hand sanitizer and Chap Stick.

"Honestly, if I had my way, [hooking up] would definitely be once a day, or once every other day," Sarah says.

A slight personal failing, an undesirable act, or a serious moral failing are all definitions of the word 'vice.' While some may associate casual sexual intimacy with such negative attributes, there are many others, like Sarah, who just want to have fun.

Sarah says she considers hooking up to include making out, groping over or under the clothes, hand jobs and oral sex.
Wearing blue jeans, loafers from Macy’s and a five-o’clock shadow, Jacson Bevens saunters into The Woods Coffee in downtown Bellingham. Bevens, with a baseball cap over his dark hair, sits his tall frame down with a cup of coffee in hand. He carries himself with a confidence people are attracted to – the kind of confidence it would take for a 26-year-old man to admit he’s still a virgin.

So why is an attractive guy like Bevens chaste? Originally, it was his conservative Christian upbringing that taught him the virtue of virginity, but in his early 20s, his devotion evolved into a self-discipline he takes pride in. Bevens’ is not alone. Five percent of Americans are virgins when their wedding bells toll, according to Public Heath Reports, and he says waiting isn’t always easy.

“Let’s be honest; I’m in the midst of my sexual peak,” Bevens says. “I feel my strengths strongly, but I feel my weaknesses strongly too.”

In terms of primal urges, sex is second only to survival, Bevens says. In the United States, not many people have to worry about their ability to survive, which leaves a lot of people thinking about sex. For this reason, sex sells.

According to a study done by New York University, 64 percent of freshmen enter college as a virgin. By senior year, the virginity rate drops to 28 percent.

Rhea Woolley, a 20-year-old junior at Western, plans to be among the virgin minority. Woolley doesn’t buy into the cultural myth that waiting until marriage is easier for women, but she knows she can wait because she says God intended sex for marriage.

“Sex has become recreational,” Woolley says. “It’s just what people do when they’re dating. I believe [sex] is a sacred thing that should be regarded and approached carefully.”

Besides waiting for religious reasons, Woolley says she’s not ready to have sex because of the emotional and physical attachment sex creates between people. She says she has enough stress in her life and doesn’t have time for a sexual relationship.
While Bevens says he feels mature enough and emotionally ready to have sex, he's not sure if he's ready for marriage. He has been in two long-term relationships, but says he's wary of what he calls the "Nicholas Sparks Syndrome," which gives people a false perception of love and marriage. Pop culture presents love as this beautiful thing that puts people on top of a mountain of happiness, he says.

Bevens says that in real life, God shows people the mountain-top experience, but then they have to go back down and spend some time in the valley. Here things get tough, and commitment might be the only thing left to keep two people together. His parents' marriage, which is still strong after 33 years of highs and lows, is how he hopes his own marriage will be. But he's not sure when he'll be ready to make that decision.

"I don't want to blow it," Bevens says. "It's [a decision] that's hopefully going to affect the next 50 to 60 years of my life. That's not something I can venture into lightly."

For 22-year-old Western senior Phil Merrell, a relationship is something that is intended to lead to marriage. Now that he's close to graduating, he sees marriage as a possibility. As far as sex goes, he believes it is a physical union God created to be shared within the bonds of marriage.

Both Merrell and Bevens say they have seen Christian friends get married young, and they know that the desire to have sex could have played a role in the couples' decisions. However, Merrell says that if two people are getting married so they can have guilt-free sex, God will know where their heart is.

"God is not so legalistic," Merrell says. "And if you can't commit in a mature union in the other areas [like the spiritual and emotional], you have no business [getting married]. It's ultimately about the heart."

Until a few months ago, Merrell says he didn't date because he wasn't ready for marriage, and he was waiting for the right woman. He recently started dating his first girlfriend. He says it's too early in his relationship to discuss marriage. But when the time comes, he believes that his marriage will be a partnership between two people who are working to encourage, protect and serve each other.

Having recently reentered the single life, Bevens remains patient. He says he's not wired differently than anyone else; there is nothing about him that makes waiting until marriage easier. Sometimes his hormones kick in, and he has to stop himself from going all the way.

"I'm not averse to gettin' down," Bevens says. "There's a lot of fun to be had outside of intercourse."

Although tempted, Bevens knows where to draw the line. And he says religion is only half the reason he's holding out. The other half has stemmed from convictions he has developed. Over time, he has realized that in a society where 20-somethings have access to pretty much whatever they want, there's just not that much left to be innocent about.
Story by Gabrielle Nomura
Photo illustration by Kathryn Bachen

Meet Tsuki and Vern—young enough to have idolized Run
DMC in high school, but old enough to be my parents.

Instead of “Nice to meet you,” from Vern, you get “’Sup dude?” And upon parting, Tsuki bids you “Peace Out,” not “Bye-bye.” They’re a match made, not in heaven, but maybe a hip-hop concert (Outkast is mom’s favorite, especially the song, “Gangsta Shit.”) She’s got freckles like Lucy Liu’s, and sass that exceeds her petite frame. He’s got tattooed sleeves and the foul mouth of a sailor.

And now meet me—but don’t get too excited. As a 21-year-old girl who gets grammar, not street smarts, I don’t carry on my parents’ legacy of cool—I envy it.

While my parents can party all night, it’s miraculous if I’m awake after two beers. I’m wearing Dansko clogs and wool socks, while my parents rock Nike high-tops. I’m doing college homework. My mom and dad are skateboarding in our driveway.

Know how sometimes traits skip a generation and kids end up with Grandma’s eye color instead of their parents’? Well, I’m probably more similar to my old-fashioned grandparents because cool courses through my parents’ veins, but is missing from my genetic code.

Parents are supposed to be the ones who discourage their children from having any fun. However, in my family, Mom and Dad despaired when they discovered that their child was too sensible and square to be a party-thrower, and was indeed, a party-pooper.

For example, because I had school the next day and no toothbrush packed, I quashed their idea of spontaneously catching a plane to Las Vegas when I was 8. My parents were beyond bummed. The plane left without us, along with their dreams of raising a spontaneous rebel.

To this day, I’m the girl who’s too afraid of falling on her ass to learn to snowboard and getting lost to go on an adventure. But while, there’s no hope for me to ever be as cool as my parents, maybe my kids (if I ever have them) won’t have to envy the family legacy like I did. If cool really does skip a generation, what lucky fools my descendents will be.
Sitting in the passenger seat going down the stormy Interstate-5, 20-year-old Emily O'Brien diligently puts the finishing touches on the devil and angel costumes for tonight’s gig. Looping ribbon and lace through black satin forming cuffs for the girls’ wrists, she can hardly contain her excitement. After a two-hour drive from Bellingham, O’Brien and six of her employees arrive at a warehouse on First Avenue in the industrial district of South Seattle.

The girls are dressed in their handmade costumes; bras decorated with sequins to capture the lights of the rave, fishnet stockings purposely ripped in different places, and a tiny mini-skirt trimmed with either red or white lace depending on their choice of being an angel or a devil. The girls walk across the street wearing high platform boots and a lot of confidence. They walk straight to the front of the line formed outside of the two-story warehouse. >>
"We are the Candy Box girls," O'Brien says to the doormen, who remove the red rope to allow the girls to enter.

Two years ago, O'Brien never expected she could be involved in the business of adult entertainment. She grew up in an entrepreneur's family on a vineyard in Napa Valley, Calif, and attended high school in Lake Tahoe. She came up to Bellingham to attend college at Western, and struggled to support herself financially.

"I was in a situation for about nine months where I could not find any jobs. I came here looking like a pretty preppy girl from California and now I'm completely alternative," O'Brien smiles as she runs her fingers through her shoulder-length dreadlocks and laughs. She was in desperate need to find a way to afford the high out-of-state tuition.

O'Brien is self-reliant, determined young entrepreneur who started her adult entertainment business when she was 19-years-old. She books gigs from Bellingham to Seattle for seven girls, including herself, who comprise the Candy Box girls.

For only being open for four months, O'Brien's business is seeing many interested clients and have many gigs already booked in advance. She markets and advertises her company without knowledge of graphic design or marketing a business; and does all her bookkeeping to make sure her business stays healthy.

She learned how to hand-sew costumes for her employees to make sure they look uniform together when they went on a dancing job. She says she never stops working and the only way she can make sure that her business succeeds if she is so involved with every step along the way.

O'Brien was introduced to the adult entertainment industry through a friend. The neighbor of O'Brien's friend was starting his own adult-exotic dancing business and he said he was hiring. O'Brien was interested and decided that she would give it a try and see how her first performance went.

"After I danced I realized that it was the best self confidence booster that I have ever had."

"Before I did my first performance I was thinking 'what have I got myself into, I can't believe that I am doing this,'" O'Brien says, as she put her hands on the side of her face in disbelief.

Despite being nervous, she was encouraged by the response from the crowd. She says that just by pulling off a glove, the crowd went crazy with excitement, cheering for her and the other girls.

"After I danced, I realized that it was the best self-confidence booster that I have ever had," O'Brien says. "I have never felt so damn good about myself."

On that same night, O'Brien met Katie, one of the girls who worked for the same business, and previously worked for another adult entertainment company.

"It is a bad business in that sense, and there are not a lot of people that are drug free unfortunately," Katie says. "The owner and some of the girls would be hitting drugs hard and would use up all the money to go and pay the dancers for their gigs. So I decided to leave that environment."

The business went under financially, and Katie began working for the company where she met O'Brien. According to Katie and O'Brien, the owner ended up being an atrocious boss.

"He became an alcoholic and after a while he became very sexual towards my co-workers, and they were completely mistreated," O'Brien says. "This business is known for this to happen, but I won't stand for it. I refuse to be mistreated."

O'Brien says the moment she realized she's had enough was when she and the other girls were invited to promote a rap group.

"When our company showed up we looked like a bunch of fools because we were all dressed in different styles," O'Brien says. "We looked disorganized in comparison to the other company next to us. It was then that I said this is ridiculous and I can do better."

After these events, O'Brien decided to leave the company to
Right: Katie dances to the DJ’s music to teach the ravers how to move to the fast beats.

Left: Emily O’Brien begins to dance on the platform to encourage and entertain the ravers in the warehouse.

V

start her own adult entertainment business, and Katie decided to join her to work in a safer environment. When O’Brien started her business last August she says she didn’t know what she was getting herself into.

“I was not prepared for everything that came with owning a business, like the business aspects of advertising, promotion and the entire bookkeeping that needs to be done,” O’Brien says. “So I learned how to book-keep and about graphic design and advertising. I am taking an accounting class at Whatcom, and it’s helping.”

She says the first thing she did was research how to obtain a business license in the adult entertainment industry.

“I found out all the laws and legality in Bellingham and made sure that we were not breaking any laws,” O’Brien says. “All my girls are on payroll and everything is completely legit.”

O’Brien says she started her company, the Candy Box girls, for her friends, who are the girls that work for her.

“These amazing girls are my buddies,” O’Brien says. “I wanted to take care of them. I am here to try to give employment to them. It makes me feel better that I can provide income for them to make sure that they can support themselves.”

O’Brien believes the Candy Box girls have a great relationship with each other. They hang out when they are not working, she says, and since the girls are not in a competitive environment, they get along well. O’Brien is meticulous in making sure she is doing everything legal for her business, but says the most essential thing she could do for her employees is to make sure that they are safe on the job.

“Safety is where I am totally diligent in my business,” O’Brien says. “Safety comes first for my girls. For any kind of gig that they go on, they go with a bodyguard to protect them if anything goes wrong.”

Katie says all the girls have been told about the safety precautions that they have to take before going to one of the jobs.

“For example, we have to park our cars at gigs like the cops do,” Katie says. “We have to park backwards so that in case we get into an unsafe situation, like a gang fight at a gig or the crowd gets unruly, we have to just be able to jump in the car and leave.”

Katie says common sense is a necessity for success in the adult entertainment business. “The experience that I have had and that all the girls have had together in this business we have developed a good security system,” Katie says. “We are very attentive.”

The Candy Box girls are starting their night confidently walking into the rave. The bouncer at the front door checks to make sure everyone is accounted for and gives each girl a martini shaped stamp on her hand.

The music is blaring and the base shakes the floor beneath everyone’s feet. The girls assess their surroundings and split up. Two girls pair up together and the others find the stages throughout the different rooms of the warehouse. With encouragement from the hyper crowd the girls begin to dance.

*Katie’s name has been changed to protect her privacy
Growing up I heard my father tell stories of his hitchhiking travels every time we took a road trip. Even though his stories intrigued me, at 21 years old, I've never hitchhiked. I've never picked up a hitchhiker, and I've never needed to get anywhere so badly that I couldn't afford to arrange reliable travel plans. I don't know if I was ever given a solid warning — beware of hitchhiking, you could get killed — but somehow that idea seeped into my brain.

Now, I find myself wondering how the public attitude toward hitchhiking has changed since the 1970s, when my father traveled the country with nothing more than a surplus military backpack and a walking stick. Is it really likely that any person standing on the roadside with their thumb out is doing so with some ill intent, and that the person picking them up does so only to drive them to a remote country road and attack them? Or, has society simply overblown the few frightening instances and turned its back on the innate American right to get somewhere for free? There was only one way to find out.

On a Friday morning - equipped with my backpack, a Washington state map, and a vague idea of where I wanted to go - I set out to see for myself the true meaning of hitchhiking. In two days, I traveled more than 450 miles and, in my short time, compiled a few tips for the average student looking to get somewhere for cheap.

>>
Hitchhiking Tips:

1. Do Not Head Out On An Empty Bank Account
   If you’re leaving on a hitchhiking trip, especially if it’s winter - as it was when I undertook my adventure - I’d recommend having at least enough money to cover a Greyhound ticket or a motel room in case you find yourself stranded in a strange, cold place. It may not sound like authentic hitchhiking to have a backup plan or to sleep in a motel, but the $39 motel room I purchased in Quincy, where it was 38 degrees when I arrived at 6 p.m., cost less than the tent and sleeping bag I nearly purchased from an Army Surplus store at the beginning of my trip.

2. Get To The Edge Of Town
   Following a tip from a friend who hitchhikes frequently, I began my journey at the Fairhaven southbound on-ramp. When traveling through cities with multiple exits, get yourself to the exit furthest from the city center in the direction you want to go. People on interior on-ramps are more likely to be heading to the grocery store than to the next big city, so position yourself at the edge of town to increase your likelihood of getting a ride.

3. “Not All Guys In Mercedes Are Pricks!”
   I envisioned the type of person that might pick me up as a gruff, older guy in a beat-up truck, with nothing that might entice theft. But, the ride I got out of Bellingham, about 30 seconds after posting up at the on-ramp, was with a young real estate agent driving a new Mercedes C300. Abel offered me a Red Bull, an umbrella, and let me use his phone charger all the way to Everett. He provided me with the perfect first ride; it eliminated my expectations and my early fears about the demeanor of people on the road.

4. A Phone With GPS And Internet Is A Lifesave
   Again, I offer the recognition that this guide is not for the hitchhiking purist, as I would have been much more stressed lacking a phone with GPS and Internet. When I couldn’t get a ride out of Everett for more than an hour, I used my phone to check the bus schedule. I caught a bus to Monroe. I had no idea where to get off in Monroe, but I knew that I wanted to be near U.S. Highway 2 so I could head east. I watched a blue dot that represented my position move along a map of unfamiliar streets on my GPS. When I saw an intersection of Main Street and Highway 2, I pulled the string and got off the bus. Standing in front of a road sign where Highway 2 stretched out from Monroe toward Leavenworth and over Steven’s Pass, I waited for 40 minutes before getting my second free ride.

5. If The Person Driving You Informs You That They Are Narcoleptic, Worry, But Do Not Panic
   When David, a guy about my age who took me from Monroe all the way to Quincy, said he forgot his medication for narcolepsy and that he wasn’t supposed to drive at night, I didn’t even consider the possibility that he is joking. Our conversation about motorcycles and music didn’t suggest to me that he was the kind of person that would say such a frightening thing just for a laugh. “It should be okay, as long as someone is in the car to keep me talking; and the energy drinks help,”
David said reassuringly.

It was completely dark by then, but I saw a sign that read “Quincy 30 miles,” and I did my best to keep him talking. David said he doesn’t usually pick up hitchhikers. “The radio’s broken and it was gonna be a long ride, I figured it’d be better to have someone to talk to,” he says.

There was a little swerve, I looked again and I saw what looked to be a grin. I thought, “is this guy really playing a joke on me?” Then, David got a phone call and started trying to figure out his plans for the evening. “I’m probably just gonna go straight to Jeremiah’s then you can pick me up. I’m not trying to drive tonight. You know how I get. I’m already having problems.” At this point I was probably 70 percent certain that he wasn’t joking with me, but finally we pulled into the only gas station in the teeming metropolis of Quincy. “I was just kidding with you about being narcoleptic,” he said. “Ha, yeah I wasn’t sure,” I said, playing it off like I wasn’t scared.

6. IF YOU CAN, TAKE A CAMERA

I woke up in Quincy before sunrise and decided I needed to see the small town at first light. At 6:30 a.m., Quincy, a speck of a town situated almost perfectly in the center of the state is a post-apocalyptic ghost town. I walked through the empty parking lots of Mexican restaurants, the one grocery store, and random unmarked lots of broken-down farm vehicles and noticed there were no cars but I waited for the walk signal at the only stoplight in town. My camera documented the giant Jesus mural at the town’s only church, the tattered American flag above a junkyard and the golden arches of the town’s only fast food restaurant: all things I’d expect to see even after the apocalypse.

7. NO HABLA? NO PROBLEM

I waved Emilio away after 30 seconds of trying to explain where I wanted to go. As much as I wanted to avoid walking the 11 miles from Quincy to Interstate-90, I was afraid of where I might end up if I couldn’t communicate with the driver. After an hour with no luck finding a ride, I started down the road on foot fully expecting to walk the entire way to the junction. About ten minutes into my walk a car pulled up. It was Emilio. This time, despite my complete ignorance of the Spanish language, I got in the car. I pointed to a road sign and he asked, “Spokane, or Seattle?”

“Seattle,” I said.

In the 15 minutes I spent with Emilio, I spoke the most Spanish I had in my life. Through a rough conversation filled with repetitions and gestures, Emilio and I discussed how old I was, if I was a student and if I needed money. When he dropped me off I’m pretty sure that he scolded me for not speaking Spanish and I told him I’d try my best to learn the language. “Gracias,” I said, and stuck my thumb out once again.

8. WEAR A SMILE!

Andy, a former federal parole officer who took me from George to Bellevue, asked me how my trip had been so far. I told him it had been pretty easy, and I had not been forced to wait too long for a ride.

“I guess I don’t look too dangerous,” I said.

“No, you look college-y,” Andy replied. “I passed another guy trying to get a ride. He had his hood up. It wasn’t raining; he just had his hood up. It seemed a little sketchy.”

When you’re hitchhiking, people decide whether or not to let you in their car in a split second. I tried to wear a light smile whenever I had my thumb in the air. Not so big that I looked creepy, but scowling as if I had been standing on a roadside with my thumb in the air for an hour.

9. KNOW WHEN TO CONCEDE TO A LEGITIMATE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

On my way back to Bellingham, I once again found myself at Everett Station. As the sun began to set I walked a mile to the nearest freeway onramp. I stood beneath a dirty, yellow streetlamp with my frozen thumb in the air as the minutes passed by. It didn’t occur to me until 20 minutes had passed that the likelihood of being picked up in the dark would be exceedingly difficult. I walked the dark mile back to the station and bought an Amtrak ticket.

On the train I thought about all the people I had met. I thought about how I get annoyed when strangers on the train talk to me, but then realized the primary reason drivers pick up hitchhikers is to have someone to talk to. In a time where the value of a dollar continues to fall, a free ride and a glimpse into the life of a stranger seems like a hell of a deal.
Local firefighters and Vashon ferry riders undress for charity

Story and photos by Kathryn Bachen
Photo courtesy of Rebecca Douglas Photography

She sees Todd Lagestee, a handsome, chiseled, firefighter, everyday. A glance at him makes her cheeks bloom with color. She averts her eyes from Todd, who always grins back at her, holding a confident stance. As a smile spreads across her face, she bites her bottom lip.

She likes Todd, but knows that, come December, she'll move on to a new man. She changes men every month, but never feels an ounce of guilt.

Todd has come to terms with this relationship. Being objectified for his body doesn't bother him. In fact, he is treated in a similar way by thousands of women, even some men.

He asks no sympathy. He accepted this would happen when he applied to be a model in the 2008 Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) Burn Foundation's wall calendar.
Posing in the Calendar

“Beefcake,” or “cheesecake,” calendars, exhibit scantily clad, attractive men or women lustfully posed. As the saying goes, “sex sells,” which holds true even for charity fundraising.

Unlike a Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Calendar, an ironic dynamic plays out with charity calendars: Vice is sold for virtue.

“We’re using our bodies to make money,” says Janae Carpenter, bodybuilder and Ms. May 2010, of Bellingham, while signing calendars at the Burn Foundation booth at the Woodinville Women’s Show.

Lagestee doesn’t mind fans’ lustful gaze on his shirtless image in the November spread, which he shares with a fellow fireman, George Epperly. The two are posed in the woods wearing only their bunker pants and boots.

However, Lagestee would have not posed for the WSCFF Burn Foundation calendar if it wasn’t for a virtuous cause. The proceeds of the calendar go to the Burn Foundation, a charity that resonates strongly with firefighters.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to do something good, have some fun and live out your 15 minutes of fame,” Lagestee says.

The Burn Foundation started selling the calendars in 1996 after a firefighter approached the foundation’s Executive Director Rod Heivilin with the idea. Profits from the calendars are used for research funding and scholarships for children with burn injuries to attend burn camp. The firefighters who model in the calendar visit hospitals to spend time with children recovering from burn injuries.

Being a model means more than posing for one photo shoot. Models are required to donate more than 300 hours of their time to events such as calendar signings and auctions throughout the year.

As Lagestee explains, “(Modeling) is not even a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of time you put in going to the auctions and meeting people.”

The calendar, and auction events associated with it, has brought in up to $250,000 a year to the Burn Foundation.

DreamBoats

Across Puget Sound, 12 middle-aged Vashon Island men are taking off a lot more than their shirts in hopes of selling $20,000 worth of 2010 calendars.

“You hear about a calendar with semi-nude men in it, (and) you assume it’s the quintessential image of the sexy fireman in their bunker gear,” says photographer of the 2010 Vashon Island DreamBoats Wall Calendar, Rebecca Douglas. “It’s the complete opposite of what people think of when they think of a beefcake calendar; that to me was the appeal of the project.”

The DreamBoats calendar project was developed by a group of male commuters who rode the passenger-only ferry from Vashon to work in Seattle together. The idea initially started out as a joke, but soon materialized into a real project to help the Vashon Island School District, which made cuts recently due to a $1 million budget gap.

Though the profits are being donated to the school district, the calendar is not affiliated or endorsed by it, and still remains controversial.

The DreamBoats certainly kick it up a notch, clad in nothing but props, strategically placed, from their favorite activities and hobbies. Kayaks, footballs, instruments and climbing helmets assist in leaving little to the viewer’s imagination.
Women older than 60 seem to be the main demographic of consumers, says Douglas, whose husband, Mr. December, gifted the calendar to his 95-year-old grandmother for her birthday recently. Needless to say, Grandma loved the gift.

Buying the Calendar
The virtue of charity provides easy justification for consumers. Those who wouldn’t normally buy a beefcake calendar are more than willing to perform the transaction if it profits charity.

Yet Mr. November 2010, Tim Mason, says he is suspicious of the many customers that claim their calendar purchase is for a friend.

Melody Mistlin of Woodinville is not bashful about her reasons for buying the firefighter calendar, “I like looking at eye candy,” she says. “There’s nothing wrong with that.” Mistlin says she also appreciates the work firefighters do, as she had first hand experience when her neighbor’s house caught fire a couple years ago.

Heivilin says there are three main reasons that 15,000 copies of the WSCFF Burn Foundation calendar are purchased each year.

“It’s a combination of a lot of things, a respect for the profession, the desire to be supporting a good cause, and ... horniness, I guess,” Heivilin says.

Is it the sex appeal that is the key selling factor in these calendars? Couldn’t the firefighters button back up those shirts?

“I don’t think it would do as well,” says Heivilin. “It needs to have sizzle.”
To most people being prideful is a sin, but in the case of sports fans it is quite the opposite—it is a virtue. Showing pride for your team is encouraged at any sporting event and some people take this to the extreme. Super Fans go to insurmountable lengths to show their pride—they live for their team. Meet some of the Seattle Seahawks’ Super Fans.
Painted Hawk has been featured in commercials as one of the Seahawks' most dedicated fans. Ms. Seahawk gets up at 4 a.m. to start getting ready for a 1 p.m. game. She said it takes multiple hours to paint her and Mr. Seahawk's faces.
The year is 1986, and Western freshman Dennis Lapchis and his friends are getting ready to move into a Ridgeway Beta suite, when they discover Lapchis’ housing paperwork was never processed, and he is left without a room.

His parents decide to rent him a single room in the Fairhaven Residence Hall but he and his friends decide to build a three-bed bunk so Lapchis can join them in the suite for the year. Now, he contemplated, what to do with that empty room?

“We thought ‘hey we got that space over there, why not get a tanning bed and go for it’,” says Lapchis, now 43, recalling the year he and his friends charged Western students $100 for 10 tans. “It was hilarious getting [the bed] up stairways, down the halls and in the room.”

After a year of helping Western students achieve the artificial tan they were seeking, Lapchis had a change of heart.

“In the end, I felt like a cigarette salesmen; we were selling something unhealthy. My conscious got to me,” Lapchis says.

Fast-forward to the year 2010. The International Agency for Research on Cancer, recently added UV radiation-emitting tanning devices – tanning beds and lamps – to the list of the most dangerous forms of cancer-causing radiation, including plutonium and certain types of radium. Nevertheless, Western students still frequent tanning salons.

“We all just kind of think [getting skin cancer] is not going to happen to us, it’s more of a threat for people who go constantly, like every day,” 19-year-old Western sophomore Christina Grey says, quick to compare tanning to another college activity. “I feel like it’s similar to drinking. It can cause liver disease, but we all still do it.”

Despite the well-known, cancer-heightening risks of tanning beds, Grey and her roommate Rachel Peterson say they still spend between $40-50 per month tanning.

“I think the benefits now outweigh the dangers long-term,” Peterson, 19, says, citing relaxation, clear skin and stress relief as benefits of artificial tanning.

Because of the dangers of artificial tanning, 40-year-old Bellingham resident Mandy Knutson was seeking a safer way to tan, when she discovered airbrush tanning. After using tanning beds since she was 14, Knutson founded Airbrush Tanning by Mandy seven years ago and achieved similar, yet healthier results.

“You have a healthier look if you have a glow,” Knutson says, describing the similar feelings women have after tanning. “Once you have the color [no matter how it’s achieved] it is the same type of feeling.”

Tanning can do many things for people, yet offers many health risks and long-term dangers. Vanity has always been considered a vice, and in this case it really can kill. Nevertheless, many still flock to tanning salons knowing the risks. It really is vanity in the face of danger.
My name is Hannah, and I'm a coffeeholic.

I've tried to quit. In fact, I have successfully overcome the intense coffee cravings, and suffered through the excruciating caffeine headaches to a coffee-free existence several times in my life. I can recall a few summers when I traded in my iced Americanos for iced teas, only to go running back to that oh-so-delicious and oh-so-tempting pot of coffee once school, work and stress re-entered my life, and when sleep became more of a luxury than a necessity.

For most, the image of a glutton can best be pictured at an all-you-can-eat buffet: a famished person satisfying their cravings in mounds of mashed potatoes and bowls of macaroni and cheese. But for coffee addicts like myself, gluttony takes the form of a line curving its way out the doors of Starbucks every morning. It presents itself in the pile of paper coffee cups overflowing out of the caffeine-lover's garbage can each night. When pot number three is brewing and it's only 10 a.m., it becomes perfectly clear: These coffee drinkers are hardcore caffeine addicts, struggling to overcome the coffee gluttony that rules their lives.

I, too, am one of those people.

I blame my addiction on my upbringing. I am, after all, the daughter of two habitual coffee drinkers, who chose to raise me in coffee heaven, a.k.a the Pacific Northwest. Home to Starbucks, the coffee giant that, according to its Web site, opened its doors in Seattle's Pike Place Market less than 40 years ago. Seattle is a coffee Mecca that has expanded its caffeine-dominated culture to countless neighboring Northwest cities.

But as I would soon find out, not all Northwest cities share Seattle's affinity for java.

Before coming to college in Bellingham, I thought this coffee-crazed world was normal. I imagined that everywhere in the world, people loved coffee, depended on it to wake them up, and had countless choices of where to get it within a five-mile radius of their house. I believed this, that is, until I met a girl in one of my college classes from a small town in Oregon. One day, as we walked to Biology 101, she said, "Everyone

What your daily latte is costing you:

($4.23 per cup/3 times a day)

After one day: $12.69

After one week: $88.83

After one month: $355.32

After one year: $4,263.84
here is so obsessed with coffee.” I stared at her blankly through sleepy eyes as I clutched my morning cup of coffee, and muttered the only thing that seemed to make sense. “What do you mean?” I said. She looked at me and responded as if talking to a child, “I mean, there are coffee stands and shops everywhere here. We don’t have anything like this in Oregon.” My un-caffeinated brain struggled to comprehend what it had just heard. Could it be that some places in the world don’t cater to the caffeine needs of coffee addicts like myself? Are there places where people have only one choice of where to get their morning cup of coffee?

Three years later, my addiction has only grown worse. I not only live in a coffee drinker’s dream world, but I work in one too. Each day, I head to my job at the alcoholic’s equivalent of a liquor store: a coffee stand. My time as a barista has shown me I am not alone in my coffee gluttony. I can see it in each customer’s eyes as they order their morning fix — a love, a want and a need for the bitter, yet sweet taste of their beloved coffee.

But just like any addiction, coffee has its downside. A study conducted by Johns Hopkins University recognizes caffeine withdrawal symptoms as a medical disorder. Researchers in the study identified five groups of common caffeine withdrawal symptoms, including headaches, fatigue or drowsiness, depression and irritability, difficulty concentrating and flu-like symptoms of nausea, vomiting and muscle pain or stiffness.

According to the study, caffeine-dependent individuals typically begin experiencing one or more of these symptoms within 12 to 24 hours of stopping their caffeine intake. And while the severity of the symptoms increase with the size of the daily dosage, someone who drinks just one small cup of coffee per day will experience one or more of these symptoms if they go without it just once.

With proof like this, it’s no wonder a majority of my customers are irritable, tired and edgy prior to being handed their morning cup.

Try as I might, I have yet to find any Coffeeholics Anonymous meetings, as if pouring money into a temporary fix, visiting coffee stands more than once a day and drinking coffee to eliminate withdrawal symptoms doesn’t make it a “real” addiction.

And while I can successfully achieve step one of most addiction anonymous groups’ 12-step programs — admitting you have a problem — I just don’t see the point in trying to get better. After all, it’s not a “real” addiction.
Stories by Carolyn Copstead
Photos courtesy of Sarah Drenkus

Shoulder-length locks of auburn hair frame Seattle resident Linda Johnson's soft visage. Sitting in her houseboat, she's surrounded by water, green potted plants and friendly neighbors. There's just one thing missing in this picture: a child.

Johnson, a single woman in her mid-forties, would like to adopt a baby. Partially because of her age, Johnson says she decided getting pregnant on her own was not the right option for her, leading her to look into the process of adoption. She began the process in January 2009 by taking a series of courses, getting a background check and completing a home study. Home study approval is completed before an adoption is finalized to ensure the child is being placed in a safe and secure environment. Since completing the home study process, Johnson has been actively searching for a baby to adopt since June.

"It will happen," Johnson says. "I know God will provide me with an opportunity."

Johnson says it typically takes about 18 to 24 months to find a child to adopt once the search begins. Johnson hopes, however, it won't take that long. Even so, she is patient and optimistic by nature, two qualities essential to the successful adoption of a child.

Johnson began her search for a child by advertising in local newspapers such as The Western Front, University of Washington's The Daily, Central Washington University's The Observer and The Seattle Times. She also took out ads in military newspapers such as the Fort Lewis Ranger. In her advertisements, Johnson describes herself as a "successful and compassionate professional woman." Johnson also created a personal Web site, where she shares information about herself for prospective birth mothers who are considering adoption for their babies.

Despite all of her advertising efforts, Johnson says the strongest leads have come from friends, colleagues and other personal connections who know someone who is pregnant. She has been in touch with three pregnant women who were considering adoption, but ultimately all three decided to keep their babies.

AWAITing A Child

Johnson is a member of a group known as Adoption Waiting: Anxiety, Intensity, Triumph! (AWAIT). AWAIT is a Bellevue-based group that focuses on supporting families going through the adoption process, and is part of the larger organization Adoptive Friends and Families of Greater Seattle.

Sarah Drenkus, the facilitator of AWAIT, adopted her son about one year ago. After she unsuccessfully tried to become pregnant using fertility treatments, Drenkus says she and her husband decided to hire an adoption attorney to help them with the process of adopting a baby. They placed advertisements across Washington and Oregon, and after about one year of searching, the couple was matched with a birth mother whose baby they would adopt. However, the adoption fell through when the birth father claimed his parental rights after the baby was born. In addition to the disappointment of not being able to adopt their child, Drenkus says this was a great financial loss because they had paid all the attorney fees and still did not have a baby.

After the first birth mother match fell through, Drenkus says she turned to an adoption agency in Spokane. The couple was matched with another birth mother, but again, the adoption fell through. Finally, Drenkus received word from her original attorney that she and her husband had been selected by a couple who wanted to give their baby up for adoption. This match was successful and in the summer of 2008, after waiting patiently for about three years, she and her
"The thing about adoption is that if you stick with it long enough, you will achieve that dream. With patience, you can achieve that dream."

Adam Drenkus, son of AWAIT facilitator Sarah Drenkus.

husband adopted their son through an independent adoption.

"I knew I was going to be a mother one way or another," Drenkus says. "The thing about adoption is that if you stick with it long enough, you will achieve that dream. With patience, you can achieve that dream."

Growing Up Adopted

Just by looking at the Thompson family*, it would be hard to determine which of the three children were adopted. The oldest, Carrie, has long dark brown hair. Carrie's younger brother Josh also has dark hair, just like their mother, Nancy and father, John. And then there's the baby of the family, red-haired Jessica. Which of these doesn't seem to fit? The answer, as it turns out, is not as obvious as it might seem.

Western alumna Jessica Thompson, 23, grew up in Tacoma with her older sister Carrie, 26, and older brother Josh, 24, who were both adopted.

"We grew up knowing [they were adopted]," Jessica says. "All three of us just knew. We thought that if people can't give birth to a child, they just adopted. It was normal."

Jessica says her parents were informative and open about adoption and never tried to hide it from their children. Jessica's mother Nancy says she and her husband John were always straightforward with their children because adoption was a part of their story. After trying for about one year to become pregnant using fertility treatments, John and Nancy decided they would try to adopt a child.

"[The fertility treatments] are very hard on a marriage," Nancy says. "Adoption ended that pressure of trying to conceive a child."

Nancy and John found an attorney who put them in touch with a doctor. This doctor treated many unwedded mothers who were considering giving up their baby for adoption. The doctor put the couple on a list of adoptive parents, and within about one year they were matched with a birth mother. This is when Nancy and John adopted their first child, Carrie. A little more than one year later, the Thompsons adopted their second child, Josh, and then in an interesting turn of events, they finally became pregnant with their third child, Jessica, about six months later.

Jessica says that because she and her siblings were so close in age, they all got along well growing up. Nancy says outsiders often saw the resemblance between Carrie and Josh and their parents more than with Jessica, something the family laughs about together at the dinner table.

Patiently playing the waiting game

Linda Johnson is still patiently waiting to adopt a child. She says she looked into adopting a child from another country, but most international adoption agencies aim to place children with couples, and not with a single woman. This has not been the only challenge she has faced throughout the adoption process. Johnson tried to become a foster parent with the intention of adopting, but because she lives on a houseboat on the water, the foster to adopt system would not approve her unless she built a five-foot fence around where the building meets the water. Because of the community in which she lives, this is not possible. Ultimately, Johnson says getting through the bureaucratic system is the most difficult part.

The challenges Johnson has faced have not lowered her optimism and excitement about adopting a child. She says she knows that as much patience is required to wait to find a baby to adopt, even more will be needed once she actually becomes a parent.

"I am just so excited to share love with a child and teach them all the things I've learned in my lifetime such as riding a bike and how to treat people and how to be part of a family," Johnson says.

*Names have been changed to protect the Thompson family's privacy.
What started with one peppermint patti at work, ended in a bender. About fourteen years ago, Jim headed south on Interstate-5, stocking his car with chips, cookies, candy and soda from multiple convenient stores so no single cashier would see how many snacks he was about to devour. He opened a bag of cookies and began to demolish its contents. When the bag slipped from his grasp, he reached down to grab it and his steering began to swerve. Flashing red and blue lights reflected in his rear view mirror.

While the police officer let him go with a warning for reckless driving, Jim had a more serious issue to battle. Since early childhood, Jim says he has always been obsessed with not only binging, but also forcing himself to vomit afterward. This habit followed him into his adult life. While teaching at a junior high school, Jim attended a training session to learn how to lead students with varying disorders at the school. When Jim drew parallels between himself and a bulimic speaker, he realized it wasn't normal to stuff himself with food, only to throw it up minutes later.

A friend told Jim about Overeaters Anonymous (OA), a 12-step program to help individuals' triumph over their obsessive eating habits. While the program caters to overeaters, it also assists individuals from all weight ranges who obsess over weight loss, binging and purging and over-exercising, Jim says.

"The road to recovery is riddled with relapse," Chemical Dependency Specialist Pippa Breakspear says. "There are very few people who recover and are done. It's usually a lot messier than that."

Although Jim managed to escape a traffic infraction during his freeway relapse, he knows temptation will continue to haunt him. To persevere, Jim will rely on friends, family and OA to avoid relapsing once again.

*Jim's name has been changed to protect his privacy.

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Jane Pless-Dalrymple recalls how it was almost dinner time. She walked into the living room and perched herself on the floor by the gold armchair where her father sat watching television. Pless-Dalrymple, then 12, posed a first aid question to him: how would a person force themselves to throw up if they accidentally swallowed poison? Her father kept his eyes on the TV and listed several methods he knew of, never suspecting his daughter's ulterior motives for approaching him.

Years later as a sophomore at Whitworth College, Pless-Dalrymple is given an ultimatum by her roommate to give up her bulimia or get out of their dorm room. Despite Pless-Dalrymple's efforts to conceal her disorder by throwing up in dumpsters and garbage cans, she had to once again face the illness that defined her adolescence.

Pless-Dalrymple, now 38, says her battle with dieting began in fifth grade. Although she thought losing weight would make her feel in control and accepted by her peers, she says nothing ever made her feel better about herself. She knew she couldn't fight her unhealthy behavior alone. She received in-patient treatment for bulimia during her senior year of high school and sophomore year of college. Her disorder usually resurfaced during stressful times when life felt out of her control. Pless-Dalrymple's third and final stay in a treatment facility was in 1994, when she was using bulimia to numb the pain she felt in her new marriage.

"I was afraid that if I felt everything, the feelings were just going to overwhelm me and swallow me up into this big dark hole, and then there'd be nothing left," she says.

During Pless-Dalrymple's time in treatment, her mother visited her to discuss their genealogy. The pair examined where Pless-Dalrymple's control issues had stemmed from. They were able to connect it to her controlling grandmother and her aunts who struggled with weight. She says this was a turning point in her recovery because she finally understood what made her prone to developing an eating disorder.

She now facilitates an eating disorder support group in Bellingham where she emphasizes to her group the importance of taking things slowly in order to get well.
Bellingham is known for its breathtaking scenery and active community. Views of Mount Baker and Bellingham Bay, a diverse population and a vibrant downtown district showcase the area as serene and friendly. But when the lights turn off, businesses close for the evening and everyone goes home, walking Bellingham at night can be a bit creepy—and for good reason.

The Pacific Northwest has a bad reputation for its resident serial killers. Ted Bundy, Robert Yates and Gary Ridgeway are just some of the most infamous serial killers to call the Northwest home. The theory that the Northwest breeds psychotic killers is dubbed an urban legend, though there is virtually no statistical information to prove or disprove the area’s status.

Bellingham alone has been linked to no less than four serial killers in the last 30 years, and some unusual and unsolved crimes have occurred in the area as well.

**Bellingham's MOST VIOLENT VISITORS**

**Story by Ali LeRoy**
**Photos by Michael Leese**

The Waterfront Seafood and Bar on Holly Street is small and unassuming. It's a local spot, beyond the college bar-hoppers scene. There is no dance music or peppy bartenders, but the early happy-hour, cheap drinks, and poker tournaments keep the place buzzing. The owner calls it a “family bar,” but in 2003, Esquire magazine gave it a different name: the roughest bar in America.

It began when a Waterfront bartender named Wally decided to exaggerate the Waterfront’s past patrons after John Allen Muhammad, commonly known as the D.C. Sniper, was arrested. Reporters began asking about his patronage at the bar, and Wally made up a good story, owner Lynne Farmer says. He claimed the bar’s patrons included four serial killers linked to the area: Ted Bundy, Kenneth Bianchi, James Allen Kinney, and Muhammad. Farmer says she saw Muhammad and Kinney come to the bar, but Bundy and Bianchi were just tall-tales. The embellished story soon led to a media mob at the bar, and media outlets from as far as Japan began reporting on the “serial killer bar.”

“It was really starting to interfere with my regular customers,” says Farmer about the media onslaught at her bar. “It got to the point where I just told my staff ‘don’t even talk to them anymore’ because it was just so out of control.”

The negative attention brought forth by the media was more damaging to the bar than the serial killer patrons. Farmer says both Kinney and Muhammad were quiet, friendly and kept to themselves while at the bar.

**Yacht Club Murder**

Another bartender who created a stir in the Bellingham community
The Waterfront Seafood and Bar was once called "the roughest bar in America," and is located on E. Holly Street past the hustle and bustle of the downtown college bars.

“"A guy like that never stops thinking about killing. They’re always going to be on the hunt.""

was Ron Genther. On Jan. 16, 1960, Genther closed up the Bellingham Yacht Club bar after the Saturday night crowd had gone home. He called the police station to activate the burglar alarm and headed for the door. What happened when he tried to leave is a 50-year-old mystery.

The yacht club janitor came in around 6 a.m. Sunday morning to find Genther's body on the floor in a pool of blood. Genther was stabbed in the groin and left bleeding to death on the yacht club floor, the result of what there seemed to have been a fight between Genther and his killer.

Divers searched the water below the yacht club, but no weapon was found. Newspapers reported that while police initially suspected a theft, they had later changed their theory. Police suspected the man who killed Genther knew him personally, though they never discovered who had a grudge against the 22-year-old Western Student. Since police never closed the case, local Bellingham residents maintain their own theories.

According to Bellingham papers, the well-placed cuts to the arteries in Genther's upper legs were small and precise; suggesting the killer knew what he was doing and had used a small object, such as a scalpel, as his weapon. The only clues investigators were left with were the crime scene, and a few bloody footsteps leading up Cornwall Avenue.

The Hillside Strangler
Kenneth Bianchi was on the run. The year was 1978, and Bianchi and his cousin Angelo Buono, had murdered 10 women in California. Heeding his cousin's advice, Bianchi moved to Bellingham to be with his girlfriend and son and to get away from the investigation that was closing in on him in California. He found a job at the Whatcom Security Agency and attempted to start a new life, but his desire to kill
"It was really starting to interfere with my regular customers. It got to the point where I just told my staff, 'don't even talk to them anymore' because it was just so out of control."

was too much for him to resist. He began looking for his next victim.

On Jan 11, 1979, Bianchi convinced Karen Mandic and her fellow Fred Meyer co-worker Diane Wilder, both Western students, to house-sit for him while he changed the alarm system on a house. While at the Edgemoor neighborhood home, Bianchi fulfilled his blood-thirsty desire by raping and strangling both young women. The next day police were notified that Mandic and Wilder were missing. Police found Bianchi's contact information while searching the women's apartment and he was brought in for questioning.

Terry Mangan, the Bellingham police chief in 1979, found similarities between the girls' murders and the Hillside Strangler murders in California. Police also found items from some of the Hillside Strangler's victims when they searched Bianchi's home. Bianchi eventually confessed to the Hillside Strangler murders and admitted Buono was an accomplice.

Bianchi is one of the most infamous murderers to call Bellingham home. He and Buono were dubbed "The Hillside Strangler" in 1977 because they often left their victims' bodies on a California hillside. In 1980 Bianchi was convicted of the murdering Mandic, Wilder and the 10 Hillside Strangler victims. Bianchi is serving his life sentence without parole in the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla.

James Allen Kinney

Keri Lynn Sherlock, 20, of Braintree Mass., was eager to see the world. She was always friendly and trusting of people. Those qualities concern her mother as Sherlock boarded a bus to travel across the country to Bellingham. She let her daughter go, but made Sherlock promise to call every day. Regrettably, her mother would later learn the validity of her concerns as Sherlock became the latest victim of another Bellingham killer.

Sherlock came to Bellingham in 1998 to visit her uncle, to look at Western as a potential school and to see the Pacific Ocean for the first time. As a lover of the outdoors, she went for a hike in the area on Oct 3. This was the last time her uncle, and everyone else, would see her alive. Her body was later found about an hour outside Bellingham on the Mount Baker Highway. She was raped and beaten to death.

A backpack found near her body led police to James Allen Kinney, a Bellingham resident and Vietnam War veteran with a history of mental illness. A warrant was released for his arrest, but Kinney already fled the area. Kinney also had warrants in Michigan and Ohio for murdering two other women.

Kinney managed to avoid capture for three years. It wasn't until a tip was called into "America's Most Wanted" from a viewer in North Carolina who recognized Kinney, that he was arrested and admitted to Sherlock's murder. Kinney was sentenced to life in jail without parole. He is serving his sentence at the Washington State Penitentiary.

What is it about Bellingham?

Is Bellingham swarming with predators looking for their next kill? Mark Young, the public information officer for the Bellingham Police Department, says it is unlikely, but those who did come to the area, such as Bundy, were probably on the prowl.

"A guy like that never stops thinking about killing," Young says. "They're always going to be on the hunt."

Despite the psychotic killers to call Bellingham home, Young says Bellingham is a safe community, and has an average of one to two homicides a year. According to reports from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, 41 murders and 423 violent crimes occurred in Bellingham in the last 25 years, which is about 1.65 murders and 169 violent crimes a year. The city of Everett, which has a similar population sizes, averages 2.96 murders and about 388 violent crimes per year.

Young says Bellingham is not a magnet for criminals, but some may end up here by default as they attempt to enter Canada, or head to Alaska. Young also says Bellingham is the first stop for many coming to the Northwest from other places, as Bellingham has all forms of travel available: flight, bus, train and boat.

We will never know for sure whether Bellingham's proximity to the border, the abundant wilderness, or the roll of the dice led to the wrathful acts of violence in the area. What we do know is they are a part of Bellingham's history. But Bellingham's crimes are only one part of the vibrant community that makes Bellingham unique.