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*Western Washington University*

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# KLIPSUN

P R O M I S E



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— SPRING 2016 —



# Dear Reader,

The flowering cherry tree has long symbolized the cyclical nature of life and death. Its blossoms arrive in the spring, delivering their beauty for only a short time. There is a transcendent quality to them, a sense of magic. The Japanese tradition of Hanami has celebrated these trees for more than a millennium and invites people to leave their home or workplace to admire the blossoms and watch them fall. This act is one of honor and regard for the ephemerality of life. It is a practice calling for recognition that as all things begin, thus they too shall end. The trees and the tradition they foster represent the fleetingness of life – nature's one true promise.

Truly,  
Halee Hastad

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Halee Hastad". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Editor-in-Chief

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01 02 Natural light illuminates the waiting room at St. Joseph Hospital's Childbirth Center while a nurse works behind the door that leads to the mothers and their newborns.

03 (next page) Catherine Goff has been working at St. Joseph Hospital's Childbirth Center since 1989. The position is an honor, she says, one that both motivates and inspires her.

04 (next page) Sarah Nowell has been working at St. Joseph Hospital's Childbirth Center since 1981. She helps new mothers acquire the basic skills for motherhood.

# Sacred Door

Nurses and mothers build relationships to foster new life

Story by Joyce Heberden - Photos by Jake Tull

It's 8 a.m. and the Childbirth Center at St. Joseph Hospital is still warming up for the day. The only person to be seen in the waiting room is a man who sits in the corner reading a magazine, throwing out his wrist and looking at his watch every minute or so.

The receptionist's phone rings every 10 minutes and the man sitting in the corner lifts his eyes from the magazine every so often. He's waiting for someone. Nurses pop out of the door, which leads to the delivery rooms and expecting mothers. This realm is forbidden for the public to enter. Birth is private and, in many ways, sacred.

There seems to be a certain energy coming from the other side of the sacred door. It's exciting, like pressing an ear against a beehive. Invisible commotion, atoms flying in every direction, setting the universe straight once again.

Birth is a work of art, as it takes patience, experience and most importantly, courage.

A nurse finally emerges from the sacred door, and, asked if she'd be willing to talk about her work, she says she'll try to help. She smiles, explains she'll be back, and then returns behind the door.

It's 9 a.m. and Catherine Goff looks out the window to clear her mind.

"You regain a certain respect for Mother Nature," Goff says. "It kind of scares me to see a baby be born, it's amazing what you can do to a human body."

At the same time, next to the miracle of life and its beauty, there are some aspects of motherhood that are often unheard of and muffled behind the sacred door. There comes exhaustion from motherhood, sometimes due to postpartum depression. Goff mentions that more often than not, mothers suffering from drug addictions experience this negative side of motherhood.

Goff talks openly about her concerns, and the anger she feels for babies who aren't given a chance to lead a promising life, as well as mothers who society has given up on. The hospital can only help a baby recover from an addiction it received from the mother until the baby and mother leave. After that, all the nurses can do is hope for the best.

The buzzing nervousness in the center brings deep concerns about the child's future. Babies being addicted to heroin from birth,

teenagers giving up their babies to foster homes. Goff mentions mothers with medical conditions who have babies regardless of their illness.

"They are not bad people, just because they have children under those circumstances," Goff says. "As long as they know what it entails."

The nurse's perspective on the miracle of life and the beauty of birth can sometimes be tainted by these harmful conditions. They can be tricky, but Goff has found that confronting these problems in her professional life gives her the drive to help new mothers.

"It's a huge privilege to be at a person's delivery," Goff says. "All deliveries are different, first-time mothers usually take 12 to 14 hours to deliver," she says.

When Goff had her own children, she found confidence that she could walk others through the birthing process, based on her experience. And while she's been working in obstetrics, the science of pregnancy, for decades, she still finds surprises in every birth, good and bad.

After a small lull in the conversation, she wants to be reassuring.

"The good things make the bad things seem smaller," she says.

It's 10 a.m. and Sarah Nowell takes off her glasses to rub the bridge of her nose and the creases created by them. She enjoys working with first-time mothers to help them understand the process of motherhood.

"It was my dream job. Every day I pinch myself because I can't believe I'm working the day shift in obstetrics," Nowell says. "It never gets old."

Helping new mothers is something she always wanted to do. Contrary to popular belief, motherhood is not a natural talent that all women are born with. Because of this, people like Nowell are there to help women acquire the skills, physically and emotionally.

Some mothers embrace their new status fully as a new way to self-identify themselves, while others see it either as a burden or job, preferring to distance themselves from the label of mother. Postpartum depression affects about 14 percent of women after giving birth, according to the American Psychological Association. It can be dangerous for the mother as well as the baby. This prolonged malaise from motherhood can be prevented or treated through check-ups and Nowell is the nurse to do it.

Postpartum depression screenings for mothers during and after birth have increased in recent years. This is especially important for first-time mothers, as they may be experiencing symptoms such as depression, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder without

knowing how to cope.

Nowell returns behind the door and a few minutes later, Kari Eastman comes out for a glass of water and a small chat with the receptionist. She leans against a wall, taking the weight off her feet.

"They're excited, nervous, fearful of the unknown," Eastman says. "First time mothers come into the center with big bags full of every bottle, device or blanket they had in their possession at home they thought could be used after the delivery. They are ready for it, they've read all the books."

Eastman says the real anxiety comes from third-time moms, because they know what they're getting into. The first-timers are excited they're in labor, the second-time mothers deliver much faster and the third-time mothers usually have more anxiety.

"They're like 'Oh my god, I'm doing this again, I don't know if I can do this,'" Eastman says.

But the rush of adrenaline felt by the new mother can be easily subsided by the kind words of the nurse. She knows what they're going through. She sees it every day. She tells them they're going to be a good mother.

The fear of labor and delivery are only a fraction of what mothers and nurses worry about. They support each other's anxieties and the nurses in particular feel a very special attachment to the baby, almost the way a mother would.

This symbiotic relationship between the nurse and the mother is a large component of the delivery process. The nurses are there not just for the delivery, they are there to ease the birthing process as a whole.

It's obvious that while they are happy to answer questions, the nurses can't wait to get back behind the door into the sacred realm. The beauty and hope that birth gives is enough to make a pessimistic person smile.

Two women holding a baby come out from the sacred door. The man sitting in the corner looks up, grins and puts down the magazine. He walks up to them and wiggles his fingers in front of the cooing baby.

The person he was waiting for has been delivered and the quiet waiting room suddenly feels full of the electricity that could be felt behind the door. The new family hustles out the door into a misty January morning.

It's almost 11 a.m. and a visitor can't help but feel a little different about birth while walking back out into the world.









01 Wind Dancer sits proudly overlooking her carrion. She is the largest bird at Sardis and has the greatest wing span — 8 feet wide when fully expressed.

02 Clove, a Barred owl, naps while perching at Sardis Raptor Center as the sun peaks through the clouds in Ferndale, Washington.

# Bird's-Eye View

Sardis Raptor Center works to rehabilitate birds and educate the community

Story by Erik Swanson - Photos by Beatrice Harper

It is unknown how Wind Dancer, a Golden Eagle, came to collide with a power line. Hitting it in two places, the voltage surged through her body, causing destruction to her tail as she fell to the ground.

Wind Dancer survived the collision. She was taken to a veterinarian who brought her back to health, but her tail feathers grew out corkscrewed. With irregular feathers she struggles to fly and would be easy prey in the wild, so she calls Sardis Raptor Center her home. She received the care she needed when she came to Sardis, but it was too late for full recovery.

Sardis was founded by Sharon Wolters in 1989 as a nonprofit organization based in Ferndale, Washington. Their focus is to provide shelter and care for raptors that have been injured.

Kelina Victor, a Sardis volunteer, has a large tattoo on her right shoulder of Wind Dancer's talons. From the way it's positioned, the piece gives the impression that the talons are still there, attempting to lift her off the ground. It's the size of a basketball player's hand and Victor says Wind Dancer's claw, in reality, is even bigger than the tattoo.

"She has this look in her eye that says, 'I'm wild,'" Victor says of Wind

Dancer. She is the only show bird at the center that was not bred in captivity.

Another volunteer at the center, one who gives free tours every Saturday, says many of the birds arrive with injuries that prohibit them from returning to the wild. Sardis is the second largest raptor rehabilitation center in the world - second to the Alaska Raptor Center.

The raptors arrive from a variety of places and the center has a hotline for those who encounter an injured bird in the wild. They have received birds from veterinarian clinics and animal rescues as far south as Oregon and into Eastern Washington.

Human development is the main reason for the injury of raptors that come to them, Victor says. This may not always be intentional harm, but cars, telephone lines and sometimes guns, are often factors in the condition of the birds they receive. The first priority of those at Sardis is to rehabilitate the birds that come to them and close behind that is the mission to educate the community on the dangers that humans pose to the raptors.

It's hard to know exactly how many raptors they have set free, but after 17 years of operation, the number is in the hundreds.

Every raptor they take in has a story, Victor says. Many of them tragic.

Thunder came to Sardis after being raised in a birdcage. The hawk was discovered in a drug bust, malnourished and missing half a wing. She is off balance when held and, for stability, puts her good wing on the trainer's shoulder as she grabs their collar with her beak.

From Thunder's enclosure, the calls of 10 bald eagles can be heard at feeding time.

The Bald Eagle space is both sobering and exciting. There is a beach with logs and branches for perching and pebbles and rocks make up the ground coverage, simulating their natural habitat. It's not hard to imagine that they are happy here, even when considering that their injuries prohibit them from the Pacific Northwest beaches that they belong to.

Some raptors just get dealt a bad hand.

Clove is a Sparred Owl that came in as a chick 6 years ago with several of his brothers and sisters. A Sparred Owl is a mix of a spotted owl and a barred owl. His siblings were raised, nurtured and released to the wild by Sardis, but Victor says Clove just wasn't sure how to owl.

He sits on a branch in the enclosure and stares with dark, golf ball-sized eyes at a child in a blue rain jacket. He moves his head every few seconds but seems to be immersed in another world, one that man will never understand. Victor says it took two years before Clove figured out he could perch on branches.

Clove doesn't realize he has the ability to see by turning his head 270 degrees. He will contort his body in such a way that his head disappears in his feathers as a way to make up for his lack of dexterity.

It's easy to forget the natural power of the raptors as they perch calmly in their homes.

Each species at Sardis has evolved for a life in the free, open air. There are many dangers, but their senses and instincts have developed to protect them. Their injuries, mental or physical, stop them from returning to the wild. Some raptors at the sanctuary will never be well enough to return to their natural environment. Their injuries would make them easy targets, like Wind Dancer who can no longer fly effectively.

The important thing is that they are being cared for. Raptors are an irreplaceable link in the food chain and provide for balance within an ecosystem. They are impacted by mankind and will continue to rely on resources such as Sardis to survive.

Heyoke is a Harris Hawk that was rescued as a hatchling by Sardis — these species are native to the Southwest. They are the most social of North American raptors and are often found in groups.

03









- 01 The waters around the Lummi Reservation are threatened by the possibility of the Gateway Pacific Terminal, which would bring in large ships to Cherry Point to export coal.
- 02 Former Lummi Nation Chairman, Cliff Cultee, speaks during a protest against the Gateway Pacific Terminal on Sept. 21, 2012. Photo courtesy of Paul K. Anderson.

# Protecting the Past

How two Lummi Nation activists are working to preserve the nature and spirit of Cherry Point

Story by Maria Matson - Photos by Jake Tull

In the distant background is the snow-covered peak of Mount Baker, looking like a photograph beyond reach. Closer is a stretch of tree-covered land that is Canada, surrounded by the turquoise ocean of the Salish Sea.

The boat speeds north, away from the reservation and cutting through waters where the early sun reflects as a million sparkles.

The bright blue skies and calm air make a perfect day for crabbing, where the roar of the motor engine could never take away from the indisputable beauty of the San Juan Islands.

"This is actually very calm," Jeremiah Julius says. He and the other fishermen would go out on the sea anyway, despite the cooperation of the weather. Rain, wind, storm—no matter. If Julius didn't have other responsibilities, he'd be out on the ocean every day, fishing and crabbing while blasting country music. But he has other duties, such as serving as a councilman for the Lummi Indian Business Council.

As he works on land and on the water, Julius is constantly thinking about the Lummi Nation's future and the lives of the Lummi people in the times of modern development. He travels around the islands and sees them as they once were and what he wishes they could still be. He knows what different locations looked like 200 years ago,

before the Lummi Nation were forced to sign treaties—moving them from their villages along Washington's coast to the Lummi Reservation.

Julius gave a TEDx talk on Orcas Island in 2015 called "Sacred America," discussing how the past is deeply relevant to this area today. He said archeological studies document human development at Cherry Point up to 7,000 years ago, around 5,000 B.C.

"Being 100 percent Native American, growing up on a little Indian reservation of about 4,000 acres with individuals like my great-grandmother who lived here and was born in 1892 — it's not easy to break free of these stories, of these realities that took place," Julius says.

The boat speeds along at 25 mph, leaving behind Lummi Island but not the determined flock of seagulls. They cannot resist the large grey bins which hold salmon skins, squid cubes and fish heads—a bait smorgasbord worth chasing.

"You would have seen an 800-foot cedar longhouse here," he says, pointing to a shore where seaside houses pepper the landscape.

Julius sharply spins the wheel on the boat he built himself, The Salish

Soldier, causing water to rush rapidly in through the drainage holes. In some ways, Julius' lifetime of work made him a salish soldier.

He's spent his whole life boating on the ocean, as his father and each generation before him did.

He looks to the shore of Xwéchi'cXen as it passes, which is known as Cherry Point today, located about 100 miles north of Seattle.

As the boat travels closer to Canada, he outlines the path that the coal barges would take from behind the islands on his right, where they'd travel up through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and eventually cut perpendicular through the route he is currently taking to check his crabbing pots. The barges would be sent to Cherry Point to stock up on coal and travel to Asia, if the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) is built. Nothing will be built before 2017, however, when the final environmental impact statements are finished, but time has passed steadily since the modern terminal was proposed in 2011.

Nearly 500 visits a year of Panamax and Capesize vessels would, without any doubt, impact Cherry Point and the surrounding area, say the Lummi who speak out on the subject. Public documents from the Department of Ecology tell how each type of ship is named for its massive size. Panamax ships are the largest vessel able to fit through the Panama Canal, and Capesize ships are the largest dry cargo ships available.

But the barges that will come for the 54 million metric tons of coal and dry products at the proposed terminal would only have to take the two-week trip from Whatcom County through the Pacific Ocean to arrive in Asia. By the time it is burned for energy, the coal will have traveled thousands of miles from the place where it originated, the Powder River Basin.

This land in Wyoming and Montana produces nearly half of the coal used nationwide. It is transported by railroad trains across the United States to Whatcom County. It is true that we are losing our appetite for coal while slowly working toward cleaner forms of energy after the national discussions of the dangers of coal burning.

But Asia will still buy huge quantities of it, even as dozens of coal mining companies go bankrupt.

Julius has seen the effects of industrial pollution in his lifetime, recalling the times when native and local fishermen could get healthy catches in Bellingham Bay. But now, crab pots come up covered in black gunk and the shellfish are poisonous.

Even now, as he raises one of his 100 crab pots with the floating blue and white buoys, litter and discarded bottles occasionally come up in the cage along with the masses of squirming crab.

Because Cherry Point is an especially deep body of water in the

Strait of Georgia, it is a uniquely valuable spot when it comes to supporting fish, mammals, birds, plants, the Lummi Nation's fishing industry and now, the coal industry.

The Lummi Nations fight against SSA Marine's Pacific International Terminals over the Cherry Point area has been fought for years, with Lummi Chairman Tim Ballew II, currently leading the council in its public defense. Lummi legal defense references the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855, when many local tribes relinquished their lands and moved onto reservations, including the Tulalip, Swinomish and Lummi. In exchange for leaving their land, the Native American leaders at the time negotiated a guaranteed right to fish and hunt at their usual and accustomed grounds. The phrase is repeated today by the decedents of the signatories, who remember this history each January on Treaty Day.

"We gave up everything for a little bit of rights," Julius says of the Point Elliot Treaty. "Now we have to ask permission to visit other islands—we have to ask permission."

His voice hardens the longer he talks about it, especially when he talks about the way the Coast Salish people lived before and after colonialism. He says they were living in the area for thousands of years, and then those from across the ocean began to destroy their way of life.

"These people were supposedly God-fearing," he says, pointing out the hypocrisy of Columbus with his crosses and of the religion of the early settlers. Now, the Lummi face a modern, high-tech battles over the lands of San Juan that have led to legal warnings from companies who wish to develop Cherry Point.

Julius is not the only person who protests the development at Cherry Point.

For activist Jewell James, protecting Cherry Point is deeply spiritual. He works to spread the message that Cherry Point is sacred, it is historical and its health is necessary for the Lummi people in both culture and sustainability. James believes the GPT will not become reality and is optimistic about the outcome.

"It's a battle over public opinion," James says.

He is versed in the history of Native American oppression and the present-day cultural and ancestral significance of Cherry Point. He has written about it in his collaborative 19-page report, called "The Search for Integrity in the Conflict Over Cherry Point," and given speeches on the subject. He helps with the politics, traveling to Washington, D.C. to work on the political aspects of protecting treaty rights.

"We have a law firm that monitors congressional actions. Other tribes have lobbyists too and they all communicate. We have national intertribal organizations that share information," he says.



He stopped fishing in 1986 because there were too many fishermen and not enough fish, and has urged others to do the same, with admittedly limited success. He has two bachelor degrees and does not want to take the place of others who must fish to live.

He sees things in his dreams, which he says drive him to stay involved in protecting sites like Cherry Point. He is also driven to speak out on behalf of those who have suffered from injustices of the past and those who face challenges today, living on a reservation.

His most recent trip to the nation's capital was spent discussing local, national and international subjects.

"I was with a group in a national meeting to address the suffering our native children endured from 1868 to 1975," he says. "The boarding schools run by churches and the government tortured and killed many and those who survived were damaged for life, and then damaged the families and children and grandchildren they had."

No living Lummi person has grown up fluent in the language because of the way their culture was legally suppressed, he says. Their rights to use eagle feathers, peyote, to speak their language, practice their own religious customs and ceremonies were suppressed and banned before the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. He talks passionately about how the Lummi still have a living culture and how hard they've had to fight for their right to maintain it to this day.

The old artifact collections stored at Western, a sampling of 150 boxes filled with tools and evidence of human activity thousands of years old, tell a technical story of how Cherry Point was once a site where people created net weights, hammered rocks, fished and hunted. Their descendants today speak about this site's significance on different levels: spiritual, cultural, historical, economic, personal, sacred — they speak of something worth protecting.

As the boat rests, a feathered ornament in its doorway spins in the wind. There are Seahawks stickers on the walls, a cross above the door and a laminated sheet of The Seaman's Prayer of Psalms 23 propped up on the counter.

"I'm looking to create empathy, not sympathy," Julius says. It's important to know the difference.

He believes that if you have a vision of the future, there's no room for ambiguity when talking about it.

He believes in saying, "I will," instead of, "I want to."

The people who live on the Lummi Nation reservation tell each other about their past, stories about how they used to live and how they came to live at this place. Because if they don't, they risk losing a part of what binds them together. They work to remember what was worth protecting in the past is worth protecting for the future.

**"We gave up everything for a little bit of rights, now we have to ask permission to visit other islands—we have to *ask* permission."**

**-JERIMIAH JULIAS**



01 Masen Lopes looks to his family and smiles after delivering the game ball for the San Francisco 49ers.

# Masen's Monsters

The story of a young boy and his fight with the disease that took his father's life

Story and photos by Lindy Holmberg

Masen Lopes runs around with his siblings, jumping on the trampoline and showing off his 'Nae Nae' dance. The zigzagged scars on the right side of his skull, accentuated by his mohawk, are seemingly the only marks his battle has left him.

In September 2013, just eight months after his father, Lloyd Lopes, Jr., passed away from anaplastic astrocytoma, 5-year-old Masen was diagnosed with the same disease.

Brain cancer.

Masen, now 7, is one of four children in the Lopes family. Living in Gig Harbor, Washington, he commutes regularly with his mother, Kainani Lopes, to Seattle Children's Hospital for treatment. Masen fights his cancer with three different chemotherapies; seizure medication, antibiotics and medical marijuana.

## THE MONSTERS

"One day I got a call from his professor saying that Lloyd fainted in school and they were sending him to the nurse," Kainani says. "They thought it was just exhaustion."

One week later, the Lopes family changed forever.

At 24-years-old, with four kids under the age of 7, all Kainani wanted was for her children to see their father.

"I can't even explain to you how much my heart broke that day," Kainani says. "A week later they told us it was brain cancer and it was inoperable."

Anaplastic astrocytoma is a rare malignant brain tumor most commonly found in adults with no known causes, according to the American Brain Tumor Association. It usually develops slowly over time and puts pressure on different parts of the brain, causing various symptoms. Astrocytomas are classified in four stages based on how fast the cells reproduce.

Stage I or II are non-malignant and are referred to as low-grade. Stage III or IV astrocytomas are known as glioblastoma multiforme.

Masen's monsters are stage III, just as his father's.

The prognosis and median survival for glioblastoma multiforme in adults is about 15 months. Patients with glioblastoma have a 2 percent chance of surviving upward of three years, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information. However, children with grade III and IV glioblastoma tend to do better than adults.

The family spent time in San Francisco for Lloyd's treatments. Throughout this time, he stayed faithful to his favorite team, the San Francisco 49ers. It had always been his dream for his family to see 49ers game, a dream that would come true only after his passing. On Jan. 18, 2013 Lloyd passed away, 18 months after his diagnosis.

That year, the 49ers went to the Super Bowl.

"I remember watching the Super Bowl with my kids parked in front of the TV in their jerseys and the stadium lights went out. The hairs on the back of my neck and arms stood straight up. Masen and Ryleen turned around to look at me and told me 'Look mommy it's daddy, he's trying to help our team out, he turned the lights off!'" Kainani says.

## HOPE

Masen had his first seizure at 5-years-old, shortly after Lloyd's passing, and was then diagnosed with the same disease as his father's.

"My heart went from being broken to being ripped out and stomped on and broken into a million pieces," Kainani says.

Since being diagnosed, Masen has had two surgeries to remove golf-ball-sized tumors and has undergone multiple chemotherapies, proton therapy and radiology treatments.

"There's monsters making me sick," Masen says, describing his cancer.

The 49ers have had a huge impact on Masen's life and have given his family memories they will never forget. Masen represents them by wearing a 49ers jersey into every surgery.

Over the summer of 2015, his dream of going to the 49ers game started to come together. It all started with the Austen Everett Foundation, one that empowers kids fighting cancer by uniting them with teams.

Honored by the 49ers, Masen delivered the game ball before the Dec. 20, 2015 game against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Masen's dream had come true as he beamed his missing two-front-teeth smile, and with a football in one arm and his other pulling up his oversized pants, he sprinted to the center of the Levi's Stadium.

Back in Gig Harbor, Masen continues to brave his monsters.

"I purposely didn't ask for Masen's prognosis because I don't want to know," Kainani says, shrugging her shoulders as she explains. "It wouldn't make a difference in our lives, we know how fragile life is and we know to enjoy the little things."

The Lopes children live as if they had never heard about cancer before. The sadness and unknown that come with disease doesn't

affect their lives now, because of the troubles they have experienced in the past.

"The community has been amazing. They bought the new roof on our house we live in now and have helped out so much with my family," Kainani says. "I can't really work because I am so busy with the kids and everything. It's amazing what people do for us."

Masen hopes to buy a boat, do his 'Nac Nac' dance on TV, create a Nike shoe and do everything else in between. The cancer that took the father, husband and the rock of the Lopes family has taught them more than they know.

"I remember how strong my dad was and I like to look at his pictures in my room," Masen says. "I just think about how much I love him."

As Masen keeps on fighting, he has someone important watching over him.

Kainani Lopes makes dinner for the family on a rainy day. The chalkboards above the counter and on the garage door remind the kids to be thankful for what they have. 02

Kainani checks on Masen's ear to see if she can clear up some of the build-up from scar tissue and swelling to relieve the pain. 03





# Dear Western,

My little brother wants to leave you. It has been six months and he is tired of this campus. He's a good student, charismatic and sociable.

Little kids love him, look up to him. He's a leader. I think he'll make an excellent teacher one day. He'll have that cool teacher vibe; one of those who can crack a joke and make the room come alive in laughter. In high school, he cultivated significant relationships with his guidance counselors, advisors and teachers. They cheered him on at plays, helped him when he struggled and still welcome him back when he visits to tutor younger students.

He texted me late one night in February, asking to come over and talk. I worried, but not too much. He's always been the one more willing to open up.

He sinks into the beanbag chair in my room and wearily but firmly announces he's unhappy here and I hate that I recognize what he's saying. I don't share his unhappiness but I understand him more easily than I'd like when he explains.

"On paper, it's so perfect," he says. "It's close to home, it's not too expensive, I can see my girlfriend often, I'm in my major, you and I can share the car..." When his voice trails off with unspoken words, I know he's struggling with the knowledge that Western is supposed to work for him.

I came to Western before him, but I was not the first. My family has been here before. Uncles, aunts and our mother too. We came as many students do; with excitement, a pocketful of scholarships, hazy visions of our future and a readiness to be challenged.

"The whole time I've been here, I haven't made a single friend," he says. "It's not just that. There are so few people who look like me."

He hits straight to the point, calling the shots as he sees them.

"I just don't feel like I belong here," he says. **I feel tension like a balloon that's been blown up too tight.** For years I have tried to piece together my feelings about situations in the news revolving around racial issues across the United States. And now they have come home to me.

His story reflects that of other transfer students and those who don't live in the dorms when they come to Western. He's tried joining clubs and talking with his classmates, but with little success. It's a common sentiment, this difficulty of meeting people. The way the mind numbs going from class to home, home to class, class to home. The way people feel after they find out college is unpredictable, the surprise when expectations are nowhere near reality.

"It's hard when you're in a group and you're the only person who isn't white," he says. "I feel like people here don't give me a chance; People look at me and they just assume things."

I wonder if it's worse for boys than it is for girls. I wonder if it's just the people in his classes, if things get better as students get older. I wonder what the proportion of students who know better is to those who don't. But I don't wonder if he's exaggerating.

The people he wants to get to know assume he has his own different life with his own different friends. It's not malicious and maybe they don't mean to. People are accustomed to lumping others into groups, dividing them into categories.

He first broke me out of my naivety toward race by winning a high school poetry competition. I knew then that an unspoken line had been crossed. We don't talk about race in my family, other than the pride that comes with having many different skin tones and backgrounds within the same extended unit.

We watched him pour out his experiences, pain and questions, into poetry that made the audience cry. He told us things I didn't know. He told us things that scared me, like being followed around a store, about being treated badly because of how he looks. He told us his questions about life, his hopes for the future.

I felt my world tilt then, realizing that along with all the challenges life is expected to bring, my brother will have the unfair disadvantage of worrying about the assumptions and racism that swirl around us.

He's dealt with the pain of dating a girl from a racist family. He's been called disgusting names, names that don't make sense in context but still hurt: the "N-word," "banana monkey," "spawn of Satan," and his least favorite, "beaner." He told me about the time he was hired at a new job and his white co-worker "joked" with him, saying, "There are two kinds of beaners out there, the good kind and the bad kind. Which kind are you?"

But you see we are not so easy to categorize by what we look like. The personal background of a stranger exists only in your imagination.

I am proud of both sides of my family. I love that our genealogy has been studied, painstakingly traced through books, documents and medals back through WWI, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and to the Mayflower. And before that, Norway and Iceland and a dash of Swedish and Finnish. I equally value my other lineage, where I have a genetic connection to a Central American country, which I've never been to, but have always been proud of. And by

extension, I honor the adoptive lineage I've grown with, the love and traditions that are both Fall River and French-Canadian.

My brother has mentioned it before, the shock of coming from the high school we did, where half the school was not white and the other half was. Where he took advanced placement classes and did not stick out like a sore thumb, but instead enjoyed the quiet secureness that comes from being surrounded by others who look like you. Where he knew others would judge him because of what he said, what he produced, what his goals were; for the content of his character.

It can be called campus climate, student experiences, or race relations. I don't care. What I know is this: if my brother thinks Western has a problem with it, then Western has a problem with it. He has always been clear-sighted in his observations and has come to Western and observed the problems that many others before him have.

He says he is viewing his time here as a checkbox, that he just needs to get his degree and move on with his life. But I feel the emotional and mental well-being of a student is too important to ignore, to ask a bright student to just try and make it. I want him to be happy here, to fall in love with Bellingham the way I did and I want him to grow as a person. I am conscious that life is not everlasting—that it matters how you spend every minute of your time.

I found myself at Western. My brother is losing himself at Western. The ambition for his classes is slowly draining because of his unhappiness with his surroundings.

He will not just be a statistic, and I do not want others to encourage him to stay to be a number used to make the school seem diverse. I don't want him to always be asked his point of view on racial issues just because his peers and teachers see him as different. I want him to be able to speak out when he's ready, if he chooses to. I want his words to fall on ears that are both willing and prepared to listen—not ones full of resentment and fear.

He tells me the only time he's felt comfortable here is when he is playing basketball in the gym with others, because it's about the game then, not about what you look like. I think that's sad, that he has to resort to a basketball court to feel like others aren't dismissing him because they think he's too different.

I understand the knee-jerk reactions, the resistance and the inner-confusion that comes with talking about racial issues.

I know that the more people who ignore these issues because they are too complex and not relevant to their lives, well, it means the burden of change will rest solely on those who suffer when change doesn't occur.

I understand what Western's AS President means when she says:

"Why do we have to choose between our education and our safety?" Only now do I truly understand how Western's campus is risky for some students, the reasons why my brother wants to escape to someplace where he will not have to worry about his race.

We are young, how can we be expected to have all the right answers, solutions, strategies? I hope that those older, the administrators who have studied policy more than us, see what's wrong with this campus and plan ways to improve it — with the urgency and determination as if they were in our shoes — because my brother deserves it.

True listening means you attempt to understand that person's point-of-view. I know it is okay to disagree while having these conversations. People are at all different points of learning when it comes to race relations, but disagreeing shouldn't mean dismissing, disrespecting, to stop listening or thinking.

Racism is alive and well, in all its forms. It's in the way people do not want to hear about it, despite evidence to the contrary. And it's in the way politicians and leaders encourage others to hate different races. It's in the ways a person will joke about lynching. It's when others say non-white people are taking the places of white people. It's all in the ways others treat those who look different worse.

I believe that focusing on what we have in common is a way to help people get past the initial assumptions and reactions. Maybe our school lacks team spirit, unity. Maybe too many people are from backgrounds where interacting with different races is so rare they never overcome the barriers to looking past appearance. Maybe we are all just too afraid to talk about race for so many reasons. Maybe we believe it's too much work to tackle on our own, that the best option is blindness.

Eventually, with enough quality education and reflection, the uncertainty and heightened emotions settle down. I know it is not easy, painless or comfortable. In fact, it is exhausting, draining and oftentimes confusing. But it's ultimately worth it, for everyone.

I know Western can't solve the core of my brother's problem in time, that any changes will come too slowly. Quick fixes may help those far in the future, but that is not soon enough for me.

Hours after he leaves my apartment, he texts me.

"Well, I'll probably stay. The University of Washington isn't accepting applications until August and everything is too established here. I don't know. Don't tell mom or dad anything, por favor."

Sincerely,  
A Viking





01 An avid traveler and photographer, Brad Widman's original pieces adorn the lofted walls of his tiny home near Lummi Island, Washington. Though the space is small and has only four walls — it is filled to the brim with memories of his travels, friends and places he will one day venture to.

# Tiny Home, Big Heart

Hospitality in less than 300 square feet

Story by Erik Swanson - Photos by Beatrice Harper & Jake Tull

A wall made of cedar wood from a 1920s home is covered in photographs of family, friends and images of Pacific Northwest landscapes. Soft, white lights shine on an opposite wall made from recycled fence wood. Everything has its place. Everything is intentional. Brad Widman's home is warm. And it is very, very small.

Owning a home at the age of 24, for many people, may be nothing but a distant dream. Brad lives that dream, and accomplished it for little more than \$9,000.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the average home's square footage is 2,392. The movement for smaller living is largely undefined but the Small House Society declares a small home as one that is less than 500 square feet. Brad's home totals 261.

Wanting to move out of his parent's house, but not wanting to pay rent, he decided to build a small space that he could move and modify as he pleased. His tiny home looks and feels like a home, and it can roll down the freeway.

Brad committed to building his home when his boss found a moldy old camper that someone was giving away. It was just what he needed.

The year and a half it took to build his tiny home began with destruction. Hammers, saws, jackhammers and hacksaws tore away. Brad was left with a solid, metal trailer for the foundation of his small abode.

On any given winter evening a wind blows in from the south on Sandy Point, the spit of land north of Lummi Island where Brad's home is currently parked. Norah Jones plays on the stereo while he cooks a dinner of chicken and quinoa.

Various signs of beach combing and mountaineering are scattered throughout the space. Carabiners hang from a drop-down projector screen. Photos of a motorcycle he had to abandon in Iowa hang here, along with a worn window frames a picture of Locust Beach at low tide.

Five thin planks of wood tacked to the kitchen wall hold cinnamon sticks and tea spices in glass mason jars along with a collection of utensils and mugs. Empty jars of peanut butter are filled with flour, noodles and beans housed on the wall above the stove. The countertop is made from wood donated by Lynden Door.

Above the kitchen is his lofted bedroom and the most comfortable bed he's ever slept on, Brad says. Less is more and what

he has, he wants to be of a quality that lasts.

You could toss a pillow to the twin bed across the house in the other loft — a guest bedroom that doubles as a storage space.

Brad and his friends built every part of the home, even the compostable toilet.

He used Craigslist and other resources to find materials. He learned about a federal grant that replaces any refrigerator built before 1992 for free and took full advantage.

Electricians, carpenters and framers helped him get to work on his tiny home starting in August 2013. Brad spent a lot of time on the Internet simply figuring out the answers to his construction questions.

“In some ways it was the blind leading the blind,” Brad says in reference to his team of amateur volunteers.

The knowledge of how to actually build a tiny home came slowly, as necessary.

“Google can teach you how to build a house,” he says.

Brad loves his home. He says he sometimes comes home from school or work and can’t believe it’s his. His goal was to create a sanctuary for himself and his friends; a peaceful place for retreat and refocusing. He has accomplished just that.

Currently, Brad wants to build another tiny home. e’ll need another free trailer to hack apart. The challenge this time around – building a space that is even smaller.

●  
**“Google can teach you how to  
build a house.”**

**- BRAD WIDMAN**

Brad’s trailer overlooks Lummi Island and is directly on the bay in Ferndale. He spends a great deal of his time here and is planning to build another tiny home. His home is tied down to prevent it from blowing away in gale force winds.

02







- 01 Rick Hermann, 65, poses for a portrait on his recumbent bicycle. Hermann, who has Parkinson's, was having increasing difficulty riding his bike until he found recumbent bikes, which help alleviate the stress on the body by placing the seat lower and further back in a reclined position on the bike.
- 02 Hermann demonstrates using his recumbent bike on Bellingham's Railroad Trail near Whatcom Falls Park. A recumbent bike has helped Hermann get outside to stay active and has also been a mode of transportation for him.

# Pedaling With Purpose

Alternative therapy brings local Parkinson's community together

Story by Kieran Boyle - Photos by Jake Tull

Rick Hermann goes to the YMCA in downtown Bellingham for his 12 p.m. spin class three days a week. As soon as the last of the participants arrive, the door shuts and the outside noise disappears.

Conversation fills the room with people talking about what they did over the long weekend as the pedaling on stationary bikes begins.

This is no ordinary spin class though; it's a class specially designed to combat Parkinson's disease.

Hermann is one of the seven million people who have their daily lives affected by the chronic movement disorder, but Parkinson's has been far from defining for him.

Hermann was 41 when he began to show symptoms of the disease. He found his handwriting was becoming less accurate in the early '90s, which he later realized was a symptom of Parkinson's. It wasn't until 1998 that he was tested and was diagnosed. This isn't surprising, considering barely 4 percent of diagnoses are made before age 50, according to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation.

Looking at Hermann you would never guess that the 6-foot-tall athletic man is 65-years-old. He hasn't let Parkinson's slow him down.

"I throw everything I've got at Parkinson's," Hermann says. "I do biking, walking, and Tai chi — If you don't keep moving, you kind of just fade away."

Hermann has cycled his entire life, but found it to be increasingly difficult when he started to experience the symptoms of Parkinson's. It was then that he discovered recumbent bikes.

A recumbent bike seat is placed further back on the bike in a reclined position that puts less stress on the body. Hermann bought a recumbent bike and began using it as a mode of transportation and staying active.

Hermann explains that when you have Parkinson's, the dopamine-producing cells in your brain begin to die. Lack of dopamine causes symptoms like tremors, muscle rigidity and slowed movement. While medicine helps, forms of physical therapy are just as important to fight these progressive symptoms.

To help ease them, Hermann has partaken in multiple therapies throughout the years such as dancing, acting and even deep brain stimulation.

The one therapy that really caught Hermann's attention was Pedaling



for Parkinson's at the YMCA.

Nan Little, a retired University of Washington anthropologist, is responsible for expanding Pedaling for Parkinson's to YMCA facilities throughout the country to cities such as Bellingham. She found out that sustained pedaling had helped mitigate her symptoms after being diagnosed with Parkinson's, which inspired her to spread the program.

Tracy Diehl, a Bellingham YMCA employee, is a leader for the local Pedaling for Parkinson's class.

"Rick Hermann comes religiously, I have never seen him miss a class unless he is sick," Diehl says. "He is an inspiration and plethora of information."

Diehl turns on a fan and plugs in some upbeat music to listen to before leading the class. Hermann and the others mount the bikes facing each other and begin cycling. Hermann pedals along without breaking a sweat. Not even the music or the cycling could drown out the friendly chatter and laughs being shared throughout the hour-long class.

At the end of the hour, sighs of relief are released in unison as everyone dismounts their bikes. They all slowly trickle out of the room saying their goodbyes.

While Hermann religiously attends his spin class, his desire to cycle with other Parkinson's patients doesn't end as soon as he steps outside. Instead, he wants to find ways to bring the class outside with him.

In 2014 Hermann set out to do this and contacted the local nonprofit Smart Trips to help him organize a bike ride for people with Parkinson's. With help from nonprofit Outdoors for All Foundation, ten recumbent bikes were donated for the seven-mile ride, which happened on May 17, 2015.

It was a beautiful sunny day at Whatcom Middle School where 16 riders gathered for the ride to Fairhaven, with a pit stop at Boulevard Park for lunch along the way. Ten of the riders had Parkinson's and some were nervous, not having ridden a bike in a long time. Hermann saw it as a huge success, and thinks that every rider felt extremely satisfied at the end.

"It changed people's lives. I could see their eyes light up when they started biking," Hermann says.

This was not just a one-time event though. Hermann is currently in the process of organizing a smaller, yet more ambitious event for the second annual Parkinson's bike ride. This time he wants to get people down to the Centennial Trail in North Skagit county.

Unfortunately due to the distance, previous sponsors are unable

to assist with the bike ride, but this is not stopping Hermann. He believes that while it will be a smaller group, the trail will offer a smoother and unforgettable ride.

Hermann has dedicated himself to his passions, one of them being biking. He believes that these bike rides and support groups are incredibly important for not only people with Parkinson's, but family members as well.

Today, his passion for biking continues, and he has helped himself and others fight Parkinson's with an alternative therapy that encourages people to not let their disease define what they can and cannot do.

**"I throw everything I've got at Parkinson's. I do biking, walking, and Tai chi — If you don't keep moving, you kind of just fade away"**

**-RICK HERMANN**

Rick Hermann pedals at the YMCA in a spin class that helps him combat Parkinson's disease symptoms. During the hour-long bike ride, the participants talk and exchange stories about their lives.

03

The Pedaling for Parkinson's class consists of a 10-minute warm up, followed by a 40-minute session keeping the bike at 80-90 rpm and ending with a 10-minute cool down. Hermann attends all three days the class meets each week.

04





# Virtuality

Virtual reality in an increasingly technological time

Story by Madeline Mohn

“Zero, zero, one, zero, one, one,” he says.

Nick Nestor’s hands are sweaty and he feels like laughing.

“Got it — ready for wires?”

He flips the bomb over. Colored wires run parallel to the clock ticking down to zero. He reads the sequence to his partner.

“Um, your knob is left,” his partner says.

“Okay. Wires?”

“All of them.”

“All of them?” He clips through four wires and the room flashes green. The bomb dings.

He’s defused it. Again.

“My turn,” his partner says.

Nestor, a senior in Western’s computer science program, removes the headset and the scene with the bomb vanishes as the Oculus Rift

changes hands. He’s ready to tell his partner how to diffuse the next virtual bomb.

The game is called *Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes* and everyone at 2014’s Penny Arcade Expo (PAX) gaming festival wanted to play it. One player wears the gear and is virtually transported to a room where they are tasked with diffusing a bomb, with instructions given by a partner who can’t see the lethal weapon.

“It’s a communication game,” Nestor says. “It’s fun, but the real fun was using the Rift.”

## MEET THE PLAYERS

The idea of virtual or augmented reality is not new. Immersive media and computer-facilitated simulations are common, popular, and becoming more intuitive to use.

But whether you’re wandering the map in a first-person shooter game or watching GoPro footage of a trip down Mexico’s longest zip line, one thing remains the same — you’re not there. The difference between these forms of immersive media and the new reality-enhancing hardware is a true sense of presence.



The Oculus Rift and the HTC Vive are on the high end of the technology market and will be early entrants in the virtual reality market. Both HTC and Oculus have announced that its product will be a \$600 investment.

On the lower end of the market are mobile-powered virtual reality sets. Companies such as Google, Samsung, Freefly and Zeiss have also introduced products branded as virtual reality that are simply headsets paired with smartphones as the display and processor. Users strap their phones into the headset to play games, watch videos or interact with media in an immersive setting.

“They’re novel and inexpensive but they’re just not the same quality, nor are they integrated into PC stuff, so the graphics are limited,” Nestor says.

Because the market is new and unsaturated, there are many smaller firms developing products on a budget. One such is Bellingham software company 8las. Cat Felts, a Western senior and software engineer for 8las, writes programs for augmented reality technology. This altered perspective is usually accomplished with visual overlays.

Felts considers the technology presence-enhancing and foresees augmented reality hardware, like Google Glass and Microsoft’s HoloLens, replacing mobile phones in the next few years. Most high-profile augmented reality technology isn’t ready for the average consumer yet, but Microsoft’s HoloLens beta models are being launched in the next few months, which will sell for \$3,000.

“They’re building a product that’ll change lives,” Felts says. “But funding is a problem. Because product development is slow and high costs can be an obstacle to entry into the market for smaller firms,” she says.

## THE HARDWARE

Today’s virtual reality hardware systems such as the Rift and Vive are tangible consoles, similar to an Xbox or Play Station. Both systems unite three parts to create a seamless virtual world.

Each includes a headset, worn over the head and eyes to provide the corporeal experience. A sensor is set up in the space of play to track the user’s movement and facilitate the immersion. A remote control allows the user to direct their interactions with the virtual world.

The owner of a virtual reality system would set up the sensors in their arena of choice — the Rift’s sensors look like freestanding microphones and the Vive’s are Rubix Cube-sized boxes. The headset uses sensors to signal if one is getting close to a wall or object, permitting free movement around the room.

“It sounds like a lot,” Nestor says. “But it’s portable. For the Rift at least, the headset is pretty small so it’s easy to move around.”

Augmented reality hardware is much simpler. The axis of the gear is simply the goggles, sometimes fortified with additional lenses like Microsoft’s HoloLens, or almost indistinguishable from eyeglasses like the discontinued Google Glass.

Whatever the style, the system is powered by a portable processor that allows holographic overlays to be manipulated in the wearer’s vision. Prototypes include a remote control to enable interaction with augmentation.

Felts says that the IMMY hardware currently uses an Xbox controller, but the team hopes to develop a more natural user interface, like hand gestures, so the software can be operated just like the screen on a smartphone.

## GOALS AND GLITCHES

Despite the many attractions of owning a virtual reality system, early adopters won’t have the easiest time getting started.

Owning the Rift is one thing, but having the PC to power it is another. Nestor, a senior studying computer science at Western, has invested about \$1,000 in his personal computer for gaming, coding and streaming. If he were to purchase the Rift, he would have to spend an additional \$500 getting his computer up to recommended specifications.

This means a total investment of around \$2,000, assuming the average consumer needs to build their hardware from scratch, as well as order their virtual reality headset, sensor and remote.

Additionally, developing integration for technology of this type is slow and existing programs will have to be rewritten to be compatible with these technologies, Nestor says. He guesses that it won’t be very popular at first, considering the financial investment.

Felts, however, has different hopes for augmented reality systems like the one she’s helping develop.

“I think the product will have a fast integration, be readily available, and only cost a couple hundred dollars,” she says.

Those differences aside, the challenges of producing the technology to power virtual reality and augmented reality are fairly similar. One of the biggest issues in developing truly immersive and user-centric virtual reality is creating a virtual world that responds like a real one.

“Real life doesn’t lag,” Nestor says. “So systems like the Rift run at 90 frames per second.”

Felts says her team has run into lag-related problems while writing programs for augmented reality.

The lag between stimulus and response can produce “simulation

sickness,” which manifests itself through symptoms such as nausea and dizziness and is caused by optical misperception.

“When your eyes see something that makes your brain trip, that’s a problem,” Felts says.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

The practical purposes of virtual reality are endless, Nestor says, recalling his own experience with bomb-diffusion.

“That’s just a game,” he says. “But the imaging on this thing could change the way we train people in the field of medicine, the military and pretty much everything.”

Felts agrees that these technology’s applications to professional settings will change the way people are trained, how they build and how they think.

“I really think that this is going to be the new smartphone,” she says. “Everyone will have one, and they’ll use it all the time.”

As the technology needed to power these products gets better and cheaper, more people will adopt virtual reality and augmented reality, Nestor says. Investors expect it to revolutionize productivity, entertainment, communications and all areas of media.

“It’s hard to think of an application that won’t work with this technology,” Nestor says. “You put on the headset, you look around and you’re just immersed. It’s such a natural interface. It makes sense.”

The way it’s developing, in a few short years, virtual reality could be anything to anyone. It’s a gamer’s escape, an innovator’s paradise. It’s a new kind of textbook, a new kind of travel. Not just blue prints or bomb diffusion. It’s not today, but it’s soon: the clock ticks down to zero, and then — boom.

●

**“I really think that this  
is going to be the new  
smartphone. Everyone will  
have one, and they’ll use it all  
the time.”  
- CAT FELTS**



- 01 My grandmother was well known for her Mandelbrot recipe, a Jewish biscotti, and notoriously eating with her mouth open. A slightly disgusting and endearing idiosyncrasy of hers.
- 02 Paintings of my aunt Carol and my father hang above the sofa. The painting of Susan has been hidden in a closet out of my grandmother's respect for Susan's wishes that it not be displayed.

# Empty House

A first-person look at the process of letting go

Story and photos by Nikki Shapiro

My grandmother's hands were the most delicate hands I've ever seen.

They were covered in freckles and spotted with age. She had one of the strongest grips I've ever experienced.

When she talked to me, she always held my hands in her own. I knew that once she had a grasp, I was there to stay for a while. There would be days I would hold her hand for hours. Over the summer or after school I would take the short 15-minute walk, with my dog, Charlie, from my house to my grandmother's to hold her hand and catch up on life.

But I knew, the last time I went to her house, that she wouldn't be there to hold my hand. Frieda Shapiro passed away on Oct. 9, 2015, 11 days shy of her 96th birthday.

It was a few days before Christmas and my father, sister and I walked to her house to find what we wanted to keep amongst her possessions.

A part of me thought that it wasn't true. I wanted to believe she would be there, waiting to hold my hand.

My chest tightened as I walked up the steps to her house. My heart felt like it was in one of my grandma's vice grips.

We started with the bedroom.

"Is no one really going to take this?" I asked my father, pointing to a worn, stuffed leopard wearing a faded pink ribbon as a collar in the corner of the bedroom. I remember seeing the leopard throughout my childhood; a watchful guardian protecting my grandmother as she slept.

I stared at the leopard's face, trying to find some ounce of justification for bringing it with me. 'What am I going to do with an old stuffed animal anyways,' I thought. At that moment I felt angry, the leopard had failed its job of protecting my grandmother. I left it there.

I looked over to the closet in the hallway. There was her wheelchair with her fuzzy leopard moccasins next to it. It was a big decision for her to get a wheelchair and replace Johnnie Walker, the walker she named after one of her favorite drinks. Seeing her wheelchair made me wish I could see her walk down that hallway one more time.

I walked out of the bedroom and made my way into the kitchen. I will always remember how she ate. She was meticulous about it and often picked at her food. My father tells me that I'm a lot like her that way. We both eat like birds. I sometimes wonder if I'll leave a similar



idiosyncratic legacy for the people in my life. Will people remember how I ate when I die?

I feel that leaving a legacy, an emotional inheritance, is more important than leaving a monetary inheritance. Maintaining family traditions, life stories, values and wishes help to keep loved ones alive even after they pass on.

I walked into the family room with my father and sister. Photos of smiling friends, kids, grandkids and great-grandkids smiled back at us from all corners of the room. Two large oil paintings hung above the sofa as the centerpiece of the room.

She always put family above all else.

When asked what made her most proud in life she would always rotate her answers between “My kids, my grandkids, my great-grandkids.”

She had three children, two girls and one boy. When they were young my grandma commissioned an artist to paint their portraits. She loved all the paintings. Susan, the oldest daughter, embarrassed by how she looked, hated the painting of herself.

I once found the painting of Susan tucked away in a closet hidden under some old coats. I asked my grandma why she didn't hang it up after Susan moved out.

“Because I love her,” she said. She always put others before herself.

My father went to the couch and sat beneath his painting. My father is an incredibly talkative person, but once we got to the family room, he was quiet. I looked around the room at all of the pictures of smiling kids, grandkids and great-grandkids then looked back to my father and saw the deepest sadness.

I asked if I could take his picture with his painting. Knowing the moment would be photographed he plastered on a smile for the camera. He reminded me of the final thing my grandma had left me.

In her will she left me a portion of money and said to do something fun. When I initially learned this, I felt a wave of emotion.

I knew this was my grandma telling to live life to the fullest. It's a cliché that only the living tells one another, something I never truly understood until now.

My father, sister and I gathered our things and made our way to the door. I looked down at my hand on the knob and thought about all of the things she left me. I knew I was closing the door on all the physical belongings my grandma had left behind, but I felt that her spirit would never leave me. Holding the knob, I looked down at my back of my hand at the freckles covering my pinky and pointer fingers, I thought of my grandma's hands. Then I let go.

●

**“I sometimes wonder if I'll  
leave a similar idiosyncratic  
legacy for the people in my life.  
Will people remember how I  
ate when I die?”**

The stuffed leopard sat in the corner of my grandma's (Frieda Shapiro) bedroom since my father (Rob Shapiro) won it in a carnival.

03

She had to get a wheelchair after years of arthritis had taken its toll on her body, though the wheelchair helped her physically, it hurt her emotionally because she took pride in her ability to walk.

04



# Online Exclusives

Klipsunmagazine.com



## Twin Brook

Twin Brook Creamery, a family-owned dairy farm out of Lynden, Washington, produces products from the farm to the table. By Kesia Lee.



## Ski Patrol

A look at the Mission Ridge Ski and Board Resort Patrol in Wenatchee, Washington. By Lindy Holmberg



## Me and My Beard

The search for meaning tangled within the growth and maintenance of beards. Story by Mark Hartley / Photos by Nick Danielson.



## Handmade

A collection of handmade furniture from the garage of Bellingham's Greg Aanes. By Amelia Lathrop.



## Hand Bound

Kasey Potzler uses her books as an avenue of creative expression. These hand-stitched books resemble the quilts that Kasey's mother would make. By Ashley Hiruko and Alyssa Pitcher.



## Battle Ballet

The faces of Bellingham's roller derby league, Bellingham Roller Betties. By Kyra Bettridge.

# Klipsun

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Maria Matson / Ashley Hiruko / Kenneth Clarkson

Amanda Milner / Madeline Mohn / Marilyn Napier

Heidi DeHart / Stephanie Bishop / Paolo Bicchieri

Amelia Lathrop / Nicole Daniels / Lindy Holmberg

Erik Swanson / Anne Elliott / Karina Soennichsen

Kerry Norris / Morgan Ramsey / Michaela Trulson

Will McCoy / Kesia Lee / Mark Hartley / Hayley Elkin

## ADVISER

Joan Connell





KLIPSUN IS A CHINUK WAWA WORD MEANING SUNSET

