Dearest readers,

This is the section that my predecessors have carved out to write something profound about Klipsun’s theme and the stories you will find within. Yet, as I write this, I realize there isn’t anything inherently profound to say about pride.

Pride is something most people understand from a young age. Life is filled with proud moments. Pride in education and sports, pride in family and pets, even pride in our ability to meet milestones like talking and walking.

Do you have it? Now think of what it took for you to get there. Imagine what life would be like if it brought you shame instead.

As you finish this letter you will move on to our magazine and discover the stories of pride found within our communities. Our writers have worked hard to tell these stories and I hope they bring you even the slightest amount of joy.

Once you finish this magazine—you are gonna finish it, right???—I recommend you go out and do things with as much pride as you possibly can. Or else, what’s the fucking point?

With Pride,

Colton Rasanen
Editor-in-Chief
CONFLICT BEGGETS REVOLUTION, and historically, movements require digression. Fifty-one years ago police raided the Stonewall Inn, a New York City gay bar in the Greenwich Village neighborhood. The Stonewall uprising ignited in the early morning of June 28, 1969. The LGBTQ+ community had grown sour over the narrative society had given them. Time and time again they dealt with police raids and were routinely subjected to harassment and persecution. When confrontations with police became violent, the individuals from the LGBTQ+ community put up their fists and began the fight for liberation.

Steven Sawyer, one of the co-founders of Pacific Northwest Black Pride, emphasized the connection between the past violence against LGBTQ+ people experienced to the current harassment and persecution. When confrontations with police became violent, the individuals from the LGBTQ+ community put up their fists and began the fight for liberation.

While Stonewall didn’t necessarily start or end the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement, it was the stimulant for sustained political activism. Alike to the current Black Lives Matter movement, the news of this uprising had spread like wildfire around the world after George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin. People were in rage, the Black LGBTQ+ community.

Stonewall produced several crucial organizations that propelled the Gay Liberation Movement forward, including the Gay Liberation Front. This Front was the first and one of the most radical organizations that was a product of the riots. The Black Lives Matter movement has put a greater spotlight not only on these leaders but also a connection between racial and LGBTQ+ justice.

“I think queer liberation, since its inception, has been intersectional and intrinsically linked to racial justice,” Vargas said. “I see these two linked in the recognition that Black trans people are especially vulnerable to physical and systemic violence and discrimination and deserving of our care and support, and that Black Trans Lives Matter.”

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“Think about how Pride started,” Sawyer said. “A lot of people give credit to Marsha P. Johnson for throwing the first brick of rebellion.”

Marsha P. Johnson, a New York drag queen, was widely known as the poster child of the Stonewall riot. Marsha’s legacy is not only monumental because she pushed the envelope within the LGBTQ+ community, she also became a beacon of light for transgender people. Marsha also envisaged the importance of inclusivity within the LGBTQ+ community, especially the Black LGBTQ+ community.

Chris Vargas, executive director of the Museum of Transgender History & Art and speaker at Western’s “50 Years Since Stonewall” event, said, “When we say, ‘queer,’ sometimes it’s automatically assumed to be signaling white queer, in a way we actually have racism within our own community.”

Pacifica Northwest Black Pride saw the lack of inclusivity in Pride and wanted to reinstitute a space where Black, brown and other people of color in the LGBTQ+ community could be represented.

“We really did want to create this space where people can come and be unapologetically queer, unapologetically Black and positively trans,” Sawyer beamed.

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“We really did want to create this space where people can come and be unapologetically queer, unapologetically Black and positively trans,” Sawyer beamed.
From Sawyer’s own experiences he learned that a place was needed where people from diverse backgrounds could be represented. Sawyer grew up in the Deep South with deep connections to the community, he recalls, “As I kind of came into my own sexuality, I started realizing that there were not a lot of places where Black and brown folk could come together and really feel a part of the [LGBTQ+] community.”

When Sawyer moved to Seattle he started to look for this community. Taking over where the last Black Pride organization ended, Sawyer and Autry Bell created Pacific Northwest Black Pride. The two co-founders looked to team up with other organizations in Seattle that also covered issues of racial equity within the LGBTQ+ community.

To Pacific Northwest Black Pride, providing resources and knowledge about issues that circulate within and outside of the LGBTQ+ community is just as, or even more, important than the celebration of Pride. “There is a schedule of classes where we talk about everything from HIV to Black trans issues,” Bell added.

Sawyer smirked, “But we do the turn-up as well.”

The Black Lives Matter movement and Pride are enhancing both fights by bringing back history such as the Stonewall riots. This history is important to give incentive for the queer liberation and modern LGBTQ+ civil rights movement to help embrace the connection between the importance of representing LGBTQ+ people of color.

“It was an uprising in response to police violence and harassment of the most vulnerable within our community; namely queer people, low-income, houseless and queer people of color,” Vargas said.

The interruption from COVID-19 has forced Pride events to turn to a virtual platform, but this opens an opportunity for diverse voices to be elevated and push Pride back to recognizing marginalized groups within the LGBTQ+ community. Bell quietly piped in over Sawyer’s shoulder, “It really does give us this unique opportunity to step back from commercialism and get back to what is important.”

People from anywhere in the world can jump online and to any Pride event of their choosing. People who live in a place that might not accept the LGBTQ+ community can now join in and listen to leaders around the world they can relate to and connect with in the comfort of their own home. Longoria said it is important to have LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ people of color educators so students can look at a leader who’s open and accepting of themselves, which then normalizes students to do the same. These virtual Pride do just that.

The Black Lives Matter movement has pushed Pride to return to its roots this year. Both movements have elevated each other and nudged people and businesses to reflect on the building blocks that got both movements to where they are today.

“It’s not just a moment, but it’s a movement. A lot of people are saying that, but that is the reality,” Sawyer said. “I think us LGBTQ folk, we can’t let this time pass without connecting to that movement. Right? It’s a continuation.”

Sometimes it’s hard-fought, slowly-built, and takes time to flourish into something outwardly beautiful. That’s my experience, anyway. For me, pride means years of, “doing the work,” to be at ease with myself and my body.

Growing up, I was far removed from any authentic feeling of pride. Sexuality aside, inhabiting my body wasn’t pleasant. I didn’t know what to make of me; my eyes, my face, my torso, my body. And bless you, mom, for this nose.

I’ve had to go back and make reparations with my inner child for the effect this disconnection had on my well-being.

Anyway, my relationship with myself was not warm and fuzzy. And, as exceedingly obvious as it was to literally all my peers, I didn’t know I was gay until 7th or 8th grade. Apparently my voice and mannerisms (see: limp wrists) were a clear indicator of homosexuality. My time in the closet didn’t start until after I was relentlessly asked, “Are you gay?”

This question was always accompanied by chilling fear. That fear was not without merit. People were seeing something in me that I hadn’t even identified myself, and that something put me at risk of further bullying, discrimination and physical harm. I’ve personally experienced harassment for being, “gay,” for being chatty and for shrieking when I got excited.

By the time I’d made it through high school, came out, and gone to college, I had no relationship experience, zero sexual encounters and next to zero experience being romantically intimate with another human, I had catching-up to do.

Enter: anxiety and depression. I’d dealt with anxiety before, but spending nine months at a school in Oregon was unlike anything I’d ever been through.

I constantly experienced distress and alienation from hookup culture. I thought I could never participate in the way I saw other people doing. I thought I was just too anxious and uncomfortable. When you’re working on being comfortable with yourself, apps that demand split-second decisions on people’s attractiveness are decidedly unhelpful.

During this period, I was also dealing with major depression and anxiety, as so many LGBT folks do. Lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are twice as likely as heterosexual individuals to deal with a mental health condition. For trans folks the number is nearly four times higher than cis individuals.

This is no coincidence. The insidious nature of heteronormativity, lack of proper sexual health education and general homophobia make for a distressing experience in school.

In my health class, all they told us about gay sex was that you could get AIDS. The teacher, literally the football coach, never mentioned queer pleasure or love. I never saw LGBT couples in the hallways of my high school. I never saw or identified with characters that were like me on TV.

It’s no wonder so many LGBT people are depressed and anxious.

I’ve since learned to let go of any self-blame for the mental health issues I struggle with. It’s my responsibility to address them, but they’re never my fault.

Deep and trusting friendships, lots of meditation and somatic therapy have helped shape my healing journey. These tools have changed my life, and are how I continue to “do the work,” every day.

Younger me, even just five years ago, would be shocked beyond belief if I could tell him how much better my mind and body feels. I think you can see it on my face, in the way I walk, laugh and smile. The hyperactive, giggly boy that I always have been is the face I put on TV.

I’m determined to live via this self as often as I can, because that’s where I feel the most pride.
El Orgullo

The pride within Chicana culture

BY MAZEY SERVIN-OBERT

Traditions and personal experience connect us all to the Chicana Cultural pride.

GROWING UP, MY FATHER always told me stories of coming to this country to provide a better life for his family. Juan Luis Servin Perez was 14 years old when he left Michoacán, Mexico with his brothers to come to the United States.

After being deported twice when he was 20 and sent back to Mexico in 2004 for 18 months, he would finally accomplish his dream of creating a better life with his wife, Shannon Servin-Obert and daughter. He became a U.S. citizen in 2018. His wife, Karla Gallegos, told me stories of coming to this country.

Cerna started to enjoy her culture through attending parties like quinceneras, a coming-of-age celebration for a girl’s 15th birthday, where she would dance and enjoy time with her friends who shared her background. For Cerna, being at the register I would give them a sense of community. After karina Gallegos worked at Target where she would come to her when they had a Spanish-speaking customer.

GALLEGOS finds pride in being able to help people from her same background just by speaking the same language. The connections created without knowing each other’s stories but sharing a language express a connection between them, like the women.

Cerna, a second-year Western Washington University student, was in middle school when she found pride for her Chicana culture.

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Dear Diary: My Adventure in Geocaching

An interurban treasure hunt brings outdoor entertainment amid pandemic

BY MALLORY BIGGAR

While regular summertime activities are limited, it’s the perfect time to pick up a new hobby. Geocaching is an outdoor activity and perfectly equipped for social distancing.

DAY 1
Friday, July 3: The temperature outside is still not breaking the mid-60s, and a little bit of wind makes anything more than a sprinkle unbearable. Or at least more uncomfortable than the mist any average Washingtonian is used to. I’m freezing and generally do not deal well with mild discomfort. But if I’m waiting for the rain to stop, it may be a while.

Today, I’m going Geocaching.

Geocaching is a real-world scavenger hunt on a global scale, as my friend Alex, who first introduced me to Geocaching put it. About a year ago when he was visiting Bellingham, he took me on my first hunt, and I’ve been itching to go out ever since.

What started in 2000 as one person posting coordinates to a large black bucket filled with prizes has developed into a worldwide phenomenon with only one request to the finders, “take some stuff, leave some stuff.” From what I gathered from the website, the name “Geocaching” stems from the prefix “geo,” for earth, and “cache,” a French term meaning a temporary hiding place.

Although Geocaching technically started in Portland, the Geocaching headquarters are less than 90 miles away in Seattle, as well as premium caches which require a subscription. The official Geocaching app. The app automatically links your location into a worldwide phenomenon with only one request to the finders, “take some stuff, leave some stuff.” From what I gathered from the website, the name “Geocaching” stems from the prefix “geo,” for earth, and “cache,” a French term meaning a temporary hiding place.

Although Geocaching technically started in Portland, the Geocaching headquarters are less than 90 miles away in Seattle, as a Pacific Northwest native I think is pretty cool. This is definitely something I’ll have to check out post-pandemic. The idea is that if I have the coordinates, I’ll find the prize. Or in this case, many prizes; Bellingham has dozens of caches hidden all over the city.

How to play: To make things easier, I downloaded the official Geocaching app. The app automatically links your location and shows which caches are closest to you. You can search for caches by name, but to my disappointment, someone had put a piece of gum and a purple hair tie and a sticker that read “My Lucky Four Leaf Clover.”

Someone out there had left a plastic yellow jumping frog, a seemingly innocuous post over and over again, I find that the idea of finding the names of those who came before us has been lost to water damage. For geocachers, this is part of the prize.

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DAY 2
Monday, July 21: It’s 10:10 p.m. and twilight turning into darkness, a burnt orange skyline fading to a deep greyish blue. The air is cool and crisp but comfortable — it’s the perfect summer night. Tonight, I’m hunting specifically for caches that are recommended at night. On the Geocaching app, I go through just about every cache and look through their “attributes,” which are characteristics of the cache itself or the location. Eventually, I find two that are attributed to be “recommended at night.”

Abandoned Drive-in: I’ve been looking forward to this cache for some time now. Thoughtfully placed in the Lincoln Creek Park and Ride, this cache is aptly named for what was once a drive-in movie theater. After starting the app’s navigation, I quickly realize why these caches are recommended at night. Not only does it add a secret agent feeling of stealth, but I imagine that I look like I’m up to something when I have my iPhone flashlight shining through the trees and in the dirt throughout the surrounding area. After looking at the same seemingly innocuous post over and over again, I find that the cache was at the bottom of the entire time. It’s small, only containing a logbook full of names that came before mine, but it is the most satisfying find so far.

Barkley Trails: This one is supposed to be an easy find, but the problem is that it’s right in the middle of an apartment complex parking lot. I figure since it’s closing in on 11 p.m. that no one would be around, but of course, there are cars coming in and out and a couple of guys hanging out outside of their apartment, looking right at us. Jonathan and I have resigned ourselves to looking like creeps, so we turn our flashlights down as low as they’ll go and get to searching. Based on the navigation system, I know we’re in the right area, but we still can’t seem to find it. I open the app and check the description.

“This is a micro cache (key magnet box) and holds a logbook and pencil.” That wasn’t helpful, so I gave up and looked at the hint. “Brrrrrrrrr.”

And then it clicks. It’s obviously somewhere close to the electrical box. It was easy enough to find the small key box, but to my disappointment, someone had put a piece of gum in with the logbook, but that wasn’t all that was in the box. Someone out there had left a plastic yellow jumping frog, a purple hair tie and a sticker that read “My Lucky Four Leaf Clover.”

Over my two days of Geocaching, I not only had an excuse to get out of the house, but I enjoyed myself in a way that I haven’t since the pandemic started. The more I look back I realize that these caches were right in front of me the entire time, and the more I think about it, I realize that this is a metaphor for Geocaching. Adventure is right in front of me, just waiting to be found.
A look behind Cascadia's most inclusive publication

BY ELLANKEN

BEFORE 2006, YOU could get fired for loving who you wanted to in the state of Washington. If your employer saw you walking into Bellingham’s known gay bar, you would be at risk of losing your job.

So, everyone went in the back. If you came in through the front door, you weren’t from Bellingham.

Or, you were Betty Desire.

Betty has been performing as a drag queen in Bellingham for nearly 25 years.

“When I ended up coming out, I didn’t want to go in the back door any longer,” she laughed, thinking about how many years have passed.

Rumors Cabaret was a place for camaraderie and hub of support. The walls were covered from the bar to the bathrooms, detailing information about events, activities and resources. Rumors was the place - the only place - to spread the news. Over the years, Rumors has become a popular destination for more than just the queer community. It’s the only gay chib in Bellingham, but it’s not such an exclusive environment anymore - which isn’t a bad thing, Betty assures - but it’s not the same communication space that it used to be.

Thus, The Betty Pages were born.

Originally, the publication served the same purpose as Rumors’ poster-covered walls, except you didn’t need to sneak in the back door to read it.

The first two editions of The Betty Pages were printed on standard letter paper at Office Depot. Betty printed 300 copies of those first issues, and thought that she would end up keeping most herself. Betty never imagined she would distribute them all.

Clearly she underestimated Bellingham’s appetite.

The Betty Pages can be found at 115 locations, in three different counties, and she’s printed 3,000 copies each month for the past 17 years. Or at least, she thinks it’s been 17 years.

“More than 15, it might be 18 years,” she paused, then laughed and said, “You know, you get to be 65, and everything just sort of gets muddled!”

Self-proclaimed, as “Cascadia’s most inclusive alternative-life-style tabloid,” The Betty Pages covers Indian cinema reviews, political musings, recipes for cannabis infused dishes, vacation highlights, burdoir photography, horoscopes, kink exploration, current events, queer resources and more. It’s a treasure trove of information.

“I never expected The Betty Pages to... is ‘grow’ the right word?” Betty said. “I didn’t expect it to be what it is today. It’s a lot more than I thought it would be.”

The Betty Pages is a lifestyle. The whimsical, sexy, hilarious and caring pages connect readers to resources, information and community.

“Every purpose can be loosely attributed to Betty’s experience with Christianity. Before coming out as gay, and before Betty Desire graced the stage, she did everything she could to avoid that reality. In the 70s, she trained as a pastor in the Pentecostal faith, because they said she couldn’t ‘belong’ her.”

“It really didn’t take,” she laughed mischievously, after a pause.

That chapter of her life is behind her, but she says it continues to influence her approach to The Betty Pages.

Every reader that finds help within the pages motivates her to help more. LGBTQ+ organizations are featured in the bar in each issue. A suicide hotline is listed, free meals and food banks are advertised. COVID-19 health and safety guidelines are the most recent addition to the pages.

“We try to have articles that might be able to be helpful to the reader. You know, something that might say, ‘oh, that might work in my life,’” she said.

Every edition is preceded with Betty’s Corner, penned by Miss Betty Desire herself. Whatever is on her mind is what lands the page.

In May 2013, Betty talked about discrimination in businesses and Ski-to-Sea. In January 2016, she discussed marriage equality and the birth of her granddaughter.

“There’s not really a magic formula - besides a healthy dose of THC - for producing each issue, Betty says. It usually just falls into place.

“I sit down in front of the computer and write what comes to me. And most of the time it’s okay!” she said.

The Betty Pages are not only there for the community, but the community helped them. Betty delivered all the copies each month herself. She would linger and chat at each stop. Through her web of connections, The Betty Pages was first printed by the Bellingham Herald (not counting the initial Office Depot copies) until the Herald outsourced their printing in 2018.

Now, she has a network of support. She has enlisted a few kind volunteers to produce each issue, including her daughter. “More than 15, it might be 18 years,” she said, “I thought it would be.”

“The Betty Pages project is to start conversation and inspire empathy. In the days when the back door of Rumors was the main entrance, the stage was the bar through downtown, in full Betty glory, with a curly wig, dress and sensible shoes, making several pit-stops along the way. She would stop at bars to have a drink and a chat with other bar-goers, and let everyone get to know Betty.

The cocktails and conversation weren’t only for fun. Betty had a mission, and a theory.

“My theory was that exposure to gay people and drag queens is like a vaccine to bigotry,” Betty said.

For over 25 years, Betty has been injecting the Bellingham community with her vaccine, and according to her, people are responding well to the medication. She has found that most bars in Bellingham are now gay friendly, and she really believes that Betty’s work is to thank.

“Betty, in her soul, is a mother hen. If you don’t have a place to sleep, you can go to Rumors with your heart, and she will take care of you.”

While Betty was in Rumors, the page was not only for fun. Betty had a mission, and a theory.

“My theory was that exposure to gay people and drag queens is like a vaccine to bigotry,” Betty said.

Betty’s corner is a lifeline. The Betty Pages are a decedent of the only place in Bellingham that served the same purpose as Rumors’ bar through downtown, in full Betty glory, with a curly wig, dress and sensible shoes, making several pit-stops along the way. She would stop at bars to have a drink and a chat with other bar-goers, and let everyone get to know Betty.

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“My theory was that exposure to gay people and drag queens is like a vaccine to bigotry,” Betty said.

Betty’s work is to thank. “More than 15, it might be 18 years,” she said, “I really don’t expect it to be.”

Through the articles and advertisements [in The Betty Pages] she’s able to provide those resources, not just to people she knows, but to anyone who’s able to pick up The Betty Pages, Rian said.

While Betty’s support team has grown over the years, she is the lifeblood of the pages. It’s her, on paper. Without Betty, something similar could exist, but the Betty Pages couldn’t continue without Betty Desire.

Whether it’s performing at retirement homes, fulfilling her role as "cookie lady" at free meal events, or participating in protests, Betty always spreads positivity and fun. But, The Betty Pages project gives her the opportunity to continue her work at home.

InBetty’sCorner
STIGMAS SURROUNDING THE LGBTQ+ community are taught by the things we see and hear from those around us. Media also plays a significant role in disseminating and amplifying messages that are derogatory and prejudiced. For example, in entertainment, gay males are often shown only as flamboyant and lesbians as masculine. Transgender people tend to be shown in an exaggerated joking manner or as a victim in crime shows. People with and outside of the LGBTQ+ community have squashed the legitimacy of bisexuality, denying or questioning if it’s even a real thing. Media follows this notion with a lack of representation, if once in a blue moon they are included, they aren’t identified as a bisexual. 90% of Americans said they personally know someone in their life who is lesbian, gay or bisexual. The Human Rights Campaign says four in ten Americans personally know someone who is transgender. However, these statistics don’t indicate if these people who personally know an LGBTQ+ person is accepting of them or if they’re actively educating themselves on LGBTQ+ issues.

If you are basing the entire LGBTQ+ community off of one person, how is that any better than what you see in entertainment?

These stereotypes lay a foundation for straight or cisgender people who are unfamiliar with LGBTQ+ individuals to justify their hateful actions and biased thoughts against people in the LGBTQ+ community, but it doesn’t end at being derogatory. These rooted stigmas can lead to much more violent outcomes, such as murder.

We cannot just look at the individuals who are perpetuating violence towards the LGBTQ+ community. We must look at the aftermath of an attack to understand why anyone thought they needed to commit violent actions against LGBTQ+ people and how that thought process is treated during trial.

Some state laws allow tactics such as the LGBTQ+ “panic” defense which puts the community in greater danger and gives loopholes for homophobic and transphobic people to achieve lesser sentences for murdering LGBTQ+ people.

The LGBTQ+ “panic” defense is a legal strategy that asks a jury to find that a victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity is to blame for the defendant’s violent reaction.

This defense is now banned in the state of Washington, effective June 6, 2020. Nine other states have also banned this tactic, leaving 40 more states with legal precedent to enact this defense.

While this strategy is not a get-out-of-jail-free card for the attacker, it can work in their favor even when the case is cut and dried. Yet somehow, a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity becomes a way to pin the murder on the victim, even when there is no evidence the victim tried to make provocative advances on the defendant.

The LGBT Bar provides a timeline that explains some cases that used this strategy. In 1995, Scott Amedure had been a guest on “The Jenny Jones show”. The talk show host was trying to get juicy details of guests’ secret admirers. Amedure shared he had a crush on his friend Jonathan Schmitz, who was invited to come to the show. Three days later Schmitz showed how he felt about this announcement on The Jenny Jones Show, of course not with his words, but with two bullets to Amedure’s heart.

At trial, Schmitz used the LGBTQ+ “panic” defense in favor of his actions saying he suffered from “gay panic disorder” when he became aware of Amedure’s crush on him. The jury reduced Schmitz charges from premeditated, a murder that is planned before it was committed, to second-degree murder, which requires intention of murder but lacking premeditation.

This is far from the only case. A recent and well-known case in 2015 involved two men in Austin, Texas. Daniel Spencer and James Miller were neighbors and both musicians. Spencer invited Miller over to play music and drink together. That night Miller claimed Spencer tried to kiss him. Instead of a civil conversation about what happened, Miller stabbed Spencer multiple times in the back, in Spencer’s own home.
Miller cleaned up Spencer’s apartment, went home and changed his clothes, then called the police to report he had killed Spencer. In the 2018 trial the defense attorney argued that Miller had never been in trouble with the police, and because of that loose argument, the only thing that made sense is Spencer had tried to sexually assault Miller. I say this is a loose argument because a clean record does not indicate innocence. I also say loosely because there was no physical evidence to suggest an attempted assault. In this case, the LGBTQ+ “panic” defense was successful. The jury convicted Miller of the lowest grade of felony murder in Texas, criminally negligent homicide.

The final verdict? Miller got away with six months in jail and a 10-year probation.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyo., was murdered. The defendants tried to use the LGBTQ+ “panic” defense to warrant the torture and murder of Shepard because of a provocative proposition he made. This gave the defendants an “irresistible impulse” to murder. However, the American Bar Association said, “in the state of Wyoming, irresistible impulse is not a defense allowed under the statutory insanity defense construct. The LGBTQ+ panic defense was inadmissible, not due to the illegitimacy of it, but instead due to Wyoming’s statutory insanity defense construct.”

This defense strategy can’t stand alone in court as the defendants only rebuttal to why they attacked an individual, they must also support three theories. The defendant first has to argue that the knowledge of the victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity was a sufficiently provocative act that drove them to kill. Second, the defendant has to have a solid argument that their discovery or potential disclosure of a victim’s sexual orientation or gender identity caused them to go into a temporary mental breakdown, driving them to kill. Third, the defendant has to support a theory of self-defense, where they feel they were in immediate danger or serious bodily harm based on the disclosure of victims’ sexual orientation or gender identity.

I can’t help but let out an obnoxious sigh at these fragile arguments. They stem from those same stigmas and prejudices that I talked about earlier. If people feel serious bodily harm, temporary mental breakdowns and murder because they are scared of someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity, what does that say about the narrative America has formed around the LGBTQ+ community?

As a society, we’ve seen time and time again that we choose ignorance over educating ourselves. Not just when it comes to violence against different races, ethnicities and religions. FBI data that was last recorded in 2018 shows that 4,047 hate crimes occurred because of someone’s race or ethnicity, 1,419 because of someone’s religious belief, 1,196 because of someone’s sexual orientation, and 168 because of someone’s gender identity.

According to the Human Rights Campaign the FBI data showed an increase by almost 6% in hate crimes against LGBTQ+ individuals since 2017. There was also a 42% increase in crimes directed against transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.

But take that data with a grain of salt. According to the Human Rights Campaign and NBC News, reporting hate crimes to the FBI is not mandatory. The number of law enforcement agencies reporting hate crime data decreased by 110 from 2017 to 2018. These statistics surely only show a fraction of such violence. The consequences LGBTQ+ individuals have to deal with when opening up about violence is also a big factor in why hate crimes go unreported. The Human Rights Campaign says the fear of discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or being outed to friends and family can be a reason for hate crimes not being reported.

I always hear we have come so far, and I agree we have, but we are also far from reaching the goal. The fight for LGBTQ+ equality is far from over when we live in a country where states give a lesser sentence to murderers because of how the victim expresses themselves or who they choose to love.

I always hear we have come so far, and I agree we have, but we are also far from reaching the goal. The fight for LGBTQ+ equality is far from over when we live in a country where states give a lesser sentence to murderers because of how the victim expresses themselves or who they choose to love.

Steps are being made to prohibit the LGBTQ+ “panic” defense at the federal level. On June 5, 2019 the “Gay and Trans Panic Defense Prohibition Act of 2019” bill was introduced to the Senate. The sponsor of this bill, Senator Edward J. Markey, said, “this bill generally prohibits a federal criminal defendant from asserting, as a defense, that the nonviolent sexual advance of an individual or a perception or belief of the gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation of an individual excuses or justifies conduct or mitigates the severity of an offense.”

The last actions have been that the Senate has read the bill twice and referred to the Judiciary Committee, but has yet to pass the introductory stage.

The LGBTQ+ “panic” defense law is a prime example of the issues that fly under the radar when the LGBTQ+ community is not represented or forgotten. We need to bring attention to why these kinds of strategies are created and more importantly why they are still allowed to be used. Bring the issues into conversations with your family and friends, spread awareness on social media, contact legislators or governors that are trying to ban the gay/trans defense, and research where you can support organizations that support the LGBTQ+ community. This issue might seem bigger than you, but if everyone thinks this nothing will change.

After a long and difficult day at preschool, I remember sitting in my dad’s lap as he bolted away and shot flesh-eating, reawakened corpses. His hands were noisy as he smashed his thumbs into the buttons and sticks of the controller. He jolted his entire body, including my tiny self, in reaction to a loud noise or unexpected attack. At the time, I didn’t know what the hell was happening or what zombies were, but I did know that the whole experience was exhilarating.

My dad was playing “Resident Evil 2.” As I started to learn and understand more of what zombies were and the objective of the game, I became increasingly interested - and borderline obsessed - with the grey plastic box that my dad called a PlayStation.

My dad’s best friend, who I referred to as my uncle Khoi,
I often come back to this memory whenever someone questions why I play video games... and I get questioned a lot.

“You play video games?”

I just said I did, so why are you asking?

“You need help? You know how to do that?”

No, I don’t need help. I’m just learning the game just like you can. I figure it out myself.

Video games are an important and extremely popular form of entertainment. The U.S. game market generated $36.9 billion in 2019 and is expected to increase to $300 billion by 2025. Despite this growth, the video game industry is still facing a problematic disparity among audiences. According to a 2019 survey from the International Game Developers Association, video game developers tend to be straight white men which is why games are typically oriented toward straight white men. The lack of representation among women and non-white ethnicities in players, developers and video game characters has often created a hostile online environment where homophobic, racist and sexist slurs are common talk. As a female gamer of color, I have experienced the toxicity of this gaming environment first-hand.

When I got older and online multiplayer became more popular and more accessible through different games and platforms, I remember constantly checking if my mc was muted during online matches. The slightest peep of my voice would immediately trigger “teammates” to tell me to get back in the kitchen and make them a sandwich. To this day, I still receive the same comments. It’s more upsetting that the insults haven’t gotten any more imaginative than the effect the insult actually has on me. There’s no better way to assert your dominance and control than admitting you can’t make your own lunch.

No one knows what you look like in real life when playing “Call of Duty” matches. Still, many people yell racist slurs, particularly about Black and Asian individuals, as an insult to those who aren’t playing objectively or lost the game. Though most of these slurs are thrown out into the online abyss for anyone and everyone to hear, I felt personally attacked. More so when I heard comments like “you play like a girl.”

Keep in mind, this was during the mid-to late-2000s. The insults don’t hit as bad nowadays, but hearing “you play like a girl,” back then could immediately shut down many boys’ confidence.

For a while, I listened. I also didn’t want to play like a girl. I wanted to play well and be better than everyone else. At the time, I didn’t understand that I could be exactly that. I could play well and be better than anyone else and be exactly who I am. A girl.

Many days, I was too intimidated to play online. This led to watching many YouTube videos of gameplay compilations and walkthroughs in the early to mid-2010s. Here I discovered gamers like VanossGaming, BasicallyIDoWork, Lui Calibre, and eventually MissesMae, who was the first female gamer of color I came across. She was just as funny, entertaining and skilled as her male counterparts.

Emmi Mae, known as MissesMae online, is a Filipino-American woman. She has been gaming since she was a five-year-old and producing video game content on YouTube since 2012. She has grown her audience to over 130,000 followers on Instagram and over 110,000 followers on Twitch, a popular live streaming platform where millions of people come together to chat, interact, and make entertainment.

In an older video, Mae finesses and eliminates an enemy opponent. The opponent who got eliminated responded with this comment:

"Wow, this is the first time I’ve ever seen a girl dropshot. That is amazing. That proves that she’s a four-killing queen.

A dropshot is a technique when you move your character into a prone position while firing to evade incoming bullets and ultimately kill the opponent.

Most of the comments Mae receives tend to discredit anything she does.

"If I’m doing well in a game, then someone else must be playing for me, or that I only have people watching because I’m a woman,” Mae said.

Nowadays, Mae likes to use these moments as a time to educate and give a different perspective.

"Whenever a comment is thrown at me like ‘you only have people watching because I’m a woman,’ I try to give them the perspective of how hard a woman in gaming has to prove themselves that they belong,” Mae said. “These questions are rarely presented to men.”

Watching Mae back then when my only life was Black Ops 2 Search & Destroy and Minecraft – yes, Minecraft gave me the courage to continue playing video games and pursue life’s passions even if those passions felt male-dominated.

The gamers I use to watch back then grew up... and I grew with them too. When I came to college, I began to fall out of touch with video games. I didn’t have much time to game between studies, but if I did, it was with friends I met from soccer. These friends from soccer were all boys and were more keen towards FIFA 16 than COD. I was never a big sports-game fan or at least not as diehard as they were. And oh girl, I have never been so manhandled in my life. It was all about sports, video games and asking if I needed help.

I felt like I was being exactly what many boys who didn’t know me already assumed me to be – not really good at video games – so I stopped playing and just watched the boys play.

All I did was watch. I watched videos of people playing video games. I watched female gamers become more popular among the gaming community, along with streaming and noticing the unsavory trend of racist insults and women still not being taken seriously as gamers.

As I was scrolling through Instagram and Behold, I spotted a gamer that goes by Neytiri, who inspired me to get back to playing video games.

Sydney, who goes by her game handle “Neytiri,” is a black female Twitch streamer and a former classmate of mine from middle and high school. Neytiri experiences racist and sexist remarks almost every time she goes live. The comments range from microaggressions to full-on racist and sexist attacks. Some spam derogatory terms in chat and others assume she is bad at video games just because she is a girl. But Neytiri is most definitely not.

"Gaming culture can be pretty toxic to the point where I sometimes choose to not use in-game communications because I fear my teammates will attack me for being a girl. It never feels good, but I have developed a thick skin by being a double minority, both black and a woman, in this industry,” Neytiri said.

I can understand how Neytiri feels. Over the years, I’ve realized how growing up in this community has affected the way I look at myself. I was quiet because anytime I spoke or made the slightest audible expression, I was told to shut up. Now I am not only silent and upset, but I was frustrated. This frustration developed into a rage. This pent-up anger affected my mood, my gameplay and how I interacted with people online and in person.

It is easy to be discouraged in the gaming community as a woman of color, or that shouldn’t stop anyone from participating or giving in to the toxicity of trash-talking.

"People are looking to connect and people of color feel comfortable seeing people who look like them in the media," Neytiri said. "While the internet and gaming culture may work to put down women, minorities, there will be plenty of allies you meet along the way that makes it that much easier to push through!"

Looks a lot like Mae, someone I grew up watching, and Neytiri, someone who is my age, has helped me fully appreciate being a female gamer of color. This acceptance has not only given me hope for the future of gaming but has also reminded me to never underestimate myself. Gaming has given me complete confidence and willingness to go after the things that people tell me are impossible. Even if we only play as buff white protagonists in video games, it doesn’t mean women or people of color can’t ever envision themselves being a hero in their own story.
The Far-Right of the Upper Left

Whatcom County’s violent white supremacist past and present, and the prospect of deradicalization

BY RILEY CURRIE

White supremacy has a long history in the Pacific Northwest, from the European incursions of the 1700s to modern far-right flyers and presence at protests. As the Black Lives Matter movement gains momentum in Whatcom County, hate groups are becoming more prominent, but so is the idea of deradicalizing their members.

LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVIST Stacy Bloch always refers to his cousin, who is alive and well in another part of the state, in the past tense.

“Growing up, I thought he was one of the coolest guys in the world,” Bloch said. “He was one of the fun cousins, he was always fun to hang out with.” His cousin’s family was religious, but never extremely so. In the 70s, Bloch said, he was a hippie. Eventually, he joined the military and became a paratrooper.

Years later, when Bloch became friends with his cousin on Facebook, there was a disconnect. His cousin started questioning some of Bloch’s posts about activism and human rights causes.

“I started seeing these, ‘the liberals are coming for you,’ or, ‘get them before they get you,’ posts from him,” Bloch said. “One post was about clearing the brush around your house so you have better sight lines, so you can shoot people approaching your house.”

Eventually the jokes crossed a line.

Bloch’s interactions with his cousin stopped being friendly political banter and started to become upsetting.

“I started teasing him,” Bloch said. “But it stopped being funny. I’m thinking, ‘hang on, you want to shoot me?’”

Bloch believes that his cousin didn’t get his far-right belief system from his family. His other cousins have expressed that they “don’t know what happened” to cause this shift in his cousin’s thinking.

“It’s really disappointing,” Bloch added. “Here’s one of the coolest people in the world, and then all of a sudden they turn out to be pretty extreme and pretty darn ugly in the way that they think.” He and his cousin are not on speaking terms.

Bloch’s interest in activism was piqued in his early teens, during the protests against the Vietnam War. He became even more involved in activist causes in the 1980s, when he protested the Central American wars and advocated for the anti-nuclear movement.

He’s currently a well-known cannabis and human rights activist in Bellingham.

Bloch is the first generation of his family since they emigrated from Germany in the 1880s to not grow up on a farm in North Dakota. His father, a World War II veteran, was born in the United States to German immigrants. His father’s role in the war and hatred of the Nazi party fascinated Bloch, and he has always been interested in “fringe-y” hate groups.

“Oregon and Washington in particular have really heavy racist histories,” Bloch said. “Hate group activity in the Pacific Northwest is nothing new. In 2009, 30 hate groups were tracked in Washington state, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. The Ku Klux Klan, one of the United States’ most infamous white nationalist groups, made its first appearance in Bellingham in the 1920s.

“When you think about the Klan, you think the Deep South,” Bloch said. “You don’t think Bellingham, Railroad and Holly.”

Whatcom County is 86.2% white, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 estimate. That’s almost 10% more white than the United States. (Bellingham falls squarely in the middle, at 82.5% white.) Bellingham also has a long history as a hotspot for white supremacy.

“White supremacy is really built into the fabric of our country,” said Miri Cypers, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League’s Pacific Northwest Office. “There’s certainly this white nationalist ideology that envisions especially the Pacific Northwest as a bastion for whiteness.”

Many of the same elements that appealed to white settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries appeal to white supremacist and white separatist groups today.

“[White supremacist groups] just don’t see a place for people of color, Jews, immigrants and other marginalized groups as even being a part of this country or society,” Cypers said.
She notes that the Anti-Defamation League has seen a surge in reports of hate groups present at protests of all kinds since 2016. Whatcom County is no exception.

In early June, several concerned residents filed reports of individuals armed with AR-15 assault rifles at peaceful protests at a march for Black Lives in Lynden, Washington. Stephan Hadeen, who self-identified as one of the armed individuals, went live on the air for an interview with Joe Teehan on KGMI NewsTalk 790 on June 5. Hadeen is a member of the Washington Three Percent, a group that has been circulating in Whatcom County for decades, but there’s been an uptick in recent years. In 2019, the hate group Patriot Front plastered Ferndale and the border of the Lummi nation with flyers that read, “not stolen, conquered.”

Browne, originally from Australia, has lived in Whatcom County for 25 years and is a U.S. citizen. “When I walk around, if I keep my mouth shut, most people don’t know I’m an immigrant,” he said. Browne retains a strong Australian accent. While, as a white man, he doesn’t have any lived experience being discriminated against on the basis of his race, he does have experience being discriminated against for his immigrant status. He’s often told to “go back to where he came from.”

Like most white people, Browne says, he knows he sees only a small percentage of the discrimination that occurs in his neighborhood or county. His focus now is on awareness. “The center of the population has become more aware,” he said. “But the extreme end of the population has also become more emboldened.”

Stacy Bloch has seen the same trend. “What’s troubling to the surface right now is driven by fear and hate,” Bloch said. “They’re afraid of losing what they’ve grown up with or what they’ve been accustomed to.”

Those involved in far-right or white supremacist groups are primarily afraid of losing their privilege, Bloch added. He described a banner he saw with the phrase “equal rights for indigenous whites” emblazoned on it. Historically ignorant and cruel sentiments like that one have been circulating in Whatcom County for decades, but there’s been an uptick in recent years. In 2019, the hate group Patriot Front plastered Ferndale and the border of the Lummi nation with flyers that read, “not stolen, conquered.”

Blok believes the current presidential administration has given space for many of these fringe hate groups to express themselves more publicly. President Trump infamously said of the deadly protests in Charlottesville, Virginia in August of 2017 that there were “very fine people, on both sides.”

Blok believes things will get worse before they get better. He worries about the possibility of “some sort of spasm of violence on the way out” on behalf of some of these hate groups. Bloch is excited, however, about the future and direction of the Black Lives Matter movement in Whatcom County. “Many times, you think you’re going to get really close to seeing some real social justice and equality, you end up being disappointed,” Bloch said. “But this may be the first time in all my decades of being involved in something, fighting for some form of justice, this movement may be it.”

Many also argue for a deradicalization approach. Life After Hate is a nonprofit devoted to helping individuals exit the violent far-right. Founded in 2011, the nonprofit conducts a wide variety of education, intervention, academic research, and outreach. “The most important thing to remember is that hateful ideology is not a prerequisite for joining a hate group,” said Dimitrios Kalantzis, director of communications at Life After Hate. According to Kalantzis, many people are sucked into extremism when a basic human need for connection is not fulfilled. “Radicalization isn’t linear,” Kalantzis said. “So neither is de-radicalization. It’s often a lifelong process.”

Kalantzis also emphasized the importance of raising awareness, not only of hate groups, but of institutional forms of white supremacy. “There’s a tendency to associate hate groups with rural, isolated areas. “To call hate groups a naturally occurring phenomenon in certain geographical regions is to absolve the rest of the country from a racism that millions of people are living in and facing every day,” Kalantzis said. “Every day, we make decisions that are rooted in white supremacy. If we don’t ask ourselves, ‘what decisions am I making that are informed by white supremacy,’ aren’t we complicit?”

Stacy Bloch has been following these issues closely for years, and continues to confront them regularly in his own community. He knows that as a white activist in Bellingham, it’s easier for him to speak out than it is for many others. For Bloch, deradicalization and rehabilitation are excellent ideas, but hard to envision clearly. “A lot of these people have a lot of hate inside them,” Bloch said. “I don’t know if all of them can change. But if you can show them that the things they’re afraid of aren’t going to happen, then maybe they can change ... good grief, we can only hope.”
After the permanent closure of The Firefly Lounge, musicians, venue staff and concertgoers imagine a live music scene post-COVID-19

BY RILEY CURRIE

Live music at all levels ground to a halt during social distancing, but many members of the music industry remain hopeful about the future of independent live music in Bellingham.

“PHEW. WOW. EVERYONE, this thing is hard to write.”

On May 23, 2020, venue owner and bartender Erin Gill poured herself a few drinks and sat down to write the 361-word Facebook post that would announce the closure of The Firefly Lounge. The choice to close was already made, but Gill knew sharing it with the public would be hard. She wrote a long made, but Gill knew sharing it with the public would be hard. She wrote a long Facebook post that would

“We optimistically closed our doors in March, but now, facing an uncertain future, the time has come to close our doors for good,” the Facebook post continued.

As hard as it was to announce the closure, Gill knew she couldn’t drag her feet. She joked that the last thing The Firefly could do for its community was to close early, in the hopes it might help make the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses real to some people.

The Firefly Lounge employed about 12 people a month, many of them students. As is the case in any venue, staff were always needed at the door, in the sound booth and behind the bar.

The venue was a place for new and established artists, touring acts and tight-knit community events. In the same week, The Firefly might have hosted a comedy open mic, a black metal show, a singer-songwriter on tour and a bluegrass jamboree. The restrictions on public gatherings brought that to a crashing halt in March.

“The decision boiled down to the shear uncertainty of anything,” Gill said. “We could have weathered a closure of a few months, but when we all sat down and realized it could easily be almost a year, the numbers just didn’t add up.”

Live music isn’t dead — it’s only sleeping.
Hair Pride in Bellingham

Zora’s Salon is proud to serve customers with all kinds of hair

BY ROB STANLEY

WILLIAM ZAYAS PREPARES his hair with a rinse, shampoo, deep condition and gel application, before knocking on the door of Sloane, his 14-year-old neighbor who has a knack for braids.

Back home, he adds an olive oil spray and lays his hair down with a durag. After a brief wait, Zayas pulls off the durag to reveal a slick set of braids, followed by the sounds of his own laugh and a loud “ooo!”.

About two weeks later, he unravels his braids. Another shampoo and deep condition brings Zayas’ hair back to a springy, defined look.

He turns to TikTok, a video-driven social media platform, to post two videos showing pure joy and love for the process of getting his hair done. “It was just fun, you know? I just have a lot of fun doing it,” Zayas says. “I like being on the camera and I enjoy performing for people, whether it’s music or making funny videos.”

Seeing that his social media feed was filled with heavy content, Zayas wanted to put out “some resources and funny content, just some good, whole-hearted, wholesome stuff.”

Zayas produces head-bobbing house music under the moniker “Trillvm,” and on his way back from a panel on decolonizing the anthropology department at Western, decided on naming his 2019 album “Decolonizing House Music.”

“My first actual job was a barber,” Zayas said on a Zoom call. Now 27, he has been cutting his own hair since he was 12. He began cutting his friends hair when he was in high school, and had some of the same customers for seven years. “When I had people to cut, it was like therapy. We’d sit there and just talk it up.”

Frida Emalange, owner of Zora’s Styling Salon and Spa, shares a similar sentiment. “Doing hair is not about having a salon, it’s about the people,” said Emalange. “I know how important it is for kids to feel confident. For kids to grow and be confident, they need to feel good about their hair.”

Emalange has family in Bellingham, and on a trip to visit them from her home country, Cameroon, she noticed an absence of salons that could style Black hair textures. She saw the need and jumped at the opportunity to bring her culture to Bellingham.

Emalange opened up Zora’s in 2001. The salon, named for Emalange’s daughter, prides itself on serving customers of all hair types. Zora’s stylists cut, color, braid, dreadlock and cornrow.

While Emalange herself has not experienced discrimination for her hair, she mentioned a client who was sent home from work after she had dreadlocked his hair. “If that’s not discrimination, I don’t know what it is,” said Emalange. “It shouldn’t matter what hair you wear, it should matter how you do your job.”

In March, Washington governor Jay Inslee signed into law House Bill 2602, an amendment to the Washington Law Against Discrimination that extends the term “race” to be inclusive of “traits historically associated or perceived to be associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hair styles.”

“A lot of people try and touch [my hair], which obviously I’m not an animal, you can not,” said Zayas, emphasizing consent. “You’ve got to respect my space, my body.”

In recent years, Emalange has become more selective with her clientele. “I want to help people who really need it,” said Emalange. She has white parents who come in with adopted children of color who need to have their hair done. “That’s why I’m here.”

Different hair textures require different care. There are two classifications, a number for the amount of wave/curliness and a letter which defines the width. Type 1 hair is straight, Type 2 wavy, Type 3 curly and Type 4 is coily. Zayas says his hair, for example, falls in between 3B and 3C.

Through her styling career, Emalange has made an effort to use natural, organic products, and has successfully produced her own line of beauty products, “Zorganics.” “Clients have come to trust me, I couldn’t go forward knowing I could cause long-term side effects,” said Emalange.

To many people, Zayas included, hair is a big part of who they are. Being able to express yourself with something you grew out of your own body is a unique source of pride.
Huddled in the back of her kennel, LuLu, with her sleek, black coat and a white chest, cowered when first approached by Valerie Reyes. Reyes, who had just begun volunteering for the Whatcom Humane Society (WHS), decided to give the dog some space, knowing LuLu was probably involved in negative situations with humans before. From a distance, Reyes introduced herself to LuLu, offered some treats and left her alone.

When Reyes returned on another day, she introduced herself again. Surprisingly, LuLu came to the front of the kennel and accepted the treats Reyes had slid under her door. LuLu was shy and hesitant, and stayed in the shelter longer than most. But, Reyes began interacting with LuLu regularly, when she could. With every visit, Reyes watched as LuLu gained confidence and trust, until she was eventually adopted.

WHS hosts the annual Dog Days of Summer, where they implore families to bring their dogs for treats, socialization and games. Reyes was just leaving after volunteering at this event when a dog caught her off-guard and jumped on her. To her surprise, it was LuLu with her adoptive family saying hello to her old friend.

“The best experiences are [knowing] that they are adopted and loved and in their own homes now, with their adopted families,” Reyes explained.

As a kid, Reyes lived in a home without animals. Reyes developed a fear of dogs when one of her friends - who is also involved with animal rescue - was hit trying to corral a lost dog. “[My husband] grew up with animals; so, he introduced me to having a dog in our home and, when we adopted our dog together, that’s what really got me started with wanting to be more involved with the shelter,” Reyes said.

Accepting all animals, WHS commits to being an open-admission animal shelter, regardless of age, breed or condition. With three facilities: domestic, farm and wildlife, WHS staff and volunteers care for an average of 4,500 animals a year. Kelsey Forbes has worked in all three facilities and began volunteering in 2016 with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. After being hired in the domestic animal facility in 2019, Forbes started volunteering in the farm facility on her days off. “Animals have always been a huge passion and I had two days off a week and I didn’t know what to do with myself,” Forbes explained. “So, I just figured I might as well put a couple hours to the farm facility.”

After recently moving to Bellingham, Forbes found a limping, three-legged deer and immediately searched online for somewhere that could help. She soon found a number and dialed. After speaking with a representative from the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at WHS, Forbes signed up as a volunteer and never left.
"You get an opossum; its mother was hit by a car. They're mar- supials, so the babies are in the pouch," Forbes described. "Being able to rescue the joey from the pouch, bringing them into care, and helping them grow up to be able to live and survive in the wild again; it feels awesome."

In the farm facility, horses take longer to adopt out than other animals. Since they are so expensive, require special care and need lots of land, it takes a specific person to adopt a horse.

"One of our resident horses had been there for over two years, and one had been there for over three, and they finally found homes," Forbes said, beginning to tear up. "The people who were adopting had horses who lost their best friend, probably naturally, and horses do better, usually, with another horse, and they looked at our facility and附件snatched them up and it was really awesome."

At WHS, working with fearful animals, similar to LuLu, is not uncommon.

"You're on their time. You can't just force them. You can reason with them. It's not like talking to a fearful human being and trying to get them to understand you. They don't speak the language," Forbes expressed. "So, I've learned to be a lot more patient and tolerant and learn the different kinds of techniques to diffuse certain situations and that's actually crossed over with how I work with people too."

As a WHS education and outreach coordinator, Forbes seeks to educate students of all ages, from preschoolers to Western Washing- ton University students.

"This little girl had caught me when I was at the supermarket, she recognized me," Forbes recalled.

"That's the animal lady!" the little girl exclaimed.

"This is where I want to be in life," Forbes remembered thinking. "I love being the animal lady."

Established in 1902, WHS is the oldest non-profit animal wel- fare organization in Whatcom County.

Susan Martucci, one of the newer volunteers to WHS, previously- fostered animals for the Seattle Humane Society. Martucci and her daughter, a veterinarian, made the collective decision to become a certified foster family. They fostered everything from bunnies and chinchillas to dogs and puppies.

Martucci started as a dog TLC (tender love and care) where she would walk and play with the dogs at WHS. However, she soon be- gan training in counseling adoptions.

"It's really a more intimate setting, where the family would love for this pet to work out, but now they've only seen it, behind the cage. So, we get to do some introductions and kind of talk them through things they might not have thought about ... making sure the animal is a good fit."

Every year since 2010, WHS has averaged approximately 4,823 animals coming into the shelter and about 2,956 animals going out. Of the domestic animals being taken in every year since 2010, an average of approximately 1,649 were cats and about 1,351 were dogs. Although there are many other types of animals taken in by WHS, according to the WHS Intake by Species chart, cats and dogs are con- sistently the most common, with the majority of them being strays.

Most of the animals at WHS are just waiting for the perfect fam- ily to come along and take them to their forever home, just like LuLu.

WE NEED TO EDUCATE and open our eyes to the glaring issues facing the trans commu- nity. I just want to start off by saying that even though I always listen to trans voices and try to educate myself on the issues, I cannot even pre- tend to say that I understand the pain and oppression that is felt by trans people. I do, how- ever, want to share my insight on the problematic stereotypes that movies and television have ingrained in our society about trans people.

We must push for more and better representation, but we also cannot stop there; we must stand up for trans people and continue to fight for equal treatment in our laws and in our society.

What really opened my eyes to the issues of repre- sentation for trans people is Netflix’s “Disclosure,” a doc- umentary on transgender representation in film and television. “Disclosure” gives a thorough examination of Hollywood and the problemat- ic depictions of gender in film through the voice of leading trans thinkers and creatives. As a cisgender man, I didn’t grow up thinking about the problematic stereotypes in the entertainment industry. I didn’t realize until later in my life that a lot of the movies and television shows that I grew up on had so many troublesome "jokes" and portrayals, espec- ially towards the transgender community. Unfortunately, it was hard to escape these shows and movies that made fun of trans peo- ple, as they were pretty much everywhere. In the much-loved show "Friends," Kathleen Turner played the role of Chandler’s biological mom. She was a cisgender woman. The char- acter’s gender identity is never fully discussed, she constantly gets misgendered and ends up being a walking punchline.

The joke that is constantly repeated in shows and mov- ies is about a man dressing in women’s clothing. This kind of trope exists to make fun of transgender women and should make you cringe any- time you see a show, new or old, use this as a "joke."

As cis people, we con- stantly see our heroes on- screen represent what we like. For trans people, most of the representation they get to see of themselves are problem- atic stereotypes. For example, when the transgender charac- ter always gets killed off either because of a transphobic crime or dying from the media they are using for their gender con- firmation.

I watched “Disclosure” as a way to further educate my- self on many of our society’s glaring issues, which seems to be in just about every aspect of our world. I was deeply sad- dened to see how surprised I was that there were so many occurrences of ableist portray- als and mistreatment of trans- gender actors and trans life altogether.

The documentary, and Nikki Reitz’s study of the rep- resentation of trans women in film and television, show that the storyline for a lot of trans characters is that coming out as trans influxes and burdens the cis people around them. Like making it seem like the sheer existence of transgender people is too much for cigen- dered people to bear, which is devastating because it can be difficult to accept their own identity when they see the re- flections of themselves being treated awfully in the shows and movies they grow up watching.

84% of Americans say they do not personally know someone who is transgender or don’t know that they do, which means the only way most cis people learn about trans people is through imag- es shown in the media. This is scary because the media and entertainment industry has so much power to be able to show marginalized groups in a bad light and shape the narrative for the majority of the country.

If there was more rep- resentation of trans people and trans culture in shows and movies, it would make these awful representations less damaging. The GLAAD Media Annual Report shows that of the 339 regular and recurring LGBT+ characters on screen in the 2017-2018 television season, only 17 were transgen- der. Laverne Cox, a transgen- der actress, played a lead role in a CBS legal drama “Doubt” which was shockingly canceled after only two episodes due to bad ratings and critics saying the show “deserved a better cast.”

You should feel heartbro- ken after watching this docu- mentary for supporting these problematic shows in the past and ignoring the problems that the trans community faces. The best thing that we as cis people can do with this feeling is to use it to educate others around us.

We must push for more and better representation in film and television, show that the storyline for a lot of trans characters is that coming out as trans influxes and burdens the cis people around them. We need to join in supporting and pro- moting more representation of trans people and culture, and we also must stand up for trans people by stopping the spread of hateful language and jokes. It all starts with education and listening, and us cis people need to do a lot more of that. We shouldn’t stop educating ourselves after watching just one documentary. To contin- ue to be an ally to the transgender people, check out GLAAD’s tips.
Girl Math
A brief reflection on being a girl
BY ELLA BANKEN

GETTING PICKED LAST for capture-the-flag among my 11 male cousins every time.
Not being allowed to help clean the gutters.
Being teased for drinking a “ladies’ beer”.
Receiving the recommendation to do “girl push-ups” during P.E. fitness testing in middle school.
The little comments and actions stack up over the years.
Two years ago I moved into my first home. It was definitely a “college house.” After years of rowdy tenants, it had seen better days. We covered the most gruesome wall splatters with posters and suffocated the vague cat smell with fruit-scented candles. Occasionally the dryer would catch on fire or the kitchen sink would overflow with wastewater, but we made it work, and we kept re-signing the lease.
The front of the house was almost completely obstructed by a wildly out of control laurel bush. Based on the Christmas lights that the shrub had grown around, it hadn’t been pruned - or touched at all - in years. The base of the beast was littered with trash, some with vintage-looking labels that really confirmed how long it had been. The dirt was stud marked with broken glass and cigarette butts.

This was not an attractive shrub. It was so ugly and out of control, that many passersby have mistaken the bush for a recycling can. We’ve been woken up late at night to the sound of a White Claw hitting the side of the house, and then finding a home in the bush.

In our lease agreement, it was outlined that all yard work was the tenants responsibility. So we decided that it was time for the bush to go.

As soon as we wrapped up our last finals, we got to work.
Six hours later, the bush had been vanquished.
Two less-than-neat piles of severed limbs and stumps were displayed in the yard. We sat in the grass covered in dirt and sap and scarfed down burgers from Boomie’s. The project wasn’t finished, but we took a moment to rest our arms, admire the house’s newly uncovered facade and compliment each other on a job well done.

We made plans to grow wildflowers and mint, and give the dirt patch a second chance at life. After making several trips to the dump the next day to finally lay the bush to rest, we stopped at a garden supply store. The dirt under the laurel closely resembled ash, so we decided to buy some topsoil to give our new seedlings a fighting chance at life.

As we perused the mounds of dirt, we estimated how much we would need to cover the patch. We figured that half a cubic yard of dirt would be sufficient, but we wanted to talk about pricing options with an employee.

We approached a woman wearing a vest that clearly indicated her employment and explained the situation, asking about the choices of soil quantity we could buy. She inquired about our project, and then said a line that made my confidence falter.

“OK, let’s do some girl math to figure this out,” she said.

This comment stung for multiple reasons. First, I knew that my roommate and I were perfectly capable of calculating the amount of dirt that we needed to purchase. We had both triumphed over algebra, defeated geometry and conquered calculus. We knew what we were doing and we didn’t need accommodation.

But the comment also stung, because it was a woman who said it to us. When I think about the women in my life, I am amazed at their strength and resiliency. I know that they can do anything they put their minds to, and they don’t need to modify their situations, asking about the choices of soil quantity we could buy. She inquired about our project, and then said a line that made my confidence falter.

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Looking back on that moment, I wish I had said something. It’s the sort of situation that you scheme up comebacks for while you’re in the shower, you know? Instead of ignoring the comment, I could have said, “you mean regular math?” or any other variation of “hey, girls can do math too.” Instead, we laughed uncomfortably, and left without buying the dirt.

“As a young reporter in one of my first jobs, I was frustrated that hometown friends (fortunately, not my parents) weren’t interested in hearing about my work, just about my love life and likelihood of marriage soon. I got a button that said, “Unhooked and Happy.” The publisher of the community paper saw it on my purse and laughed and said, “It should say “Unhooked and pregnant! That would be funny!” No one said anything, including me, but it still rankles me decades later.”
—Peggy Watt

“I was in my early 30s and was overseeing sales and marketing of six hotels as Regional Group Sales and Marketing Director. I was in a discussion with the general manager of one of the hotels that was not doing well about all the changes and policies that he will need to do to improve sales for the hotel. This GM chided to say “When I was running hotels, you were still in diapers.” He proceeded to spew a nasty rumor that I got my position by sleeping with my bosses! When I found out about it, I was very upset and told my bosses about it - all men. They all thought it was very amusing and laughed about it. Mind you, they were great bosses who were very respectful of me. Although this happened 20 years ago, I still felt that my sacrifices and hard work to prove my capabilities were erased by rumors and innuendo. I don’t think it would happen to a man if he was in my position. This happened in Malaysia, so I think it’s an issue for women internationally and still happening now.”
—Angela Seow-Scott Yuan Huay

“I used to work at a hardware store. There have been so many times where a customer (most of the time an older white man) would come in and either completely ignore any advice I gave. He would ask to speak with one of my male coworkers, who would repeat the same thing I told them, making me feel worthless at times. We would also have a few men who would come into the store and make inappropriate comments a lot and it got to the point with one guy where if I was working and he came in, I would hide in our break room until they left because they made me so uncomfortable. One man in particular would make inappropriate comments to me in front of his young daughter, too, which broke my heart. When I became a manager there as well, some of my older, male coworkers wouldn’t listen to me when I would try to do my job and assign tasks to them or would try to tell me how to do the job I had been doing for much longer than them.”
—Sara Bourgeau

“There are a lot of little things, but the main thing I can think of happened a couple years ago. It was when Christine Blasey Ford came out against Brett Kavanaugh, and it’s all people were talking about. Some people close to me made jokes about it and dismissed her testimony. I’ve been in that situation that’s a kind of gray in terms of whether it was sexual assault or not, and it made me feel like if I spoke up about what happened to me, they wouldn’t listen. It made me feel like, because I am a woman, my voice doesn’t matter. I began to realize that because I was a woman, my voice is more easily brushed off by a lot of people. This has had a huge impact on me when I started at Western a few months later, because I was going into journalism, a profession that requires me using my voice to bring important issues to light.”
—Izzie
AIDS activist Tim Costello opens up in this podcast about the similarities and differences he sees in the public and institutional responses to the AIDS crisis and COVID-19.

Comparing Crises: Remembering the AIDS Epidemic Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

BY COOPER CAMPBELL

AIDS activist Tim Costello opens up in this podcast about the similarities and differences he sees in the public and institutional responses to the AIDS crisis and COVID-19.

What the Doctor Ordered

BY CLAUDIA COOPER

Medical and future medical workers talk about how they hold pride for their career in a fearful time.

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GEORGE FLOYD’S LAST WORDS

IT’S MY FACE MAN I DIDN’T DO ANYTHING SERIOUS
MAN PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE I CAN’T BREATHE
PLEASE MAN PLEASE SOMBODY PLEASE MAN CAN’T
BREATHE I CAN’T BREATHE PLEASE MAN CAN’T
BREATHE, MY FACE JUST GET UP I CAN’T BREATHE
PLEASE I CAN’T BREATHE SHIT I WILL I CAN’T MOVE
MAMA MAMA MAMA
I CAN’T MY KNEE MY NUTS IM THROUGH IM THROUGH
IM CLAUSTROPHOBIC MY STOMACH HURTS MY NECK
HURT EVERYTHING

JESSICA DOTK-WHITTAKER
HURTS
SOME WATER OR SOMETHING PLEASE PLEASE I CAN’T
BREATHE OFFICE DONT KILL ME THEY GO KILL ME MAN
COME ON MAN I CANNOT BREATHE I CANNOT BREATHE
THEY GON KILL ME THEY GON KILL ME I CANT
BREATHE I CANT BREATHE PLEASE SIR PLEASE
PLEASE I CAN’T

FLOYDS EYES CLOSE.

FLOYD IS NON-RESPONSIVE.

2 MIN 43 SECONDS WITH OFFICERS KNEE STILL ON HIS NECK.
NOW TELL ME WHY FIGHTING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IS STILL A CRIME? THE TIME FOR A NEW WORLD IS NOW.