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For growing numbers of people, home birth is the best alternative.

by W.D. Halstead

The miracle of bringing a new life into being deserves an environment filled with loving and caring. More and more couples are choosing to have their babies at home rather than endure the humiliation and sterility of a modern hospital birth.

Growing numbers of skilled midwives are attempting to meet the demands for home birth across the country. In Bellingham, a handful of midwives are quietly practicing their profession and thereby offering an alternative where no doctor is willing to attend a home birth.

In this article, I could not possibly explain all of the things a person should know and understand about having babies and the alternatives available. But I will attempt to scratch the surface of what expecting parents might think about as they prepare for the arrival of their new baby.

What's going to happen before, during and after labor? What kind of experience can you expect? What are the possible complications? Where would you like your baby to be born? Who is going to assist you in having a baby? Is he or she the kind of person you would like to have around at such a time? What prenatal and post natal care do you want? How can you best prepare for the birth? What are the differences between hospital birth and home birth?

It's your choice. It's your baby. It's your decision. Think seriously about it well in advance of the expected due date. Consider all possibilities, but most of all consider what is best for you and your baby.

From 90 to 95 percent of all births are normal, uncomplicated births. You might be interested in knowing that there are many procedures which are unnecessary for normal births, most originally designed for "high risk" patients, but often routinely used for almost all hospital deliveries. These include a shave, enema, episiotomy (cutting), stirrups, forceps, pain-killing drugs, fetal monitoring devices, separation of the mother and child, silver nitrate drops in the infant's eyes, and so forth. If you plan to have your baby in a hospital it is recommended that you visit the labor room, the maternity ward and most importantly, your doctor. Find out exactly what you are getting into and determine if it is the best for you.
The Bellingham Alternatives

In the Bellingham area, the alternatives are a hospital, a Birth Center (in Mount Vernon) and home birth.

There are some doctors in town who will assist in natural births at St. Joseph's Hospital. These doctors, in some cases, will follow methods preferred by the mother.

"A hospital is a place for sick people. Being pregnant is not an illness, it is a natural human function."

One famous method, the Laboye technique (named after the author of "Birth Without Violence") has been used at the local hospital. This includes subdued lights, quiet and calm talking, natural childbirth and labor, and no drugs. However, St. Joseph's will not allow the Laboye bath at the hospital. Reportedly this is because "the newborn's temperature control mechanisms are not fully developed." There are many midwives and doctors who would disagree with this idea, but it's the policy anyway.

Dr. Gregory White, president of the American College of Home Obstetrics in Chicago, Illinois, has been attending home births for 25 years. He explained why so many people are turning to home births these days:

"Being in control is important to a lot of people. This is why they put forth a great deal of effort throughout their entire childhood to learn to take control of their own lives when they grow up. When you are having a home birth, the doctor or midwife is a guest in your home, and this is quite a different setup, psychologically, from being in their institution — the hospital — where the institution runs by its own rules without any necessary reference to what you want at all."

A hospital is a place for sick people. Being pregnant is not an illness, it is a natural human function. Stories of hospital births abound in frustration about the abrupt separation of baby from the mother, the exclusion of fathers from the labor room, bottle-feeding of babies whose mothers requested breast-feeding, administering of unnecessary drugs and so on. An entire study could be made just about what has been happening in hospitals and how some hospitals are changing to meet the rising expectations of couples about to become parents. But, for reasons which will become apparent later in this article, I have chosen to focus on the home birth alternative.

Midwifery In Bellingham

If you prefer to have your baby at home in Bellingham, you will be happy to know that there are trained midwives here who devote themselves to serving the pregnant woman. Although there is no licensed midwife nurse practitioner at present (a number of women are studying in preparation for this type of career), there is another kind of midwife . . . one who may not be licensed but very well might know as much about assisting in normal, uncomplicated childbirth as some doctors. There are two licensed nurse-midwives working with the Birth Center in Mount Vernon, but their policy is no home births if you live more than 15 miles from Mount Vernon. Midwives generally spend more time before, during and after childbirth with the mother and family than a doctor would ever spend. They put more emphasis on careful nutrition and childbirth education. They also provide more frequent and careful prenatal checks during the latter third of the pregnancy since the conscientious home birth midwife wants to be as certain as possible that her patient is not "high risk." If symptoms are apparent, she will not hesitate to refer the mother to a doctor whom the midwife and parents have chosen as a back-up.

In Bellingham today there are three distinct types of midwives who are willing to come to your home birth.

Rosemary, perhaps the oldest midwife in the area, has been assisting with home deliveries for about 10 years. She does not handle any internal examinations, and she insists that mothers consult with a physician well in advance of the birth so that all prenatal care will be done. For Rosemary, midwifery is a sideline. Her primary interest and livelihood is operating a school for gifted children (just south of the WWU campus) in Bellingham. A woman of deep religious conviction and faith, Rosemary calls her service as a midwife "a gift of love." Prior to birth, she stresses nutrition and the use of vitamins. For her assisting at a birth, she requests a standard donation to the private school.

"During the birth, the lights were soft and subdued. We had some fragrant incense burning and there was a magical silence."

Suzanne and Anna moved to Bellingham this October from Santa Barbara, California, where they have been working together as a midwife team for about four years. Both were trained at a midwifery school in northern California. Their services as midwives include extensive prenatal testing, attending the
labor and birth, and postnatal checks of baby and mother. Mothers are charted in much the same way a doctor charts a mother during the months prior to labor. Urinalysis, blood pressure, pulse, medical history, fundus, fetal position and similar medical checks are routinely administered by the midwives.

Another Bellingham area midwife is Anne, who lives in Sedro Woolley. She was trained as a nurse assistant and later as a midwife in Oregon. Since she has two small children of her own, she is not a fulltime midwife at this time, but she is willing to come to Bellingham for a home birth. Her methods of prenatal and postnatal care are similar to Suzanne and Anna's.

Couples who hope to have a home birth are encouraged to attend childbirth classes, such as those offered by the Prepared Childbirth Association, and other organizations in Bellingham.

The Home Birth Experience

So what happens at a home birth? I have fathered four children and I am preparing for the arrival of a fifth in February. My first two were born in hospitals, the latter two at home.

Michael, my first, lived for three days before dying as a result of improper hospital procedures in a small town in Virginia. Although 1½ months premature, he was a vibrant baby until a tube was stuck down his throat to feed him, and, he consequently hemorrhaged and died. I got to look at him through glass but was never allowed near him. Upon his death the hospital called me to ask what funeral arrangements I wanted. I told them to “do whatever you usually do when you kill a baby.” I somehow felt that if he had been able to be with his mother and father, to feel their love and energy instead of the plasticity, sterility, and human coldness of the hospital nursery, Michael might still be alive today. I never even touched him.

Lisa, now 8, was also born in a hospital. During labor, I was told to leave the room and was not allowed to be near either my wife or new daughter until after the birth. The experience was almost as miserable as that of my first born.

However, my last two children were born at home, and what a difference. These were born to my present wife, Mary, who along with me is opposed to the idea of having babies in a hospital. Our bias is founded on experience. Mary is especially annoyed by the extremely high cost of a normal birth if it takes place in a hospital because she knows that the mother really does all of the work. She also feels that the husband is an essential part of the birth because the man helped create the new being through the deposit of sperm.

“Since there is no one who is able to exchange places with me, to experience the coming and going of pains for me, to take over
the labor and contraction, then I should be in charge and I don’t want it made any harder for me,” Mary explains. She considers it to be making it harder for the woman to be subjected to a shave, enema, episiotomy, etc., none of which are done in a home birth. At home, the baby is never away from the mother. Mary also prefers to have a woman assist in the birth.

In Los Angeles, prior to the birth of Karuna, age 4, we attended husband-coached natural childbirth classes and had a doctor who was willing to assist in a home birth. The classes helped to prepare us for the birth, and when the doctor unfortunately was not able to make it on time, I personally assisted with the birth, alone. It was an experience that remains vivid in my mind.

Mary’s labor intensified during the transition period and I knew it would be soon. I kept hoping the doctor would arrive. But as I watched the head emerge, I knew we could wait no longer. Checking my notes from the childbirth class helped me to know when to tell Mary to push. Before I knew it I was catching Karuna. I placed her on Mary’s breast and found some string to tie off the umbilical cord. About 30 minutes later, the doctor arrived and delivered the placenta.

During the birth, the lights were soft and subdued. We had some fragrant incense burning and there was a magical silence. When I held Karuna for the first time, something vivifying and real took place. It was very precious to both Mary and myself. There was no terror, no disappointment. Only pure joy.

Dolma, now age three, was also born at home. For her we had a very skilled midwife. The labor was only two hours and the birth was very easy. The midwife knew by watching Mary exactly what was going on, and after checking her and finding her cervix fully dilated told her that she could have her baby anytime she wanted now. Mary relaxed on the bed for a few contractions, then the midwife had her get up and squat on the floor. With one push, Dolma was born. We filled out the birth certificate, and the midwife cleaned up everything. Because we didn’t have much money at the time and because the birth went so easily and quickly, she only charged us $150, half of her fee. It was very, very nice and was a beautiful birth.

Human life is extremely important. The preciousness of individual existence can be no more graphically illustrated than by the process of giving birth. Wherever it happens, when a life enters this world, he comes from somewhere. We should greet him as we would a long lost friend, with great care and affection. We should bring him home, feed him, care for him, and learn from him. We should not treat a newborn baby like it is some kind of disease, for he is ourself. He is us when we were innocent, alone and unable to care for ourself. He deserves our best.
The Lowly Mobile Buyers' Bible

A few words of advice — and solace — on that micro-community-cum-battleground known as the mobile home park.

by Robert Low
The mobile home is a dwelling built of prefabricated parts in assembly line fashion, with a minimum of invested time and money. The idea is hardly new. Prefab housing for export to the West Indies was one of the mainstays of pre-revolutionary New England. Today, the home is the largest single investment made by most American families, and inflation has made the lowly mobile prefab increasingly popular as an economical approach to home ownership.

"You're going to be dealing with a guy whose entire career is based on jacking you into a deal whether it's the one you want or not."

Now, I'm not down on mobile homes. In fact, I'm not truly comfortable living in anything without wheels under it. Which is why I was upset to learn from Pete Coy, Western's Director of Housing and Dining, that the college-owned units located at Bakerview Mobile Estates are to be liquidated through surplus sales when the eight-year-old lease with the park expires in August of 1980. (Surplus sales is a process through the general administration in which formal bids are taken on surplus state property.) I'm seriously thinking of bidding on the unit I now occupy, which brings me eyeball to eyeball with many of the problems owning a mobile home can entail.

The first rule of buying is to know what you want. That's because you're going to be dealing with a guy whose entire career is based on jacking you into a deal whether it's the one you want or not, and knowing what you want makes this harder to do. Remember, you're shopping for a home — not only something you'll be spending a lot of time in, but a major financial investment. So you might as well figure out exactly what you want ahead of time, right?

Besides, if you know what you want, you can then try and find it used. No joke. A used home is generally (though not always) thousands of dollars cheaper than a new one. Many late model units are bank repossessions, and the bank wants its investment back fast, so they price to sell. And usually the sales people are more willing to give better terms. For instance, I bought an 18 month old Kentwood two bedroom 12'x54' unit for $5,400 (plus tax & interest) with $400 down. A few miles away the same unit was selling for $7,500, and the dealer wanted a third down. Shopping for a used unit can pay you very well, if you're careful.

The best rule of thumb in the "careful" department is to be nosey. Go over the unit with a fine-toothed comb. Make sure it's all there. Has it got a hot water tank? Does it leak? Look for discoloration in the ceiling, especially around the outside walls and vents, a sure sign of leakage. Look to see if the hot-water tank is in place. Even when shopping for a new home.

Most new (and some used) homes include, at your option, such things as furniture, appliances, carpeting, and sometimes skirting and awning. My advice to prospective buyers is to buy those things elsewhere if you can, especially the furniture. The prices they charge may seem attractive on their face, but if you buy on contract, as most people do, it's no deal at all once the interest over ten or twelve years is figured in. The furniture isn't what you'd call prime quality, and you could have very good furniture from your local store for the cost plus interest.

When buying from a dealer, a call to the Better Business Bureau is not at all out of line. They can tell if you're dealing with a crook. Always get everything in writing. Never take a salesman's word.

And for heaven's sake, read and verify everything in the contract! What's that--you always do? Great! But is that contract talking about the home you've been talking to the dealer about? You see, mobile homes have serial numbers. And unless you've walked around your prospective home and verified that the numbers match, you don't know what you're getting.

To illustrate this point I'll use the example of a couple I know, Paul and Peggy Kruse. They shopped together, and very carefully, finally finding the ideal home, a two bedroom 24'x40' Concord. It was a beautiful home with tan carpet, a built-in counter-top food warmer, and 3/4" styrofoam insulation in addition to the standard fiberglass bath found in mobile homes. They paid $2900 down, leaving a $14,900 principal.

The home which was delivered and set up was a Concord, but it wasn't the unit they ordered. There was no built-in food warmer, the carpets were orange, and there was no styrofoam insulation. The home had a number of defects in the plumbing and wiring. For example the toilet in the master bedroom had its closet line hooked to the hot water tank. It took the dealer four days to fix the wiring, and Paul fixed other defects eight weeks later when the dealer neglected to fulfill his obligations under the manufacturer's warranty. Meanwhile, they contacted the dealer about the fact that they'd gotten the wrong unit by mistake. Only, according to the numbers on the
contract, they hadn’t. The paperwork was flawless, and the salesman who had handled the transaction had suddenly been transferred to eastern Washington.

Their lawyer gave them expensive advice: sell the home. Since the paperwork was in order, the case probably wouldn’t get far in court, and refusing to pay would mean the loss of a $2900 down payment.

The dealership where the home was purchased finally agreed to try to find them a buyer, and after three months presented Paul with an offer for $600 over his cash-out price, which he considered a lot better than losing his entire down payment. Paul signed the papers and was presented a check for $600 and that would have been the end of it, had he not met the new owners while he was moving out of the home. He then discovered that the family had paid, not $600, but $3000 over the cash-out price. And again there was nothing he could do. You might say that reading the fine print has become a habit around the Kruse household, which, by the way, is no longer a mobile home.

Another thing to be aware of when you buy a mobile home is that despite the name and wheels, they’re not really that mobile. The maximum width for private towing is eight feet, and the maximum length is 48 feet. Above that you must use a licensed, insured company which will charge for the service. The truck must be accompanied by two radio cars, and there are only certain hours of the day during which they can operate. So, while the dealer may provide the first move and set-up, you would be wise to make sure of the place you are moving to, because the next move is on you. And it’s not cheap. Local prices are available from local towing companies; check your yellow pages.

For some, the destination of their new home is a private lot. Developed lots are more expensive than undeveloped lots, but have the advantage of approval from the county. Undeveloped lots have to meet certain requirements such as land use and zoning before the state will allow you to live there. So never buy an undeveloped piece of property before checking it out thoroughly with the county. You may end up with a piece of land to pay for, and no place to put your home. Or worse, your home parked on a piece of land which the state refuses to let you live on.

For the vast majority of new owners, the mobile home park is where they choose to locate. And parks have rules, so be prepared.

To be on the safe side, you’d better plan to plan where to park before you buy. And check out the park thoroughly before you plan to move in. You will need skirting (panels which fit between the bottom of your trailer and the ground) in almost every park I’ve seen, and an awning (a porch-like arrangement over the front door) in many parks. In addition to requiring you to buy these for your home, many parks will tell you what you may keep in your yard, and in some cases, even who may live in your home. If you have any doubts about the rules, ask, because the time to find out about them is before, rather than after you move in. Finding another park on short notice isn’t always easy, and if you violate the rules, the owner may, and often does evict you.

But even if you find a park to your liking when you move in, there’s no guarantee that it’ll stay that way. The recent rent-strike staged by the tenants of Bakerview Mobile Estates is an example of the conflict that can be created by a change in the situation. It began when the new park owner, Dennis McRae, a sandy-haired Californian in his thirties, decided to raise lot rents in order to meet the costs of improvements and mortgage payments on the property he acquired earlier this year.

"Many parks will tell you what you may keep in your yard, and in some cases, even who may live in your home."

Such conflicts arise because of two basic concepts which this society has traditionally held sacred: the right to the security of one’s own home vs. the right of a man to profit from the property he has purchased. Since the mobile home separates home from the property on which it is
parked, a unique situation is created which hits both tenant and landlord literally where they live; it's the tenant's home, and the landlord's income, and disputes can become very bitter.

"We figured out that I would have to charge between $100 and $103 per lot," McRae explained from the front seat of his club wagon in front of the park's business office. He looked tired, and was clearly not eager to talk to another reporter about the well-publicized strike. "It's hard to figure things exactly, so I settled on $105 per lot."

"We were all extremely upset," said Chris Martin, one of the leaders of the nine member strike committee elected from among the tenants to negotiate with McRae. She seated herself in one of the comfortable chairs which occupy the spotless living room of her two-year-old home located on a well-kept lot 60. "Most of the conditions of the park have been made for years, it has been going down-hill. And suddenly we're hit with this huge rent increase. The double wide lots were going to go up 34% and the single wides were going up 54%. We just didn't feel that we could sit still for that. Because there are no controls in the State of Washington we had little legal recourse. He can triple the rent if he wants. What we had was a moral issue--what we felt was right."

The tenants were risking eviction, as Ms. Martin pointed out. Non-payment of rent is grounds for eviction, and the fact that there are not presently enough spaces in the area to accommodate that many units would have meant grave troubles for many of the strikers.

Among the things done by the strike committee was to survey parks in Whatcom County to see what they were paying as opposed to the condition of the park. Ms. Martin said that the average rent was $76 per month for a mobile space as of August this year, with far better conditions than Bakerview has to offer.

McRae's position on the matter was that improvements cost money, and that the rent hike was necessary to cover these expenses. Among the improvements planned was a general face-lift for the park, including repaving the driveways, with a price tag of near $50,000.

"I can't afford to put out more than I'm taking in," McRae said quietly, "and it's come down to that."

"He's willing to make facial improvements for looks, putting work into the common areas, which under the landlord/tenant act he must do anyway," Ms. Martin said. "Then would come the drainage problem, and that is all he is going to do. He wants the park to pay for itself, he wants his investment to grow, and in two years, he plans on selling this thing for a million and a half--those are his exact words! And we're going to have to pay for it! He forgets that these are our homes," she said. "We're making payments on these homes, and many people aren't going to be able to afford huge rent increases like this!"

A compromise was reached in September, both sides making concessions, but no one is really satisfied. McRae is to provide cable television to the park, and has agreed to a year's lease, which means that he can't raise rents until next September. In addition, according to Ms. Martin, he will provide a designated area for the children of the park to play. The renters will pay $95 per month rent.

But Bakerview Mobile Estates is not the only park whose tenants have objected to new management. One resident of a Snohomish County park told me of the changes made when her park changed hands.

"Around the court, this man is known as the 'Little Nazi' because he goes around looking for trouble."

Among the "Little Nazi's" alleged offenses are invasion of privacy, including allegedly entering one tenant's home to deliver a new set of rules. At the time, the lady who lived in the home was in the bathroom showering, and emerged from the bathroom to find him standing in her front room.

I could not reach the owner of this park for comment, and so, have omitted his name and the name of the park. However, having lived in the park, I must admit that I share the sentiments of one of the tenants, a former Bostonian who commented that she wished the park was located there.

"In Boston," she said, "you can have both a man's legs broken for $50."

For bona fide legal advice on problems, there are places to go. The Seattle Tenants' Union, open daily from 9 AM to noon can be reached at (206) 329-1010, and the Lawyer Referral Service at 800-552-0787. They can tell you what rights you have, and what to do in case of a dispute. Also, a summary of the Landlord/Tenant Act of 1973 (RCW Chapt. 59.18) can be obtained by writing to North Community Service Center, Housing Department, 619 N. 35th St., Seattle, Washington 98103. Their phone number is 634-2222.
Hamburger Madness
by Bill Gibson

Whether it's considered a religious experience or simple heartburn, the fast food industry is likely to be around for a long time.

Vainly I struggled with the potato peeler with the increasing awareness that I was entering into a battle of wits unarmed. Locked in the struggle between man and machine I tried to make the reluctant peeler respond to my commands. Three minutes later, the battle over, I sat down to contemplate the three white patches peeled off of my index finger and staunch the flow of blood. The dreaded contrivance gleamed from the nearby counter, its jaws still anchored to a piece of my skin, goading me into another confrontation.

Fumbling through my scant library with my remaining good hand I searched for a volume on cooking. Nothing. My intuitive knowledge of the subject consisted of making mudpies, a skill at which I had achieved only limited dexterity during my extended childhood.

The "joy of cooking" being such an elusive attainment, has for me produced some alternatives. The temporary solution, until I am more at home on the range, is the drive-in restaurant. The drive-in offers a place for the unskilled cook to preserve his tastebuds and his ego. Since my discovery of the drive-ins in the area I have noted that they produce a far reaching cultural impact.

The number of facilities in the Bellingham area (fifteen or more listed in the Bellingham yellow pages), generate an answer to just how far reaching that impact has been. Since their first appearance in the 1920s it seems that drive-ins have become almost as popular a cultural phenomenon as the automobiles which spawned them.

The answer to their popularity seems to lie within their methods of production. Convenience as well as speed are important factors in merchandising the food served.

Also, the tremendous success of the hamburger has become the mainstay of the drive-in menu. Claimed by some as "one of the greatest inventions of man," the hamburger has contributed to convenience food what the Model "T" gave to the auto industry. According to a legend, the hamburger appeared in an unnamed American city at the turn of the century in a beanery known as Louie's Lunch which began serving a hot beef patty on a bun. Somehow the idea was transmitted throughout various restaurants and in the 1930s the drive-in was born.

Today the drive-in has attained an aura which depicts cultural values and folkways. Bellingham is an excellent portrait, its drive-ins ranging from the large chains to the small proprietorships, clinging tenaciously to the old way and struggling for survival. The city displays these monuments to changing times on almost every busy corner.

An additional factor of drive-in success has been the almost religious aura that the drive-in has acquired. Restaurant advertising slogans have become the mantra to college students, corporate executives and school children alike. Some would go so far as to
suggest that the “golden arches” and other such symbols have replaced the church steeple as symbols of sanctuary. Conrad P. Kottack plays upon this idea in an article titled Rituals at McDonald’s, in the January 1978 issue of Natural History magazine.

I have never considered myself a hamburger worshipper, but there is “food for thought” in such a possibility. To be sure, less inanimate objects have been worshipped by other cultures.

In some cases it seems that the success of the drive-in method has promoted the adoption of its format in religious circles. The drive-in church as well as the drive-in bank have recently achieved popularity, a testimony to the success of the public’s conversion to convenience buying.

There is no accounting for taste of course and some will successfully avoid the magnetic pull of the increasing number of fast food outlets. Others have already succumbed. I have one friend whose daily menu consists of a cheeseburger for breakfast, a fishburger for lunch, and a deluxe for supper.

It seems that no culture can escape the wide scope of the drive-in. While strolling down the Champs Elysees in Paris four years ago I was startled by the familiar “golden arches” looming from the side of the huge street. Kottack states in the Natural History article that the restaurants in other countries provide a retreat where one can temporarily take refuge in their familiar surroundings, an additional portrayal of the drive-in as a shrine of sorts.

As mentioned before, Bellingham offers drive-ins in all stages of cultural evolution. A study of this variety of establishments displays a trend towards faster, assembly line service. Some outlets can already boast computerized menus. Another trend is giving the customer a number so that his order can be identified.

For me, the drive-in offers a momentary refuge from self destruction at my own hands. However, I have to admit, a meal there will never take the place of a home cooked turkey dinner as long as I’m not doing the cooking.

BELLINGHAM: Burger Boom or Bust?

by Kevin Stauffer

Is Bellingham’s fast food industry taking a dive? Some local restaurateurs think so, while at least one is enjoying profits which exceeds the pace for the same facility last year.

Lee’s Family Drive-In (Lakeway Drive and Nevada) reports a volume increase of approximately $200 to $300 per day over last season. On the other side of the patty, A&W (310 North Samish Way) manager Dean Fleming believes the entire area is in a recession.

Western’s students boosted sales at A&W during the first week of school, as was generally the case at area fast food franchises. But the economic situation has affected the college lifestyle, too, according to Fleming.

“It’s an extraordinary year; the college students living in apartments are going to the grocery store and making dinner at home, and those that live on campus are eating at campus dining facilities,” Fleming said.

“Call any restaurant in town, and I think if they answer honestly they’ll say that business is down from last year. I think we’re in for a serious economic depression.”

McDonald’s (1914 King) manager Eric Strade agrees with Fleming. “Our increase from the influence of Western is not as big this year as it was last year. I think it’s in line with the whole economic thing,” Strade said.

Colder weather and Western’s fall sports are keeping Lee’s Family Drive-In at the black end of the financial spectrum. With a location directly across from Civic Stadium, game time means profit time to manager Helen Trott.

“The business usually drops after the summer, but we’re really busy when there’s a game,” Trott said. “Our business hasn’t dropped; it’s picked up. Others are complaining that business is down, so I don’t know what to attribute our general rise to.”

Lee’s also caters to a number of Canadian customers. The increase of the exchange rate from 15-and-one-quarter to 16-and-one-quarter is a possible factor in the financial rise of the restaurant, Trott said.

No matter what the economic situation, one might guess that the fast food industry will always be alive and well and living all over the country, even in Bellingham.
HERLAND — A Lost Feminist Utopian Novel
by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Pantheon Books: New York 1979
(paperback - $2.95)

It's just an ordinary utopia, with life anointed, annulled in the pervading ether of peace, comfort, health, beauty, and progress, as one might expect.

But it is threateningly different to the three American men who, while exploring some unnamed and untamed land, stumble upon the remote but highly developed civilization and discover themselves aliens in a country of females. They are not intimidated but delighted at being so outnumbered, and initially approach their adventures as roosters in a henhouse. They are threatened, however, by the impeccable appearance — and reality — of order and progress. "This is a civilized country: there must be men!"

But they find no men, and as they explore Herland, they find no flaws either, except for those revealed in their own expectations and perceptions.

The women's mastery of their society extended as well to the natural functions — in the face of extinction parthenogenesis had developed and made child-bearing possible to any who lovingly nurtured the hope. Just as the land was willfully populated, so it was willfully controlled. There was no struggle for existence within their country, nor any need for predatory excursions without. The self-discipline which limited their quantity applied its energy to refining the quality of their lives. They were amazed at the reverence the American men held for old laws and traditions and at their insistence upon the value of competition as a stimulus to industry and achievement. In Herland, excellence was not a static state but a process, not a fruit of individual struggles but of united action.

The story, a whimsical but powerful social commentary by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, was rediscovered by scholar and teacher Ann Lane and published in book form only this year. Gilman wrote the story in 1915 and serialized it in her magazine Fore­runner, which she wrote, edited, and produced monthly for seven years. In a day that had not begun to lose itself from Victorian assumptions, and hadn't chosen to lose women from Victorian assignments, Gilman herself was a forerunner in a relay which only now is within sight of the still distant finish line.

"those feminine charms we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity...a creation to satisfy men's wishes."

The goal she saw was a cohesive social order built on the nurturing and life-giving female values of love and cooperation. That vision her mind nursed was sight enough to move her. She traveled throughout the United States and Europe, lecturing on social reform and feminism to women's and men's clubs, church congregations, labor unions, and suffrage groups.

Her best-known book, Women and Economics, was called an "expose of domestic mythology." It received international recognition and was translated into eight languages. Her other books were Concerning Children, The Home, Human Work, The Man Made World, or our Androcentric Culture, His Religion and Hers: a Study of the Faith of Our Fathers and the Work of Our Mothers, and a book of verse, In This Our World. Her very first book, Yellow Wallpaper, was a novel studying insanity, and she continued to write fiction, serializing her stories and novels in Forerunner.

Gilman knew the power of fiction for conveying her own visions, and the power of humor to expose
the absurdity of wide-accepted pieties. Her first utopian novel, *Moving the Mountain* (1912), constructs a humanist paradise in which all energies are applied to constructive industry, not warfare and aggression; in *Herland* the paradise is achieved without men at all.

The paradise viewed, resisted, yet finally acknowledged, is narrated through male eyes and provides the tediously perfect backdrop against which enculturated prejudices and perceptions of femininity and masculinity are challenged and changed.

"The whole culture was strikingly deficient in what we call femininity. This led me very promptly to the conviction that those feminine charms we are so fond of are not feminine at all, but mere reflected masculinity ... a creation to satisfy men's wishes."

Robbed of the need and opportunity to act as protectors, providers, masters, the three men wrestle to free their own identities and behaviour from its dependence upon their attitudes towards women. One viewed women as delicate flowers to be cherished and protected, another saw them as quarry, good for the adventure of hunt and conquest, while the narrator, a sociologist, saw women as peculiar creatures to be studied — from a safe distance.

These assumptions and the actions born of them are revealed ridiculous in Herland, where women's achievements had never been subjected to any limits. As the Americans reluctantly surrender them to the gentle reasoning and glowing reality of Herland, traits and capabilities previously labeled masculine and feminine are understood only as human traits.

Gilman energetically advocated both feminism and socialism, and did not see the causes as separate, but sought to unite them and prove their interdependence. She believed the traditional home was the socializer of inequity and inhumanity and proclaimed the need to move beyond the pettiness and personal possessiveness inherent in the "home" to a more encompassing corporate conscience and concern.

This emerged in her utopian Herland, as the sociologist observes: "To these large-minded women whose whole mental outlook was so collective, the limitations of a wholly personal life were inconceivable. They loved one another with a practically universal affection, rising to exquisite and unbroken friendships, broadening to a devotion to their country and people for which our word 'patriotism' is no definition at all. Patriotism, I have seen, is compatible with dishonesty, a cold indifference to the sufferings of millions. Patriotism is pride, and very largely combativeness."

Just as the three explorers, I entered the book intrigued, searching certain for the conflict that must exist somewhere. But when the perfection that invited my challenge did indeed prove perfect, its allure died and its predictability tired me. What is perfection but a measure, and how can one measure except by contrast? Contrast and conflict, vices excluded from Herland, become in their own absence virtues dearly missed. As the men said, "There were no adventures, because there was nothing to fight, nothing to oppose, to struggle with. . . ."

Conflict at least affords reconciliation; sin begs salvation. Herland, knowing no sin, needed no atonement.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman's fantasy is fixed and forged in old words and awkward ways that sometimes obtrude in our space age speech — speaking dreams in the language of memories.

Reading any utopian novel, one expects to find him/her self quite at sea in superlatives, and embraces eager any particular element accessible enough to become a hope or remote enough to become a dare. *Herland* offers hopes and dares, and though it is not fascinating as a novel, it is definitely intriguing as an artifact of early feminism.
Gallery
As the fog rolls into Squalicum Harbor on a cold fall day, the fishing boats sit quietly—deserted by their summer crew. A few skippers sit on the edges of the docks, drinking coffee and talking about the season that is now about over. Last year the salmon ran until mid-November, but the supplies are now gone and it's time to stow away the nets and think about winter.

While many local commercial fishermen are lamenting the abrupt end to a predicted good fall season, some Western students are glad to be able to start their classes at the normal times. A longer season for them might have meant missed classes and dropped credits, sacrifices that have been made in the past for a chance to make more money.

Outdoor adventure is an attraction for newcomers to the fishing business, but romantic visions of being at sea fade quickly when going to work for a veteran skipper. This summer occupation is the only source of yearly income for most old-timers. Nets have to be mended, boats need new paint, new lines have to be cut before the season starts and a new crew usually has to work for a couple of weeks with no guaranteed pay.

Besides the flexible work schedule (two to three days a week this year) and the chance to cruise the San Juan Islands during the warm summer months, a major advantage of fishing for students is the money. On a fairly successful Purse Seiner or a lucky Reefnet operation, a crew member can make as much money in a day as most would make all summer at a regular nine-to-five job.

"It's nice to be able to afford a little cocaine for my friends at the end of the season," John Bliss, a business major, said.
Three Techniques

Purse Seining, Gillnetting and Reefnetting are three of the more common forms of commercial fishing in the local area.

The basic operation of the reefnetter centers around an artificial reef made of plastic grass and nylon lines.

Spotters stand in ten foot towers and watch for fish as they wander through the reef. These fishermen can do nothing to lure the fish in but have to depend on the tide to do most of the work. Once the fish are in the nets the boats come alive—battery powered winches scream as they lift the front of the net to trap the salmon and the crew works quickly to pull the net to one of the boats and dump the catch into the hold before any can escape.

Purse Seining is the largest of local fishing operations, both in the size of the equipment used and the amount of fish caught. Seiners rarely stick with one set of the net for longer than an hour. When the net is hauled in, at the skipper’s orders, the skiffman slowly closes the circle of net while the purseman is pulling on the line that runs through moveable rings at the top of the net. When the skiff reaches the main boat, that end of the net is tied off to shackles about fifteen feet above the drum and secured to the boat’s mast. The drum slowly winds the net on board while the rest of the crew watches for snags and eventually dumps out the catch.

Because it is usually a one or two man operation, few students are hired to work on Gillnetters during the summer. However, many students that are successful at other forms of fishing end up being either partners or owners of boats in this part of the fishing industry.

Gillnetters range from fiberglass custom crafts to wooden skiffs with outboard motors. Regardless of the boat, the netting operations are all the same. The main difference between Gillnetting and other forms of fishing in the area is that once the salmon are in the net they are stuck by their gills in the five inch mesh. With less concern for escaping fish, Gillnetters usually leave their nets in the water for hours at a time.

A sense of camaraderie develops among crew members as the season goes on and the boat begins to catch some fish. Good days bring high spirits and make the tedious work of setting and hauling an 1800’ net a little more tolerable. During the poorer days, when only 50 or 100 fish are caught, the crew bolster each other’s morale and tries to work at an enthusiastic pace.

“Temper do tend to flare after four guys are stuck on a 60 foot boat for several days on end,” Connors said.

A problem that student fishermen face is trying to fit the sporadic fishing schedule into coursework in the spring and fall. Western profs have cooperated with most fishermen, allowing a few missed classes or giving early final exams. However, the workload can be quite heavy for a couple of weeks with 8 or 9 hours a day devoted to boatwork and the rest of the time spent on homework.

“It’s a matter of priorities: either risk flunking a class or make some more money,” Connors said. “I’d much rather make $75 to $100 than sit in class for an hour.”

John Bliss got a late start for his first season of Purse Seining and avoided the conflict between school and fishing. However, he came up against some problems...
of his own in going to work for a skipper that didn’t have a crew until the middle of June.

Warren Hanson, his skipper, has been fishing the Puget Sound since about 1946 with his brother and the rest of his Bellingham family. His political position is evident in the names of his two Purse Seiners (the “Liberty?” and the “Justice?”) and in some adventures with Indians that Bliss alluded to but never explained.

“Our skipper follows a certain fishing etiquette,” Bliss said, “and is known to get very upset with his crew when things don’t go his way.”

Bliss and Connors agreed on one aspect of working on a Purse Seiner—the danger of not paying attention to the job. Winches, which are used to haul in the net, can let go if the operator lets up pressure and the sheer weight of submerged lines has been known to pull men overboard.

“Guys that screw up more than twice can jeopardize the lives of crew members and usually are not tolerated by skippers,” Connors said.

A sense of fellowship that Connors noticed between crew members extends to boats and their skippers. By fishing in groups and sharing a code on the CB radio, boats can depend on each other for help in case of a breakdown and lead each other to good fishing areas. According to Connors, this radio code includes mentioning one skipper’s name to tell how many fish have been caught and where.

“If we say ‘we have about the same as Brett did last week’ that means we caught about 500 fish.”

In contrast to Purse Seining, Reefnet fishing involves very little competition over finding out where the salmon can be caught. With boats anchored in the same spot all season, these fishermen have to wait for the fish to come to them.

“The adrenalin rush of watching strong-spirited salmon run up into the nets is like nothing I’ve ever experienced,” Mike Geller, Fairhaven student, said. Unlike students that work on Purse Seiners, Geller admits that fishing has a romantic appeal that has kept him interested for the past four seasons.

Reefnetting can be a trial of patience. Spotters stand in towers on each end of the boats, wearing Polaroid sunglasses to cut the glare from the water and waiting to give the command to “give her hell” and haul in the fish. When the fish are scarce, the waiting can be frustrating to the point of hauling the net without actually seeing any fish below.

“It’s like a game of Blackjack in a lot of ways,” Geller said, “because you know the percentages from the cards played but you’re never too sure what will come up next.”

Working on a Reefnetter requires coordination between crew members in a small amount of space—boats are usually 40 feet long and seven feet wide—and success in netting the fish depends on quick reactions by the spotter and the deck man. Any movement that is made too early can scare fish out of reach while hesitating too long to make a move can have the same effect.

“With a minimum of moving machinery and no engines to waste gas, the crew can concentrate more on the fish and less on making repairs,” Geller said, in comparing his occupation to other forms of fishing in the area.

Earnings from commercial fishing vary with the season and the type of operation. Crew members are paid at the end of
the season when the skippers reach a settlement with the canneries for the total amount of fish caught during the season. Because they never see the actual poundage tallies, crew members have to rely on their boss to be honest in deciding how much they are paid.

Crew shares for an average summer of Purse Seining range from $5-10,000. Reefnetting shares are often much less with some making as much as $3,000 for the season and most earning around $1,500.

Concentrated and seasonal income is easier to manage for Connors. He lived on the money he made in the summer of '78 up to the start of this year's season, even though fishermen are eligible for unemployment Jan. 1.

"In spite of fishing's poor outlook for the future, I plan to go to Alaska this season and earn enough to maybe invest in my own boat," he said.

Bliss expects to save enough of his crew share to make it through the winter, but has made plans for other jobs.

"It will be hard to adjust to a normal work schedule again," he said.

"Fishing is a dying business... with no sure predictions on the salmon to come in the next few years. I would warn anybody thinking about getting into it to be prepared for a long commitment," Geller said.

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IPSFC Holds Tight

The International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission (IPSFC) is responsible for monitoring the amount of fish caught and regulating the number of days fishermen are allowed to fish. Because the number of commercial Gillnet and Purse Seine licences being used in the area has doubled since 1976, fishing in local areas was open for only about 20 days this season.

"No new fishing licenses have been issued by the government for the past six years," Bob Christianson, IPSFC member, said, "but they are being sold for upwards of $15,000 by private parties."

IPSFC relinquished its control of local waters to the state fisheries department at the end of September when "they figured that all the fish that could be expected had already gone through." Since September 28, only two days of fall fishing have been opened.

Being president of Redden Net Co., Christianson is concerned that the prices of fishing equipment and nets may be too steep for the amount of fishing that is being allowed.

"When a guy invests, say, $50,000 in a boat and a couple of thousand in nets, he has to go for any openings in fishing at all," he said. Last year the season lasted until the end of November.

The burden is placed on Alaska to produce enough fish to accommodate the large increase in the size of the fishing fleet, he said. Local fishermen will soon be forced to go north if the present local salmon supply doesn't increase.

"If the government is going to run fishermen out of business by supporting equal catch rules for the small Indian fleet and closing more and more fishing days, then they will have to pay them back somehow." Opposing federal subsidies because "they'll have to be paid out of taxes," Christianson proposed that the government start a buyback program for fishing licenses.

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1-10 You are a unique person indeed, probably look like your face caught on fire and someone tried to put it out with a fork. You are so healthy you make us sick. You are the type of person who will undoubtedly die inhaling a Bran Bud and dried avocado milkshake.

11-20 You are an average person, but who in the hell likes "average" people anyway? Why don't you do something different for a change, like impale yourself on the nearest sharp object.

21-30 As we say in the medical profession, you're "crazier than a blind hound dog in a meatlocker." To sum things up you truly enjoy intrapersonal perversions and probably think Physiology is the study of carbonated beverages.

31-40 You seem to have no favorable attributes. You relish drugs, smoke and drink excessively, probably expired two years ago and haven't realized it yet. You're certainly not perfect (perfection being a professor whose only purpose in life is to confuse you), and because of this lack of impeccancy you're a heck of a lot better than the rest of the pickles in the jar.
A story about a five-and-dimer and a long-time loser, but a loser who's made a living night after night, year after year, out on the road, winning.

He showed up one evening three summers ago in his old Chevrolet. He was nearly sixty, with a body no bigger than a good sized twelve-year-old, but a head large enough to have been on a man twice his size. He walked over and asked me for the time. I gave it to him. Then he took a cigarette out, lit it, and asked me if I liked sauterne wine. I didn't know if I did or not but I had no objection to finding out.

It didn't take long to find out about the wine and by the time I did the old man had begun to talk. His name was Philip Nickles and the way his story went he was from Portland on a kind of business trip, like a salesman covering his territory, only he wasn't a salesman. For the last thirty-five years, he said, he'd been coming up to Washington to earn his living in the bars of little towns on both sides of the Cascades beating punchboards.

I drank his sauterne but I didn't really believe a word he said, I wasn't even sure about the name. But then three weeks later it happened that Nickles and I took his old Chevy over the mountains to Bellingham, beating punchboards all the way there and back again.

"It's the oldest and probably the first trick anybody trying to stay alive on a punchboard thinks of. Wad the damn things up and throw them away."

You don't find punchboards in uptown bars. You find them in taverns selling beer and wine and they're going out of style even there. But some places still have them, boards with names like: "Dime Champ," "Pony Boy," "Olympic Club" or "Fifty Dollar Charley" and colored like circus posters set up down the bar. Pick one up and you'll see that they're as thick as a small town telephone book but taller and wider and drilled through with row after row of holes the diameter of ten penny nails, each filled with a numbered punch. The holes form a square in the center of the board, a hundred on a side, a thousand in all, and in the thousand punches that a board contains, twenty-five may be winners, ten may be worth twenty bucks a piece, one may be worth a hundred bucks or more. You use a wire key to punch out the tickets, the idea being to find the winners. The problem is that every wrong guess costs you money and there are nine hundred and seventy-five wrong guesses on a board. Nickles' angle then, the work he sets himself out to do, is to cheat.

The first time I saw Nickles work a board was in a bar in Snohomish. But before we'd gone in he stopped on the sidewalk a few doors from the place and explained.

"Look," he told me. "This is the shot. You go in first. Then when I come in we don't know each other, see? If the bartender starts hawking me you're my break, you order another drink and start talking to him. But don't make it obvious, and listen, don't worry, it's no sweat. They can't tell what I'm doing anyhow."

It was true. They couldn't. The bartender poured him a sauterne and then left him alone. I watched him work in the mirror behind the bar. I didn't make it obvious.

The bartender, if he thought about it at all, must have thought Nickles was the slowest player he'd ever seen. Taking a punch out of the board, taking his time deciding whether it was a winner or not and then laying it down on the bar. It seemed that way to me, too, even though Nickles had explained it to me. But then after a little while I began to see it, the moves he'd make with the losers. Though it looked like he was studying every punch very slowly, in reality he was moving fast, taking ten or fifteen punches out at a time, palming them and reading them quickly, fanning the little accordioned
punches open with his thumbs. When he found a
winner he'd lay it on the counter top and then palm
the rest until he could drop them in his shirt. That
was the second half of it.

When Nickles worked he wore these shiny shirts
with long tails he'd tuck into his pants. The material
was the important thing. They'd be nylon or rayon
because the material was slick. But before he
worked in one he'd take a razor blade and cut out
the bottom of the left breast pocket on the inside.
They anything that he dropped into it, like punch-
board tickets, would slip down the slick material of
the pocket, fall through the slit and end up resting
inside his shirt against his belt. It was simple, and it
worked. He called it going south.

It's not a new idea. Go into a tavern that has a lot
of boards late on a Friday night. Then look on the
floor under the row of bar stools in front of the
boards. You'll begin to see little wadded up bits of
paper. Some might be shredded labels, but some of
them will be punches. It's the oldest and probably
the first trick anybody trying to stay alive on a
punchboard thinks of. Wad the damn things up and
throw them away. Nickles has seen them put them
down their pants, stuff them in their shoes, drop
them in people's pockets sitting next to them at a bar
or order large red wines so they can hide them in
their drinks. He's even seen them eat them. He
swears he never did himself, he never had to. He
could palm twenty minutes worth of punches and
take them south. But he didn't always know how to
go south. That would come later.

The way Nickles explained it, beating punch-
boards was one of the first things he did when he
found himself back on the streets again after World
War II had finally ended and the Navy let him go.
With his discharge in the trunk of his car and an
aversion to taking orders he'd acquired in the
service, he started hanging out in the clubs of
Portland, in the working class section of the city,
looking for an angle. After he'd hung out long
enough and watched the action for a while he
became aware that some of the gamblers playing the
different games were either very lucky or else they
were very smooth. Guys would carry around a wad
of bills they'd made in three or four hours beating
pin balls, pull tabs or the punchboards. A hundred
dollars for four hours work, work that could be had
seven night a week just by strolling off the sidewalk
into any of a couple hundred bars in the city wasn't
anything anyone put down, at least anyone that
Nickles knew. Nickles had found what he was
looking for.

But in the beginning Nickles didn't know any
more than the next guy. He'd stuff punches in his
back pockets like everybody else. Then one night in
a club Nickles happened to notice an old guy sitting
down the bar from him while he worked on a board. The man kept staring at him until Nickles began to think he was an owner and put the board he was working on down and got up and left. The man wasn’t an owner though, he was another punch-board slicker watching Nickles work. The old guy followed Nickles out of the bar and caught up to him on the sidewalk. He asked Nickles what in hell he’d been trying to do. Nickles told him. Then he took Nickles to another bar and told him to sit next to him and watch. Nickles watched until the bars closed the next morning. What he learned that night was how to go south, and after that night Nickles claims he was better than the man who’d shown him.

I first heard that story one morning about 7 o’clock while we waited in Nickles’ car in front of the Holly Tavern in Bellingham, waiting for the owner, a Greek named George, to open up. We’d been in Everett the night before and had ended up sleeping in a field somewhere north of Mount Vernon. We’d awakened in the morning to a herd of Holsteins standing around the car. But Everett had been good. We’d beat a little place down on the waterfront and left with forty bucks between us. All night long we’d kept telling the owner that we couldn’t go wrong, it was the seventh night of the seventh month of 1977. He must’ve thought there was something to it, because he kept smiling and paying off. That was Nickles’ rule of thumb. If you got a bartender to smile you had him. If they thought you were OK they’d leave you alone, and left alone it didn’t take Nickles long on a board until he had his winners laid out like a hand of solitaire on the bartop in front of him.

Women behind the bar were a different matter, though. Nickles’ general theory of women bartenders divided them into two broad categories: young girls and hard cases. Nickles’ first move with a young girl was always to flatter her. Their vanity, he explained, made them easy to turn around. He’d say something nice to them and then if he saw that it worked he’d keep it up, off and on, all night long. Of course it didn’t always work. It helped if the girl didn’t have any of her friends around or if people had been giving her a hard time. But it worked as often as it didn’t and then Nickles would go to town on the girl’s board.

“With a Charley board you had a chance of walking out of a place with fifty bucks in your pocket.”

The second category were the women Nickles called “hard cases.” A hard case was any female who was wise to the game. Women who’d call bullshit when they stood in front of it. They were too suspicious, Nickles complained, and since you couldn’t turn them you had to steer around them. But even the hard cases paid off.

“But,” he told me, “there’s a person harder to beat, even tougher to get around than a hard case. And that’s a Greek.”

So we sat there that morning in the Greek’s on Holly street in Bellingham, the only people in the bar. We ordered a sauterne and a beer and when the Greek poured the drinks Nickles nudged me and looked towards the end of the bar. He had his eye on a Fifty Dollar Charley board on the end of the counter. His eyes weren’t any good any more and he was too vain to wear glasses so I always checked out the boards to see how much they were punched. If they were new we couldn’t play them. All an owner would have to do would be to count the number of holes punched in his board and match that against the punches Nickles put on the bar. But we were OK, the board was a quarter gone. And it was a good board. With a Charley board you had a chance of walking out of a place with fifty bucks in your pocket.

Nickles put a five dollar bill down on the counter then got up and brought back the board. The Greek was watching us in his mirror. Nickles went to work anyway. Slowly at first, he didn’t want the Greek any more suspicious than he already was, but steadily. After twenty minutes Nickles had two five dollar winners on the bar in front of him. The owner had just brought Nickles his second glass of wine when Nickles laid the second winner down. The Greek looked them over.

“I must be lucky today,” Nickles told him.

“I don’t know. Maybe too lucky, huh? I think I seen you before.”

“No. I’m new in town. But I’m due. I dropped half
my paycheck on a board just last week.”

If the Greek believed any of what Nickles told him you couldn’t tell by looking at him. He looked at Nickles for a second or two then he looked at his board and then he took the two winning punches back to the cigar box he kept his board money in and brought back a ten dollar bill. By the time he got back he owed Nickles another five.

Nickles worked that Charley board over for two hours with the Greek doing everything he could think of except stop him, standing over Nickles with his palms flat on the bar making him account for every punch the owner saw on the counter. But then the customers started coming in and the Greek had to pour them drinks. He never had a chance after that. When we left the place we had a twenty and three tens between us, a bottle of sauterne, a six pack of beer and our pockets full of cigarettes and change.

After we’d gotten on the freeway and gone north for a few miles Nickles spread one of the Greek’s paper napkins in his lap, unbuttoned his shirt and pulled out his shirt tails. 600 or so little yellow punches fell into his lap. Nickles took a handful and started dribbling them out the wing window. Then he looked over at me.

“Greeks always make me work my ass off.”

“Then what’d we go there for?” I asked him.

“For the money. What the hell’d you think?”

I just kept driving. Nickles laughed, pouring the last of the punches out the wing.

“Look,” he told me. “Here’s the shot. There’s a little town just north of Bellingham here called Custer that has one bar and a gas station. The bar has so many boards the bartender has to move them out of your way to give you a beer.”

Then Nickles laid his head against the window getting ready to go to sleep, a trick I’d seen him do before. It took him about a minute and a half.

“Wake me up when we get there.” he said.

I did.

* ** *

The last I heard of Phil Nickles was just last Christmas. A friend from Oregon called and his name came up. It seemed he’d left Portland, taking his old Chevy down through Roseburg to go see some friends in Ashland. He’d planned to do a little work on the way. Straight down Interstate Five. Going south.
Directions: Fill in the appropriate answer using (A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4) add them up and look for the proper evaluation.

1. Which of the following statements would best describe your childhood?
   a. Instinctively doing things the proper way.
   b. Always having to eat the last piece of bread in the sack.
   c. Having to sit within reach of your father at the dinner table.
   d. Being told by your parents that the babies got mixed up at the hospital and you really belong to a poor illiterate migrant family and if you don't behave they'll give you back.

2. Looking at yourself in the mirror, you:
   a. Think, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder."
   b. Assure yourself that you will not always look like a dart board.
   c. Pretend you don't exist.
   d. Take 20 grains of pentobarbital.

3. Which of the following applies to your daily lifestyle?
   a. You abstain from all sinful vices.
   b. You smoke anything that will burn.
   c. You drink anything that will burn.
   d. Both b. and c.

4. Rate this statement on a scale of 1 to 4.
   "Disco people are like a bowl of granola, you take away the fruits and nuts and all you got left are flakes."

5. You take large amounts of narcotics because:
   a. You don't really want to but your friends make you.
   b. You can afford them.
   c. Your friends can afford them.
   d. Hey, it's a drug-crazed culture.

6. Sex with your lover:
   a. Makes you feel joyously exuberant, spasmodically belated, etc., etc., etc.
   b. Makes you feel adequately satisfied.
   c. Makes you vomit.
   d. Makes your lover vomit.

7. Your greatest fear is of:
   a. Eternal Damnation.
   b. Not being successful in your career.
   c. Blind, crazy quadraplegics driving cement trucks.
   d. Being at a movie and getting sat on and crushed by a fat person who didn't know anyone was in your seat.

8. You are sitting on a bus while an attractive young lady stands nearby. You:
   a. Courteously stand and offer her your seat.
   b. Ignore her.
   c. Pretend you're mentally retarded and unable to stand.
   d. Say, "Hey baby, long as I got a face you got a place to sit."

9. Which of these statements would best describe a wonderful night out on the town for you,
   a. Getting dressed up, going to a disco, shaking whatever hangs, being with the "Beautiful People," and showing your ability to consume expensive drugs.
   b. Going to your favorite tournament, "Bowling for Towels," and getting a front row seat.
   c. Sitting with friends in a quiet bar, having an intellectual discussion on whether the universe is finite or non-finite.
   d. Passed out in a rock and roll bar, face down in a pool of beer after shouting every obscenity known to mankind, destroying everything within sight, and groping at every member of the opposite sex within reach.

10. You and your lover have just had an argument, later you:
    a. Ask to sit down and have a heart to heart talk.
    b. Put on the "Silent Treatment."
    c. Put glue in her feminine spray.
    d. Tie a slipknot into his jockstrap.

answers to quiz on page 23
Born to Hate
Born to Kill

by Steve Valandra

The ancient, illegal sport of cockfighting is alive and bloody in the Skagit Valley — and a lost contest means death.

When the chilly winds of December begin to sweep through the Skagit Valley, the combatants will gather for heated battles. They will weigh no more than six pounds as they square off in dirt pits roughly 16 feet in diameter. Some of the warriors will have their taut legs equipped with three-inch gaffs, others with stainless steel spurs.

Most of the contests will be swift, no more than five minutes in length. The victors will be those who refuse to die or are not paralyzed as the result of a punctured lung or neck.

The activity is the ancient "sport" of cockfighting, which, according to historical accounts, originated in the jungles of Southeast Asia more than 2,500 years ago. It is also illegal in most of the United States including Washington (a misdemeanor punishable by a $500 fine and 90 days in jail). But that deters none of the approximately 300 Skagit Valley area residents who regularly participate. For them the battles provide excitement and an opportunity to showcase their charges.

Currently, the seven-month season is in a lull because the "birds" are moulting, which transforms their usually rude, pugnacious demeanor into that of "a coward," as one trainer remarked. But come the first week of December each bird will be in his prime: feathers trimmed and arranged in a rainbow-like pattern, the skin toughened by massage and the comb cut to reduce it as a target for the opposing fowl.

For most of the Skagitonians, such as Tom Wilson (not his real name), cockfighting is a hobby. Wilson, in his forties, has raised and fought gamecocks for 10 years. He makes enough money from it to cover the $1,500 yearly expense of feeding his brood of 30. "It's just like raising a prize-
fighter," Wilson says of the delicate care he provides his troops. "They're all special. They get the best of everything."

According to Wilson, at least 300 different breeds of gamecocks exist, and that each is bred to be savagely aggressive. "Hate is bred into them," Wilson explained. "They hate each other from the moment they're born."

Sometimes, as Wilson discovered, that hate can be vented toward a human. He was once attacked and repeatedly slashed across the forehead, arms and hands by one of his most vicious birds. "I saw a lot of blood that day," he recalled. "He really tore me up."

For normal fighting purposes, the birds are split into two classes: stags, which are nine months to a year old, and cocks, those over a year in age. Each is matched against another from the same class and one that is identical in weight. Only the male birds fight.

Several weeks prior to the fighting season, they are put through an intensive training period in which they are rigorously conditioned for battle and fed a high-calorie diet of grain. The preparation also includes sparring matches. For this the birds' claws are outfitted with padded gloves to insure that no injuries result during the preparatory bouts.

Like most sports, cockfighting is watched over by a referee, whose decisions regarding each bird's competency to battle is final. For those who prove themselves able combatants, the rewards are much the same as for a champion racehorse: they are retired to stud. Wilson said top gamecocks reach their peak when they are three years old. The losers who do not die during their bouts are killed by trainers who don't want inferior fighting traits passed along to future generations.

Although tension runs high at matches, Wilson says nothing gets out of hand. Drinking at Skagit Valley contests is prohibited, and though small bets between trainers and spectators, usually in the $50 to $100 range, accompany each bout, rarely are there disagreements over money or anything else. "Everything is controlled so there's no trouble," Wilson said. "The pit boss, the one staging the fights, has final word over any disagreements. If a problem can't be solved, the people disagreeing are told to leave—and they do. He (the pit boss) has a few hundred people backing him up."

To set up a fight, Skagit cockfighters have designed their own communication network. A person who has a set date for fighting, usually on a weekend, passes the word along to several friends who in turn relay the information to others during the week. On the day of the contests, which can last up to 14 hours, the participants meet at a local service station where the location is then disclosed. Until then no one knows where the matches will be staged.

Apparently, those tactics have worked well. Few Skagit "cockers" have experienced any legal troubles, and local law enforcement officials know little about the affairs.

"I've heard of stories of betting on it, but that was 20 or 30 years ago," comments Burlington Police Chief Scott Hendrickson. "I find it surprising that that kind of activity goes on here."

"We're not aware of any activity in our area," says Sgt. Glenn Campbell of the Skagit Valley Sheriff's department. "If we become aware of them (cockfights) it's definitely something we'd investigate."

One group that is acutely aware of cockfighting is the Skagit Valley Humane Society, which harshly condemns the sport. "It's a cruel sport, a miserable thing," says SVHS Director Marie Moore. "Two animals tearing each others apart is inhumane."

Even more stern in criticism is Ted Christie, a Bellingham resident who works for the SVHS and also was a humane officer with the Whatcom County Humane Society. "Anybody that would delight in putting two animals together to kill and maim, to mutilate each other, is sick."

"Anybody that would become aware of them (cockfights) it's definitely something we'd investigate."

The merits of cockfighting can be debated forever, but several things are certain: many people actively participate in the sport locally, and trainers provide their feathery fighters with the best of care—as long as they win. "You've got your richest and poorest people taking part in the fights," says Wilson. "They're people from every type of ethnic group. It's exciting."