Dear Klipsun:

We are gratified by Naomi Stenberg’s interest in women’s psychology, and in our work described in her article. However, we want to correct what we feel are some distortions in her representations of our ideas.

Our basic premise is that psychology has not adequately represented women’s experience. Men’s experience has been taken as the norm, and women have been understood as deviant or simply as “other.” As a result, developmental and treatment theories are guided by normative ideas which represent only one part of the human experience. In order to help women, our goal is to empower women to learn to understand, value, and communicate their own experience. To interpret one’s own experience gives one the power not to be described by patriarchal models, or language, or ideas which can distort experience and self-understanding. For women, the ability to value their own thoughts and experience is hindered by self-doubt and hesitation when private experience seems at odds with cultural myths and values about how one is “supposed” to think and feel. (Men are also affected by cultural myths and values, but the different set of those values gives rise to a different spectrum of psychological difficulties.) For example, women grow up learning many “myths” about how a woman should act, what kind of feelings are “healthy,” and how one should behave in order to secure a relationship with a man. Following these myths can lead women to become self-aliased, and to develop an outer “false” self which tries to comply with the myths, while the inner, authentic self can feel confused, uncertain, angry and out of touch with others. Our goals are to help women understand and articulate their own experience in order to increase their psychological freedom, and also to expose alienating myths about women.

For Naomi to summarize that we are helping women “learn to say ‘Fuck you’ to old patterns, old ways of behaving . . .” is an oversimplification of our purposes and activities. Although anger and frustration with the status quo are frequently the impetus for change, an undifferentiated response such as “fuck you” is not, to our way of thinking, sufficient to set the process of change in motion. Our purpose is to help women, often through therapy, uncover their authentic feelings, and then to decide how or whether to act on those feelings. For Naomi to suggest that depression is unexpressed anger, or anger turned inward is a great oversimplification and denotes a kind of “reversible raincoat” theory: simply turn the anger outward and the depression is cured. Unfortunately, depression is much more complex, as is the role of anger in depression. Dana Jack’s work on depression starts from the premise that psychology has not listened carefully enough to depressed women’s descriptions of their experiences and feelings. By recording and considering the narratives of women who are depressed, Dana’s goal is to provide a text of depressed women’s experiences which can instruct us as to what kinds of cultural and psychological factors are affecting women so negatively. Anger turned inward plays a role, but points us to consider how anger becomes unrecognizable to the person experiencing it. To suggest that one simply needs to express anger to feel less depressed does a disservice in its oversimplification. We have enough free floating anger in the world; what we need more of is self-knowledge in order to be able to know what we think, feel, and experience. Self-knowledge allows a choice of whether to act or not to act in a given situation; a step toward self-definition and a step away from being interpreted or victimized by others.

To understand women’s psychology, we must consider how the culture interacts with women’s development to create their vulnerability to depression and to eating disorders. How do 20th century cultural forces affect ability to have a strong sense of self and, at the same time, to make and maintain intimate relationships with men? How can a woman become an interpreter of her own experience instead of listening to models, ideas and teachings which demean or misunderstand her experience? Patricia Marek’s work with eating disorders and Dana Jack’s with depression have something to do with sorting out some of these intricacies. Again we appreciate Naomi’s interest, but we feel we are trying to accomplish more than teaching women to say “fuck you” to old patterns and old ways of behaving in order that they may change.

Dana Jack, MSW, Ed.D.
Patricia Marek, Ph.D.
Klipsun is a Lummi Indian word meaning "beautiful sunset."

Bellingham cruisers take weekend nights in the fast lane.
BY MARK CONNOLLY

Kids in trouble get a second chance by pitting themselves against Washington's mightiest mountain.
BY LYNN BALDWIN

Coke...some use it for a fast high; others are married to it.
BY LYNN HERSMAN

Taking life on small wheels seriously—life's a half-pipe.
BY JODY MACDONALD

The last of the mohawks skates into the sunset.
BY JOHN G. PURCELL

The gay community braves the impact of AIDS.
BY JEFF BRAIMES

Two Fairhaven families reside in houses of mystery and a lot of local history.
BY HOLLY BLOMBERG

Jeff Margolis celebrates the seasons of life.
BY NAOMI JARVIE

The funeral industry looks up, and eternity in heaven takes on a new meaning.
BY JOHN PAVITT

ROCK AROUND THE BLOCK

ONCE MORE... UP THAT MOUNTAIN!

LIFE ON THE LINE

URETHANE MEETS MASONITE

SKATE TOUGH OR GO HOME

LIVING WITH THE SHADOWS

ANTIQUE LIVING ON THE SOUTHSIDE

RENAISSANCE MAN

THE CHOICES: ASHES, UNDERGROUND OR AN ORBIT IN SPACE

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Volume 17, Number 2
ROCK AROUND THE BLOCK

"We're on a road to nowhere
come on inside
Takin' that ride to nowhere
we'll take that ride . . ."
—Talking Heads

By Mark Connolly

Traffic hums above the distant whirring of G-P and the rat-a-tat-a-rat-a-tat-a... of an adjacent rooftop building fan. It's Friday night, and the first sound of teenage cruising comes from a sleek, maroon Camero that rips a long, metallic fart of acceleration through the green light at Cornwall Avenue up Magnolia.

On the street, couples stroll hand-in-hand to restaurants and bars. A line forms outside the Mt. Baker Theater. The Bon Marche spills light out onto the sidewalk. Parents walk children through some late shopping. Traffic is moderate, maybe a car or two at each red light—mostly quiet and orderly.

Two guys in a glitter-blue LeMans cruise up next to three blondes in a flat-red Mustang. They eye each other and gun it side by side through a yellow light at Cornwall. Much of the cruising action starts here—the first of four lights up Magnolia to Forest Street. The circuit

7 p.m.

From the roof of the concrete tower atop the Parkade in downtown Bellingham, the sunset is a long salmon-pink band that silhouettes purple the jagged skyline of Vancouver Island. The air is just October cool under a dark, grey blanket that's hemmed above the horizon. Squalicum Harbor appears lit with a hundred warm candles. And the steam billowing out of Georgia-Pacific's smokestacks rises floodlight white against the sky, rises, rises higher like a headless ghost and disappears. Fluorescent lights mark the grid of city streets; high-rise buildings above the rooftops peek open their night eyes.

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7:45 p.m.

Two guys in a glitter-blue LeMans cruise up next to three blondes in a flat-red Mustang. They eye each other and gun it side by side through a yellow light at Cornwall. Much of the cruising action starts here—the first of four lights up Magnolia to Forest Street. The circuit
turns left there, one block down to Champion Street. The State Street light on Champion going west is another hot starting point for the straightway past the Whatcom Transit Authority bus terminal at Railroad Avenue to the light at Cornwall. Straight through the light, Champion bears left for a block. At Commercial Street, a hard left, and another fast left through the light on the corner by the Bon, back onto Magnolia and up to the light at Cornwall where the madness begins again.

Point-seven miles. About three minutes cruising time. On Friday and Saturday nights, this is the circle teenagers turn inexhaustibly into a cross between a race track and merry-go-round. Around and around and around they go . . . RED LIGHT: Hanging out car windows, stereo blares mixing in the air, engines idle at a husky adolescent rumble . . . GREEN LIGHT: Tires spinning in piercing cheerleader squeals, and fossil fueled macho grunts of power lunging forward.

"The cruising phenomenon has been around for decades, for generations," Bellingham Police Chief Terry Mangan said from behind his desk in his office at City Hall. "The parents of some of the kids out there cruising now used to cruise, and their parents before them."

Mangan chaired the Comfortable Environment for Commercial Areas task force—representatives from government, public service agencies and commercial businesses—who met last May to address teenage cruising and drinking, vandalism and problems with street people downtown.

Selective enforcement is still listed among the solutions in the CECA report. Alternatives are dances, fitness programs, and a once-monthly cruise rally at Civic Field, featuring auto body and parts shops, mechanics and fast-food. Prizes would be awarded for outstanding cars.

The CECA also proposed a curfew to get middle school age kids off the street.

"I wouldn’t want my 10- and 11-year olds hanging out at one o’clock in the morning at a dumpster beside a supermarket," Mangan said.

The police chief said a curfew rarely would be used. It would allow parents to get their children home at a reasonable hour, and give kids an ‘out’ against peer pressure. They could say, "Hey, I don’t want to get arrested (for curfew)," or "My folks want me in before curfew," Mangan said.

8:15 p.m.

At the bus terminal on the corner of Railroad and Magnolia, three boys sit on the wood and concrete benches. Two racing bikes lean against the newspaper machines. In the streetlight, one boy decked in denim stands and blows cigarette smoke into the air. They give directions to a lost old man, pointing him down Railroad towards Champion. They rap, their voices rising occasionally among themselves.

A motorcycle cop in black leathers pulls up to the red light on Railroad facing Magnolia. His two-way radio’s electric voice crackles above idling engines. He sits stoically, facing forward, and on green rolls slowly south on Railroad.

Standing by the benches, Don Young, 16, is the one in denim. Greg Bennum, ("I’ll be 18 in November.") sits wearing a white windbreaker. Joe Jenkins, 22, sits beside him.

All three have licenses, but no cars. They’re waiting for friends to pick them up, to go cruising.

"It’s fun," Bennum says.

"Something to do," Young adds.

"They don’t have anything for us to do in this town," Jenkins says.

"Besides games. That’s every other
week,” says Young, who with Bennum, goes to Bellingham High. “After the season’s over, there’s nothin’,” Jenkins says. “Basketball,” Bennum throws in, “but not too many people go to the games. Football’s more exciting.”

On the next red, one dark beater pulls up behind another. The lead driver opens his door and leans out shouting back, “You’re not being much fun tonight, suckers!” The driver of the rear car hollers up, “Oh, move that peesa shit.” “Oh, fuck you, asshole!” And green releases them thundering in a quick, tight left up toward Herfy’s.

These three cruisers don’t hang out at Herfy’s because the cops have been cracking down there. “Yeah, I got searched last year just walking into town,” Young says. The cops look for drugs, or if word is around about a fight, for weapons.

“We can come down here and see nice cars,” Young says. “They come from Ferndale, Mt. Baker, Meridian—” “Far away as Canada sometimes,” Young adds, then points to a blue Chevy SS with scoop hood speeding up Magnolia. “There, that’s a nice car.” A pause surfaces. More cars roll up the street. Pause. An awkward, adolescent pause.

“You can go to the skating rink, but that’s mostly younger kids,” Young says motioning south towards the roller rink on North State Street. “They come down here sometimes. They’ll ask someone older to buy ’em booze. They’ll take their money and leave. The kids learn their lesson and don’t come back.”

And most cruisers have learned their lesson about driving drunk, and are too worried about their cars or getting caught to drink and drive. “Probably about five DW’s go outta here each weekend,” he says. “The cars you see all scraped up and thrashed—those are the ones drinking.”

Mayor Tim Douglas sat back in a swivel chair in his wood-panelled office. He described cruising as “a bit of an annoyance to a few people. I think it’s a passing fad.” The mayor said he’s heard Bremerton and Puyallup also have cruising strips, and related problems like the ones mentioned by Police Chief Mangan in Bellingham.

Douglas said he doesn’t think that organizing activities is enough. The kids probably wouldn’t go, the mayor said. “One of the things we realized in some of our last CECA discussions is that we didn’t need to go out and do anything to teenagers. We need to do something with them,” Douglas emphasized.

He said he believes the CECA proposals...
are at least a place to start.

The proposed CECA curfew is aimed at middle school age kids because during those years their values are being shaped, Douglas explained.

"Not high school kids. High school kids are at a point in their lives where they need to be responsible for their own actions. They’re getting jobs. They need to be involved in solutions, in their own lives," Douglas said.

"Having nothing to do is the damnation of adolescence," the mayor said lightly of the perennial teen attitude. He said kids 50 years ago were saying the same thing; kids are saying it now; and kids will be saying it in the year 2000.

9 p.m.

Three girls appearing to be about 12 years old walk up Magnolia by the Federal Building, dressed neatly in sweaters and slacks, and drawing stares from males cruising through the Cornwall intersection. The girls look up and down the streets at the corner, chat for a minute, then turn and walk back towards the Bon.

Waves of cruisers are now backing up at red light after red light, and racing through greens and yellows.

That Chevy SS with the scoop hood pulls up purring to idle at the crosswalk beside a gold, red-primer-spotted Mustang. The SS driver looks in and says something to the Mustang. The Mustang driver nods, looks forward and begins rocking and nodding in his seat. The "DON'T WALK" sign stops blinking across Magnolia. Yellow light out the corner of their windshields. Red. GREEN!! The two cars lurch and scream, front ends raised.

"Having nothing to do is the damnation of adolescence."

—Mayor Tim Douglas

9:30 p.m.

Traffic Officer Luke of the Bellingham Police Department backs the rear wheel of his Kawasaki POLICE 1000 motorcycle over the curb on Cornwall around the corner of the Federal Building. He rides the 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. shift Friday and Saturday in the cruising section of downtown.

The main complaints against cruisers, Luke explains with an eye on the intersection, are the out-of-towners who come in to do their drinking, and the heavy traffic cruising brings to downtown. Turning down the two-way radio between his knees, he says only about five percent of the cruisers drink and drive and cause other problems.

"We’re down here to keep the flow," Luke says.

He tickets cruisers for hanging out car windows, rapid lane changes, blowing through red lights and unlawful alcohol consumption. The number of citations varies from weekend to weekend. One car might yield four or five alcohol violations, he says. Another night, they might not cite anyone.

Luke says there are few fights. "I couldn’t say that when the Flame was open," he adds.

"It’s like a mother-daughter, father-son relationship with these kids. We’ve just got to keep a hand on them."

Suddenly, Luke starts his engine and speeds into the intersection, his blue tail light revolving. He accelerates into the right lane in front of Pacific First Federal Bank, and within a block races sharply across three lanes into the far left through the green light at Railroad, closing in. The car he is chasing takes him up two more blocks without pulling over, and left
around the corner on Forest Street by Herfy's, out of sight.

10 p.m.
A vacant lot sprawls across the southeast corner of State and Champion streets beneath two huge, neon-lit billboards. Officer Luke calls the sunken, dirt and concrete slab lot "The Swamp." Mike Hudson sits in the driver's seat of his primer gray '64 Malibu. John Klemann sits in the passenger seat with the window open. Both are 17 and Bellingham High students.

"You see that car," Klemann says pointing quickly at a clean, long white limousine rolling slowly past them on Champion. "It's full of hookers. They come up every weekend from Seattle."

The shadowy lot is lined with cars ready to cruise.

"What else is there to do in town?" Hudson asks rhetorically.

"Finding girls," Klemann offers as another incentive to circle the streets.

"Any luck?"

"Catch us in about an hour," Hudson says, smiling.

He says the city should build a drag strip for kids to race and show off their cars. There's no legal strip in Whatcom County, Hudson points out, and confirms that Slater Road is the place cruisers go to race locally.

Klemann says a legal drag strip probably wouldn't keep kids from cruising, but would keep them from racing on the streets.

11:30 p.m.

Back on Magnolia, the cruising circuit is in full circle. Every red light at Cornwall averages ten cars spread over three lanes, two or three kids in each car.

A baby-blue Ford pickup screams electric guitar out open windows. Horns honk for motion on green in one lane. The driver in front, in an orange fastback Datsun, hollers back, "What's it to you?" and starts through the light.

"Go, you asshole," someone behind yells.

A blue VW Bug, white domestic van, blue TransAm, maroon Mustang, blue Mustang, red Firebird, canary yellow Bronco, blue Toyota pickup with raised chassis for off-road travel, gold Bug, red Mustang, black suped-up Impala, maroon Firebird, white Rally Sport black-and-red-striped and beaded with late night carwash water, orange TC3, sky-blue GMC pick-up, Army green Datsun 260z all cruise by the Federal Building on Magnolia again and again and again.

Point-seven miles, every three to five minutes. Around and around and around .... Again and again and again ....

Midnight

In the parking lot at Herfy's, three girls from Meridian High and two boys from Sehome stand around a red '67 Mustang. They are stretching out the night after their respective high school football games, talking about the lack of things to do in Bellingham.

"There's nowhere to go," says Karen, 16, who wouldn't give her last name.

"This is the only place to go. You can't go anywhere to just park and talk," Brent Woolten, a junior, says. "The cops are there shining a light in your face," he says, jokingly shielding his eyes with his hands.

"I kinda wish the cops would just let teenagers do their own thing," Mark Sailors says, leaning his back on the car.

They agree they cruise for social reasons.

"To get to meet lots of different people," Karen says.

"To show off their cars," Sailors adds.

Tonight, they'll be out until about 12:30, when parents want them in.

Karen, a bright-faced redhead dressed in a black-and-red-plaid jacket, says social activities like dances would be popular alternatives if everyone felt comfortable there. She says all-county dances usually get a punk or heavy metal band and attract only those kinds of people. Dances she's been to were "taken over by 'scummies,' the heavy drug users," she says.

Though they don't see a lot of drugs among cruisers, many cruisers drink. "Both in parking lots and during cruising," Woolten adds.

A white pickup truck pulls up in the lot. Three teenage boys sort of roll out the back and stagger their way into Herfy's.

"There's some of them now," he says. Everyone laughs.

"The cops are a big hassle," Sailors says.

"If they suspect you of anything, they check your car," says Denise, 17, who also chooses not to give her last name.

"They'll stop you for anything," Karen adds.

Angie, 17, joining her girlfriends in semi-anonymity, says, "If you laugh, they'll pull you over because they think you're drinking."

They say cruisers are mostly high-school aged. They don't see younger kids downtown much on cruising nights.

1 a.m.

Only half a dozen cars are still hanging around the parking median on Railroad Avenue by the bus terminal, across the street from the Video Depot.

Joe Jenkins and Greg Bennum take their racing bikes from in front of the newspaper machines, straddle them and cruise silently onto Magnolia.

"Later," Bennum calls.

A monstrous orange Mobile street sweeper crawls into the bus terminal and begins rolling its brushes across the black asphalt. Huge brushes and a light film of water. With each pass, the asphalt shines wet, polished.

The driver, a grey old man, leans out on the driver's seat on the right side to guide his brush against the curb. He looks up for a second and waves. He makes six patient passes around the neon-hazed island of benches, standing plastic bus schedules and plexiglass windbreaks. Each pass is carefully driven by the old man in disciplined, imagined lanes, slightly overlapping, to cover the entire width of the circular driveway. Around and around and around . . . He leaves the center pass for last, cruising slowly down a dull path between shoulders of shiny asphalt. Just before the orange sweeper crawls like a bug out onto Champion Street in the morning dark, it polishes up four five-foot long letters painted bold white on the slick black. In his wake, they glisten: 5 MPH ....
Pete devoured his Big Mac, not as some hard-core criminal would, but like any other 16-year-old. He was at that lanky stage—the one just after sprouting up and just before filling out.

“We had nine days worth of clothes, and skis on our backs,” Pete said of his hike in Alaska. “We had to bushwhack through all the nettles and stuff.”

Describing a camping site on Mt. Baker, he said, “All you could see was white. Like there was supposed to be a tent next door, and you couldn’t even see it.”

The summit of his outdoor experience was a climb up Mt. Rainier. He was succinct: “It was hard.”

This Roosevelt High School sophomore is part of Ventures Unlimited Services, founded in 1983 to help kids like Pete who have broken the law, come from abusive homes, or have problems with drugs or alcohol.

An attempted house burglary when Pete was 14 landed him and a friend in the King County Youth Service Center where Pete stayed nine days. When he spoke of his trial, his eyes darkened and his elbows settled on the table, hands partially covering his face.

“I was scared. You sit there and your probation officer says something and your attorney says something and then the prosecuting attorney says something. Then they start saying how long they want you to go in for and your probation officer says how long he wants you to go in for and your attorney says how long he wants you to go in for,” he said with hardly a breath. “Then the judge makes up his mind.”

The judge’s decision: 80 hours of community service at the Bothell Recycling Center. Between Pete’s work at the center and his good behavior, he cut his probation time in half to only nine months.

Through his probation officer, Pete heard about Ventures Unlimited Services, a program that works with troubled youth in the Seattle area. V.U.S. combines a big-brother, big-sister approach with wilderness trips, giving the kids both a friend and a challenge. Volunteers make up most of the staff and are trained by professionals in two intense weekends.

The kids in “Rainier-in-a-Year” take trips learning rock climbing, rappelling, ice climbing and survival camping throughout the year, working up to the final goal—to climb Mt. Rainier. “Step II,” developed out of “Rainier,” is for those who have completed the Rainier program. One or two of these kids will go on each Rainier trip, helping with basic skills, for example, of rock climbing. Step II includes sailing, kayaking and this spring—a trip to Mexico where they will help with a community project. Projects are intertwined with trips to “show the kids they’re needed in the community,” said Mike Nash, Program Director for Rainier.

When Nash, then 19, launched Ventures Unlimited Services in 1983, the program received little encouragement. Myron Vierra, now President of the V.U.S. Board of Directors, conceived the idea and Nash nurtured it to life.

“He (Vierra) had the general concept of kids climbing Mt. Rainier,” Nash said. “He gave it to me three-and-a-half years ago and I put it together, coming up with the goals and idea that the volunteer staff would be the main resource.”

“I’ve done it by trial and error,” he said propping his legs on the afghan-covered couch in his sparsely decorated apartment. “I’m still learning.”

John vanKeppel, Director of Step II, first became interested in V.U.S. after he taught volunteers one session. Impressed with the idea, vanKeppel built on it, and the result was Step II.

“He’s adding a lawn service next summer so his kids can get work,” Nash said. “But Step II is on hold right now because John needs to raise his support.”

V.U.S. runs on grants and support from churches. Money is difficult to secure, Nash said. “Churches give us monthly support, but the problem is that all three full-time staff people raise support too so we’re milking the churches ourselves. The program should be depending on grants, but right now we just don’t have a grant writer.”

A 19-year-old high school graduate; a program dependent on outside sources for finances; and a bunch of kids in trouble with the law add up to a small chance for success. Gaye Brandenstein, administrative director, remembers probation officers trying to discourage V.U.S. staff. “They’d say, ‘We’ve been trying to do this for years with state-run programs and the kids never show up for the trips.’ They were our biggest critics.”

Brandenstein remembered one critic in particular. An employee at the King County Youth Service Center who worked in juvenile detention when the program first started. “He was the one who told us, ‘Don’t try it.’ Now he keeps asking, ‘What are you doing that’s right?’ Well, I think it’s because we’re relying on God to help us succeed.”

Ventures Unlimited is upfront about its Christian perspective. “We tell the kids, ‘It’s a Christian program, and we’re going to talk about God this year,’” Brandenstein said. “Is that going to bother them? And most of them can handle that. We try not to get them corralled in where they can’t get away, like on a trip or something.

“A lot of it comes up naturally in conversation because of the
kind of music they listen to," he said. "They know a lot about Satan."

Todd, who was in Rainier last year, and now in Step II, doesn't mind the talk about God. "We worked out this deal. They let us listen to our rock music, and we let them talk to us about God."

"We listen to them," Pete agreed. "It doesn't really bother us. We have little talks about what we did that day—if we learned anything new."

"And we have to pray before each meal," he said, a slight grimace on his face. "We all stand around looking at each other 'cause the counselors all have their eyes closed."

Along with prayer; biking, running, bowling, eating, and playing video games bring kids and counselors together, Brandenstein said. Just having a friend to fill up a lonely Saturday promotes a trust friendship, she added.

Counselor Arlene Gegner sees her role as someone striving for a balance between friend and adviser—someone who believes in her kid. "There is a testing period the kids put us through," she said. "They're not sure if you're going to stick with them, so they're going to test you to see if you're really what you say you are."

Kids succeed through V.U.S. "We create an environment where they will succeed," Gegner said. "We've had kids say, 'I can do anything if I can do that.' Things like rock climbing and rappelling off an 80-foot cliff change lives."

She talked about two types of kids: "There are those who are fun to be around, really neat kids who have had problems with drug abuse or maybe problems dealing with their anger. But they're nice kids—pretty on top of it—popular in school. Those are the kids who change in small, tangible ways—like they'll stop the drug use or start going to school again.

"The other type of kids we get are the loners, the real misfits. These kids change in huge ways," she said. "You'll see a kid's personality change from being suspicious and distant to really warm, friendly, and confident. You just see bounds of growth."

One boy's parents wrote to express their thanks for the changes in their son. "Earlier, Jon had problems with schoolwork," the letter read. "He now has more confidence that he can do the work and handles homework without a lot of propping, probing, and pumping from his parents . . . Jon got his first A in P.E. I believe it's a result of the demands of climbing he faced this past year . . . Jon was not one to make friends and was a very withdrawn person. Now he has developed friendships because he has adventures to tell about. . . We hope Rainier-in-a-Year has had as big an impact on other families as it has for ours."

Another person who has grown a lot, Brandenstein said, is Pete. When he talks about adventures he's had with Rainier, he smiles. His voice exudes confidence as he recalls his "perils" of the wilderness: the bear tracks he saw only 60 feet from their campsite; a tunnel he and a friend built during a blizzard (big enough for six); and a 20-foot slab of ice he slid down "almost into the water."

Pete said the program has helped him, "mostly in making friends. And having a little bit of leadership. Like on one of the Rainier trips this year I went with them, teaching them how to do tie-ups and things.

"My friends at school don't really know about it," he said looking down. "I try to explain, but people just think, 'Oh, I could do that, that's easy.' But it's not. They don't really know what I'm talking about."

Todd gets a different reaction from friends. "I told them I was climbing Mt. Rainier and they didn't believe me. Then I showed 'em my pictures and they started trippin' out," he grinned. "I tell 'em, 'Yeah, I'm going to Mexico at the end of the year. . . and they trip out.'"
COCAIN... a scary habit
One thing you can say about people at a cocaine party: they all look familiar—at least to each other. A stranger is never brought in without getting the permission of the host or supplier. And even then, someone there better know that person well—because when using, one can never be too trusting.

The people at the party this night all knew each other. There would be no strangers welcome. They sat virtually everywhere in the small apartment living room: on the brown carpet, tucked around the coffee table and stereo speakers. Others had eased themselves into the chairs and onto the print-covered couch. Everyone was relaxed, throwing back their beers and talking amiably about work, sports, anything. Each conversation hummed into a drone that overwhelmed the EM rock station playing on despite its oblivious audience.

Everyone was a smoker that night—whether they had a cigarette or not. A fog of blue smoke had everyone socked in, blurring any rough edges the alcohol might not have washed away.

Before cocaine is snorted, everyone waits with baited breath for fear a whisper of air might blow some of the precious powder away. With the cost around $2,000 an ounce, five times as much as gold, most party users only snort 1/4 gram between two people. Tonight, four people anticipated the high—a quickened pulse and a burst of energy that shakes off tiredness—so half-a-gram was prepared.

Two women with coke spoons took the first toot. The hostess dipped a miniature spoon in the coke and slid it up her nostril; the other nostril was pressed shut. Her eyes closed; her head tilted back; and the only sound was her inhaled breath. The people without spoons snorted through plastic straws cut to length. One of the women placed the edge of her straw at the end of a line of coke on the mirror. Like a race horse out of a starting gate, she moved the straw quickly down the track, pulling in air and coke all the way to the finish line.

The hit's full effect is felt within 15 minutes—in addition to a numbing of the nose, throat, and mouth. (Cocaine's medical use is a local anesthetic.)

The high lasts three minutes or less, and users build up a tolerance right away, said Steve Nobles, a drug-rehabilitation counselor at Bellingham's Olympic Treatment Center. Nobles, clad in a blue shirt and blue sweat pants, rested his large frame on the white-and-brown flecked couch in the den of his Sudden Valley home.

Although it's hard to detect, you can recognize drug abuse, Nobles said. "They (the users) have an ungodly amount of money or they're constantly in withdrawal." Cocaine withdrawal isn't physical, as it is with heroin. The signs, like irritability, can be mistaken for moodiness. And the insomnia or excessive sleep can be mistaken for school pressures or depression.

Sandy, a student at Western, has used coke for seven to eight years. She has gone from using every day, to dealing, to using only about four times a year. Sandy sat well forward on the couch of her Bellingham apartment, leaning into the conversation. Her elbows rested on her knees, arms and hands draped between her legs. Without seeming nervous, keeping her head up and eyes level, she spoke forthrightly about dealing. "If you're hooked on the stuff, it's the best way to get it, otherwise it's too expensive." It's a good business, she said. When you sell, you make a profit. You pay for the coke, and you end up with some for your personal use—or you can sell it for more cash.

When she was selling, she and her partner would buy the cocaine in bulk and "cut" it with mannitol—baby laxative. Mannitol is considered one of the best things to cut into the coke. Its effects on the body and the cocaine are the least harmful of any of the other mixes.

Items used to cut cocaine range from sugar and baking powder to speed and quinine. Nobles categorized the smart dealers as those who cut the coke with vitamin C and Dilantin (an anti-seizure medication.) "The vitamin C keeps them healthy cause when you're doin' coke, you forget to eat. And the Dilantin takes care of the seizures that come with the constant overdosing."

In his book, The Pleasures of Cocaine, Adam Gottlieb wrote, "These days, the
righteous dealer may be defined as one who cuts his coke by not more than 20 percent.” Sandy agreed. “It goes through so many hands, and it gets cut each time.” An advantage of dealing, she explained, is that a dealer can keep two grams of uncut coke free, and still pay their supplier with the money they make selling the other stuff they’ve cut.

Profit is not the only thing that concerns a cocaine dealer. “One time, a close friend brought some people over we didn’t know,” Sandy said. “We didn’t want to know who he dealt to, and we didn’t want them to know us.”

Lighting a cigarette, she explained: if the police bust someone you sold it to then they get you. “It’s scary, it gets distrust even among your friends and stuff.” She punctuated her words with the glowing tip of her cigarette. “Probably some people are not very careful . . . The consequences make you careful.”

Today, a typical coke party might be a low-key affair, but in the 1880’s, just before cocaine was declared illegal for non-medical use, flamboyance was the style. According to the May 1984 issue of Life, LuLu Lenore of the Cuckoo Comedy Company gave a “snow ball” at which guests received hypodermic needles in vanity boxes. (A Hollywood social notice concerning the affair appeared in a 1922 issue of Vanity Fair.) Since cocaine was legal, it was included in medicinal remedies for all types of ailments during the 1880’s. Powders, to be inhaled, were offered as the cure for sinus trouble and headaches. Snorting became the way to “do” cocaine, thanks to the success of the headache remedies.

Natives of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, where the coca plants are grown, chew the leaves of the plant. Swallowing coke isn’t common with users here since it isn’t well-absorbed in the stomach. More users are smoking cocaine in a purified form called freebase.

“The drug gets to the brain faster,” Nobles said, as he stretched his bare feet out on the coffee table. Intravenous use (mainlining) is also becoming more and more common. Nobles has noticed more teenaged female mainliners coming in for treatment. The girls associate with older men. The men get them hooked and then they work them as prostitutes—or they dump them, and the girls become prostitutes to support their habit, he said.

Bobbie, who works in Bellingham, leaned back against the bench seat in a Denny’s restaurant with few patrons. “When you spend that much money for something,” she said, flicking her lighter into life to ignite the cigarette dangling from her mouth, “you want a certain result. I didn’t get that result from freebas-
explained. It's like owning a beautiful house. Sharing it with your friends and letting them use it gives them and you a good feeling.

Neither Bobbie nor Sandy described themselves as addicts. Neither one could afford that intense a habit, they said.

Nash resident director, Kerry Krueger, a resident aide for three years at different dorms on campus, knows some ways the student users get coke and other drugs. They steal drugs from other students in the dorms, or they steal money to pay for drugs, she said. But drug use in the dorms is very discreet. "I know residents use it, but they don't have a need to take it out in the hallways, like alcohol. They're a lot better at concealing their use."

It's a touchy issue for RAs, for students to deal with. "We're not sure of the consequences." Krueger said drug use has many more definite legal consequences than alcohol. Students turn in can get to deal with. "We're not sure of the consequences."

Kevin Faulkner, coordinator of Western's Drug Information Center, knows some ways the student users get coke and other drugs. They steal drugs from other students in the dorms, or they steal money to pay for drugs, she said. But drug use in the dorms is very discreet. "I know residents use it, but they don't have a need to take it out in the hallways, like alcohol. They're a lot better at concealing their use."

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"They're on the go all the time to keep a supply of coke comin' in. They worry about finding their next fix, and they worry about getting caught getting it." —Steve Nobles

Once someone comes in for treatment, Nobles' job begins. He replaces the amino acids the coke destroyed with an over-the-counter tablet form of an amino acid. "This helps with the anxiety attacks," he said. A small steel-gray cat meows her way up the hall, surveys the scene, and takes up residence in Nobles' lap. He begins affectionately rubbing her ears as he continues. He teaches basic relaxation techniques and involves the people in group therapy. "That's the most important." Nobles also educates users about the damage the drug can do to the liver, which has to process the cocaine in the system, and the lungs.

Bobbie described the way coke makes her feel, as she nibbled on a french fry. "Slightly elated, it lifts your spirits, makes you happy, sociable. It does make me feel good, but it's an expensive feel-good." It doesn't make you lose control of your senses like alcohol, she added. Bobbie smiled a knowing self-confident smile. "It sure does make you think you're smart though."

The high gives Sandy a pick-me-up, but also makes her mellow. "That's the effect you want," she said. Sandy grimaced as she recalled a trip on cocaine cut with an over-the-counter tablet form of an amino acid. "This helps with the anxiety attacks," he said. A small steel-gray cat meows her way up the hall, surveys the scene, and takes up residence in Nobles' lap. He begins affectionately rubbing her ears as he continues. He teaches basic relaxation techniques and involves the people in group therapy. "That's the most

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The high gives Sandy a pick-me-up, but also makes her mellow. "That's the effect you want," she said. Sandy grimaced as she recalled a trip on cocaine cut with speed. "It makes you jittery," she said, holding her arms out and jiggling them to give you the feeling of jangled nerves. She likes to do coke, for the feeling it gives her, just before a party. "It makes you more lively." Sandy has also used it to stay up late or make it through work but she said it's too expensive to use just to keep you up. "Get No-doze for that," she laughed.

One morning, after she'd been using everyday for six to eight months, Sandy woke up totally depressed, crying for no reason. The blues are one of many cocaine side effects. That down feeling can cause a user to turn back to cocaine for a quick lift. Bloody noses, sore throats, and headaches are common. Experienced users douche their noses with water to avoid damaging them because the anesthetic effect of coke shrinks tissue between the nostrils. Whether rinsing prevents this is questionable. "The damage is done," Nobles said, "in the long run it's not going to help."

"After a couple of days, you're so tired. You're just exhausted," Bobbie said. The number one reason people quit is because they can't keep up the hustle. "I've seen a lot of people change 'cause of coke use. Loss of interest in everything. It's ruined relationships—one guy I know lost his job because of it."

A friend of Nobles burnt out. "He just had it. He had constant headaches; his vision was blurry. He spent every penny he had on coke." Finally he couldn't handle it anymore, so he came in for help. Bobbie said, rubbing his hand across the brown rabbit fur pelt draped across the back of the couch.

For Bobbie and Sandy, coke is just a lift at a party. A party of a few close friends. Sandy describes her cocaine use as treating herself to a fancy dinner out. But after the dinner is over, Bobbie said, "The next day you wake up with a guilty feeling about how much money you spent."

And how do you know when the feast is over and enough has become too much? Nobles said, "We rarely get a user in for treatment with less than $100,000 spent on the habit."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Bobbie and Sandy are assumed names.)
WAKE UP AND SMELL
THE PAVEMENT
by Jody Macdonald

he sounds, like faraway thunder, grow louder. As the large, semicircular plywood structure resembling a giant, split-open drainage pipe comes into view, the sound becomes a muted roar. It is not thunder, but the sound of urethane meeting masonite, caused by the movement of weight upon its surface. At the top of a 15-foot rickety wooden ladder, on a wooden platform, a skater of about 17 is poised to take his next run.

For a chilly fall afternoon, he seems scantily clad. A sleeveless T-shirt sits down both sides from armpit to ribbing top a pair of colorful, knee-length print shorts. On his feet are a pair of battered, red high-top sneakers over striped athletic socks. Meeting the top of the socks are kneepads; the same kind of protective gear for sharp or fast turns, so skaters didn't have a chance to test their skill or daring. "Stickers are almost a form of currency," Battaglia said. "If you like somebody, you give 'em a sticker."

And so skateboarding declined until the early seventies, when Frank Nasworthy, a surfer out of Encinitas, California, adapted the urethane wheel from rollerskates to skateboards. These plastic wheels held fast on even the most suicidal turns and bumped right over pebbles. But the current wave has reached a crest of Frisbee-esque proportions and seems no longer to be just a fad, but a global sport that is here to stay. Skating has become to the '80s what surfing was to the '60s.

The first big boom in skateboarding, in fact, came around 1964, and coincided with the surfing boom. But not everyone had an ocean in his backyard. So while beach bums were hitting the waves, skate rats were cutting up the pavement with their own kind of board.

This parallel with the rise of surfing is probably why, said Russ Battaglia, owner of Fallout, a small but popular skateboard/record shop in Seattle, "the older generation (of skaters) has more of a surf-style of skating—you know, carving and weaving around. Now they get more air time."

Skateboards back in the '60s were hardly the precision instruments they are today. With wheels made of hard-composition clay, they were high-velocity machines—a speed demon's dream. The only problem was, after a long run at high speeds, these primitive wheels had a tendency to explode when encountering a pebble or other such obstacle. Their lack of pliability also did not allow for sharp or fast turns, so skaters didn't have a chance to test their skill or daring even if they'd wanted to. This left a lot of frustrated would-be artists, not to mention high Band-aid bills.

Skateboards declined until the early seventies, when Frank Nasworthy, a surfer out of Encinitas, California, adapted the urethane wheel from rollerskates to skateboards. These plastic wheels held fast on even the most suicidal of turns and bumped right over pebbles. Since the invention of the urethane wheel, skating too, has held fast. With its own lingo, dress, magazines, stickers—even its own music—skating has become a subculture in itself.

This cultish atmosphere is evident when entering Fallout. On one wall are the decks (skateboard sans the hardware). They sport names such as RAT BONES, X-CON, SCREAMER, RIPSTICKS and RAMPAGE. On the right is a small work area to fix and put together skateboards (most of the skateboards come disassembled so the skater can choose his own hardware).

The rest of the wall is devoted to records with band names the average Budget Tapes and Records consumer probably wouldn't recognize. There are the actual skate bands, such as The Faction and Agent Orange ("EVERYbody wants to skate to Agent Orange," Battaglia said), and then there's 7Seconds and the Youth Brigade, a more positive, straight-edged, no-drugs sound geared to younger skaters.

Ditching the positive appeal are such bands as Bark Hard, Drunk Injuns and JFA (Jodi Foster's Army).

On the back wall is a magazine rack with the latest issues of Transworld Skateboarding, Thrasher Mag and Grind, a local skate/rock magazine out of Seattle. A small clothing rack displays padded skate shorts and skate T-shirts bearing the names and logos of the various skateboards and hardware. Throughout the store are Battaglia's own touches—collectibles including Dark Shadows and The Man From U.N.C.L.E. trading cards and three-inch-high-robots. Fallout also has a large supply of skate stickers, which usually plaster a skater's board from nose to tail. "Stickers are almost a form of currency," Battaglia said. "If you like somebody, you give 'em a sticker."

Though most skaters tend to be junior high to high school age, there doesn't seem to be much of a generation gap in skating. Battaglia's clientele range in age from six to forty, and for each person,
skating has a different meaning. For some, it's an occasional recreation; for others, a competitive sport. Still others use skateboards as their singular mode of transportation. And then, there are those for whom it is an obsession.

"Skating is very physical and very challenging," Battaglia said, "and they (skaters) want the motion, the feeling. It's like joggers—they want to do it every day. If the fad part of it dies down, the hardcores will still be skating.

He said that for a few, skating is just a fad. These are the people that "have to have color-coordinated everything. Their clothes match their boards and stuff . . . they're the ones that come in and wanna buy touch-up paint 'cuz they put a scratch on their board. These seem to be the more suburban kids, who have their parents drive them to the skate ramps and pick 'em up when they're done sessioning.

"Then there's the guys that come in and buy used parts and whatever, just to keep their boards running. These are more the city kids—they skate whenever they can. They're more street-oriented."

Battaglia said that in a lot of cases, skateboarding keeps kids off the streets, so to speak. Because it is physical, smoking, drinking and drugs are discouraged.

Skateboard competitions take place regularly around the country, sponsored by the companies which manufacture the clothes or the hardware; organizations like the Boy Scouts; and stores like Fallout which, sometimes with a little prodding, are backed by the companies.

Battaglia sponsored two such competitions last summer, and would like to continue to sponsor at least two big contests a year. He said, "It's been a very skateable summer for us."

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By John G. Purcell

Three skaters weave their way up Second Avenue in Seattle through the drizzle. The first grinds his trucks off the Pike Street curb, slaps his polyurethane wheels on the blacktop, and shoots diagonally across the intersection. Like a mountaineer, he scales Second Avenue, leader of a rolling multi-colored parade. They are intent, utterly, in getting where they are going, moving quickly despite the uphill grade. In seconds, the trio is gone.

This scene, once common on Seattle's streets, is becoming infrequent. Once the streets of the University District, the Broadway area and Pike Street downtown were the habitat of the skatepunk. Wearing canvas high-top basketball shoes, shorts (often in bad weather) and jackets covered with graffiti and stickers, and sporting short, slick haircuts, crewcuts or yes, the occasional mohawk, they formed a movement that lived fast and may be dying just as fast.

Andy Caro sells skateboards Saturdays and Sundays for Time Travelers, a shop at Second and Pike in Seattle. He is a nine-year veteran skater who has noticed a change in who skates and where.

"The kids that are skating now are rich kids from Bellevue. They're younger types. Of course, the top skaters are still older."

On the Ave (University Way), skatepunks once ruled the sidewalks, hanging out in front of the Sea-First cash machine or Roxy Music. The Ave was the skating grounds of the Bop-o-Boys, a skatepunk gang, which has now disappeared.

"The Bop-o-Boys were a bunch of drunk idiots," says Caro. "There's no big skate hangout in Seattle anymore. I can't think of skaters coming to Seattle just to hang out."

On Broadway, Vic and Schmu sit by the "Wall," not too far from Winchell's Donuts. Vic is bored. He shouts, "I'm so fucking bored! This is so fucking boring." Vic wears a khaki overcoat and heavy boots. He has spiked hair, wears several earrings in both ears. He has painted a crucifixion scene with an inverted cross on the lapel of his coat; the other lapel sports a button that reads, "Give us pills or kill us." He has a friendly face, a nice-guy kind of face. He is probably 17.

"Why do you want to know about skatepunks?" He wrinkles his nose in disgust. "They used to hang out at Winchell's and Dick's and sometimes right here." He points to the bench on which he is sitting.

"Why don't you do a story on Skinhead punks?" asks Schmu. Schmu is a tragic figure. He is the last of the skinheads. His head is shaved and his eyes are sad, like a bassett hound's.

Vic explains what happened to the skatepunks on his turf. "They're all old now. All in their twenties, old and grey. They're gone."

Tall, blond, crewcutted Tim Dejounge, 19, is a refugee from the Portland area, now skating in Bellingham. His roommate is David Gobel, 19, a Tacoma skater. Gobel and Dejounge are into thrash and hardcore, but they are hesitant to call themselves skatepunks.

"It sounds like someone who's posing to me," says Gobel, disdainfully. "Only punkers were skating for a while, but now lots of people do it."

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“Posers’ won’t do a grinder because their board costs $147.50. They have good boards, but they don’t ride.” A poser has the look, Gobel explains, but only for the look, not for riding the board.

“People who are great skaters might have thrashed boards,” says Gobel. Great skaters do tricks like the “grinder,” which involves scraping the axles, or trucks, down across a curb. It’s a way to get down off the curb and onto the street.

Both Gobel and Dejounge agree. “Skating gets you where you are going faster than walking.”

“Skating is getting so popular now they’re making laws against it. It’s kinda bad that they put an image on skateboards. It’s thought to be immature and it’s not for riding the board,” says Gobel.

Skateboarding has thrashed boards,” says Gobel. Great skateboards. It’s thought to be immature when you can learn it all. Every single day more and more tricks can be learned,” says Gobel.

“Skaters have a bad image to normal people,” says Dejounge.

Gobel agrees. “Skating is getting so popular now they’re making laws against it. It’s kinda bad that they put an image on skateboards. It’s thought to be immature when you can learn it all. Every single day more and more tricks can be learned,” says Gobel.

Skateboarding went through a rebirth of popularity in the United States about the same time the Sex Pistols were releasing their first singles in England, in 1976 to 1977. It originally came from that Beaver Cleaver never-never land of coonskin caps and hula hoops. Many a college-aged guy can remember the first board he bought: that piss-yellow banana board he got for fifteen bucks, bloodstains and all.

Gobel turns his head, allowing a few wispy locks to swing near his eyes. He talks about that banana board he had back in fifth grade. “We’d go for catamarans, just trying to get down the hill without wrecking.” Catamarans are rolling formations, in which several skaters link limbs while sitting on their boards.

Then the good boards arrived; polyurethane wheels with encased bearings, wide fiberglass or wood decks. “My friend had a good board. I used to ride it a lot.”

The old boards were primitive. Really primitive. They were too narrow to go really fast, any kind of speed would start wobbling. The wheels were hard and often slipped bearings.

With the new boards and a little skill, a boneless can be attempted, a move that calls for a leap with the board onto and off an object like a bench. If you’re damn good, you might try any standard move with no hands, i.e., “ollie” (Look Mai).

Most skatepunks don’t wear pads or protective helmets. Many wear no more safety than a Clash t-shirt. Dejounge was one of these until he broke his wrist last year. Now he wears protective equipment at ramps and half-pipes.

Skateboarding comes from California, and it has its origins in surfing. As Gobel puts it, “it came off the beach and onto the pavement.” Skatepunk also comes from California. It is one part skating, one part music and one part attitude.

Dejounge explains, “It’s a public image campaign. I skate to be rebellious sometimes. Like I might jump in a Wendy’s window and scare some old lady.”

Gobel and Dejounge and other skaters do it to take out aggressions, to stave off depression, but mainly for transportation.

“I’m not anti-government or anything. I’m at school. I’m not in a gutter somewhere.” Gobel and Dejounge are not anarchists, but they’re not junior Republicans either.

Dejounge has a dry wit and a deadpan delivery. “I get along with God. But I don’t get along with the God Squad.”

Gobel and Dejounge first ran into hardcore when they started going to skateboard ramps and contests. Thrash, hardcore, death metal and speed metal were played on boxes at these events to, as Dejounge says, “get the adrenaline flowing.” They liked it.

“I don’t like hardcore bands that sing, more bands that shout.” Dejounge is high on Pop-o-pie, the Mentors and the Faction. The latter is actually a skate band, skaters who play hardcore. Skaters also grind to the likes of Gang Green, Poison Idea, the Accused and Minor Threat.

Punk rock, alive, but a little hung over in this country since the late 60s, shredded popular music values wholesale in ’76 and ’77 while the Ramones were busy cutting up New York, and the infamous Sex Pistols, the Clash and the lesser-known Damned sounded the charge in England. Their music was young, loud and snotty, filled with irreverent humor, vulgarity and sometimes acute political commentary. For instance, in the song Holidays in the Sun, Johnny Rotten sings about how bloody pissed he is because he is too economically oppressed to visit the Berlin Wall. Joe Strummer of the Clash wants to know why he can’t have a riot of his own in White Riot. And of course, the first punk was fast. Not supersonic. Fast like life in the city is fast.

As the 70s closed, the “scene” moved to Los Angeles. New bands and record labels surfaced, and punk dissolved in the L.A. whirlpool. The result: L.A. punk. The scene made Los Angeles one of the permanent capitals of punk. The music began to take on traditional American elements, borrowing heavily from blues and rockabilly. The band X viewed the American dream by the light of a neon motel sign. Of course, L.A. punk was fast. Not supersonic. Fast like life in L.A. is fast.

The music spawned today’s modern hardcore and thrash. The spread of the “disease” has been astounding. From the first localized scenes, it has surged into a national phenomenon. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of local record companies exist to record the angry and sardonic young voices of cities and suburbs. And the hardcore of today is fast. Fast like an F-18 jet fighter is fast. Not just supersonic. Beyond Warp 10.

Beyond... The name of the band is Pop-o-pie, which De Jounge says is “a band, a man and an idea.” The album cover, adorned with a bright, stylistic happy face, is incredibly misleading. It’s called Joe’s Second Record. The needle goes down, and a voice, full of pain, shouts “onetwothreefour” as fast as...
humanly possible. The music begins; ultra-distorted guitars crash; a singer shouts hoarsely and a drummer pounds frantically—reaching drum roll tempo. An inevitable feeling of nervous energy begins to permeate the room. Today’s ‘hardcore.

News of bands like Pop-o-pie can be found in the section called “Pus Zone” in Thrasher Mag, a specialty tabloid put out by High Speed Productions of San Francisco. Thrasher is about 75 percent advertising for skateboards and equipment. It also features articles on events, competitions, terminology and music. Caro, at Time Travelers sells a lot of Thrasher.

“There’s a local magazine too, called Grind. It’s pretty good.”

Caro says the skateboard scene in Seattle used to be more hardcore than it is now. “I sell to a huge variety of people. There are probably hundreds of skaters in this area.” Not skatepunks, though.

When punk first rocked, it was rebellious and anti-establishment. The hard core of the movement was a few fans who devoted their lives to the look, the attitude and the music. Then it became the fashion and the critics started liking the music. As more and more people embraced the punk explosion, it became cheapened, commercialized and exploited. The new following was not as enthusiastic about the attitude and distorted the “look.” In 1985, you can be a punk and a business major at the same time. Big deal.

The same thing may be happening to the skate punks. Their music has evolved to its extreme. It can’t get any harder or faster. With the essence of punk being stretched as far east as the sidewalks of Bellevue (Billy Idol was once a punk, now he’s rich), the extreme is the only refuge. And now skateboarding is rolling into vogue.

Caro estimates he sells one or two complete boards a day. “That number will increase to three or four by Christmas.” As he spoke, a kid, eight or nine years old, examined a set of wheels. His dad was looking at comic books.

If the era of the skatepunk draws to a close, what will the true hardcores do? Will they sit on the corner like Vic and Schmu? Or will they fade into obscurity appearing only at local ramps and halfpipes, still carving out turns and catching air, teeth chattering to the latest offering from T.S.O.L? Either way, they will no longer rule the sidewalks.

**ACID DROP:** to skate off a curb or other high, flat area.

**AGRO:** short for aggressive—meaning fast, powerful, in-control, i.e., “That dude’s way agro.”

**BANK:** a skateable, paved, off-street incline.

**BIFF:** to wipe out, fall off a skateboard.

**BOGE, BOGED:** to screw up, i.e., “Don’t boge it” or “He really boged that move.”

**DUDE:** another skater or friend, often used when you don’t know a person’s name.

**GNARLY:** cool, bitchin’, dangerous, scary, anything better than ordinary. (See RAD.)

**MAG:** short for magazine.

**MASS:** like way, very, a lot, in excess or abundance, i.e., ‘Mass rad.”

**RAD:** short for radical; cool, great, extraordinary.

**RIPLIN’ RIPS:** cool, great, radical, i.e., “That move’s rippin’” or “this band rips.”

**ROCK-N-ROLLS:** to skate up to a curb or coping on a ramp, lift the front wheels over (going back on the tail of the board), then turn 180 degrees and roll away.

**RUN:** your turn on the ramp until you stop or fall.

**SESSIONING:** to spend time skating at a given area: bank, ramp, etc.

**SHREDS, SHREDDING:** great, aggressive, powerful, i.e., “He’s shredding the ramp.”

**SKETCHED, SKETCH, SKETCH:** to not pull off the move well, mess up in some way, i.e., “I really sketched my last run.”

**STOKED:** psyched, excited, etc. . . . i.e., “I’m really stoked for the contest.”

**THRASH, THRASHING:** aggressive skating or dancing.

**THRASHED:** worn out person or item

Board competition held in Vancouver, B.C. of Bellingham.
There's something about not knowing that makes paranoia. Far more unthinkable horrors lurk in the dark and behind the back than can be readily confronted in the light of day because the unknown has an ally called imagination.

In the last three years since the identification of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), the homosexual community in the United States has stood alone in the dark, flailing blindly not only at the illness, but at its own imagination, and at the paranoid conceptions, and more often misconceptions, of the balance of society.

The phantom's method of extinguishing victims, by attacking and wearing down the immune system to the point where the sufferer can be toppled by a routine illness, is perhaps one of the only truths yet known concerning AIDS. That and the fact that it kills 100 percent of those who actually contract the disease. Not very much or very encouraging knowledge to choose from, leaving, of course, a series of lethal question marks that have racked up nearly 5,000 American lives so far.
The remaining facts regarding the illness are sketchy, at best, proving elusive to the medical profession's desperate lunges for a "cure." AIDS' method of transmission has been substantially linked to the exchange of body fluids (blood and semen), but beyond this basis, details become quite fuzzy. It is this fuzziness of detail that has the stigma-wielding American public (whose history of human rights is far from sterling) running angry, scared and confused from the virus.

"There's always been a kind of hysteria surrounding gay people," said Scott Lennon of Western's Sexual Minorities Center. "Now people feel really justified to be absolutely obscenely ridiculous in the way they approach gays."

Lennon, a twenty-three-year old Western student, has been "out" (of the closet) for four years. He was the coordinator of the SMC for two years ('81 and '82) and has been active with the center's speakers' bureau since 1980, giving and arranging lectures and discussions for classes on sexuality at Western.

Relaxing on a couch near Western's radio station, KUGS, where he has been program director for a year, Lennon speaks with great conviction about his own gay identity, AIDS and the sensitive ground in between.

"There's a lot of student misconception," he said, dragging off an Export A ultralight, "a lot of hysteria. I mean, you can't just walk out in the street and get AIDS. If someone is sitting in this room breathing, you're not gonna get AIDS from them." Lennon paused before nutshelling his argument. "Unless you're having sex with someone who has AIDS, you're not gonna get AIDS."

Although the rest of the gay community may not be quite as certain as Lennon about the transferability of AIDS, most do agree that the single biggest misconception held ever-so-dearly by American society — is that AIDS is exclusively a gay disease.

Lennon maintains that the disease started in the gay sector of the United States. It has spread faster in the gay community, but has nothing biologically to do with homosexuality.

As Hollywood's finest filed into Los Angeles' lavish Westin Bonaventure Hotel for a $200 to $500-a-plate AIDS benefit dinner in honor of actor Rock Hudson (who would later die of AIDS), Wil Peglow stood up and shook the small brown locks from his vinyl cape in Seattle. His lover of two years, Wil Wright, brushed the remainder of Peglow's trim off of his shoulders, and each seated himself in front of an open Budweiser at the kitchen table of their Capitol Hill house.

"AIDS has been in both the gay and straight communities all along. However, the gay community is so much more sexual, things just travel faster," said Peglow, sipping. "The male gay community, in specific, is very promiscuous."

The Wils are both veterans of the Seattle beauty business—Peglow, 35, as a stylist and Wright, 31, as a supply house manager. They are also veterans of the Seattle gay subculture and have watched it change in the past three years in face of the relentless AIDS crisis.

"It used to happen a lot," explained Wright, smoothing the hairs on his budding blonde beard, "that you'd run into a friend at the bar and put your arms around them and give 'em a kiss. "Oh hi, howya doin'... well, that's more or less completely stopped."

Wright and Peglow and their friends
frequent a bar in Seattle called Hombres which, although it does have a large gay clientele, does not cater exclusively to a gay crowd. "It's more of a social get-together place than a pick-up joint," Wright continued, "a very mixed crowd."

There are bars in Seattle, however, that have not conformed to these adaptive social standards, and the same is certainly true for their customers. One described by Wright refuses to allow a woman through the door, and particularly promiscuous patrons will sometimes spend the entire evening in the restroom where the action is.

Another concentration of the promiscuous sector of the Seattle gay community is in the bathhouses. "The baths," began Peglow, "are whorehouses, basically. You go there, and they may have 60 little rooms that you can rent. And then there's like a hundred more lockers where you can just hang your clothes. The entire thing is just one big orgy with maybe 160 people."

The Wils say they don't go to the baths, but friends that do say business is slower, but still busy. Legislative moves have been made in San Francisco, where someone dies of AIDS every day, to close the baths, but there are strong constitutional taboos involved with such an action. "I'm really concerned that the House of Representatives has given the Surgeon General power to close the baths," said Lennon. "I'm not really into the bathhouse scene for a variety of personal reasons. But I also recognize that there's personal choice involved there, and I'm not going to step on anybody's toes. I see this as a total reflex reaction that's not gonna stop the spread of AIDS. It's ridiculous. It's absurd."

Even more absurd than a large-scale bathhouse snuff is the idea bouncing around the legislature of quarantine—a complete physical isolation of AIDS victims to go along with the psychological helplessness that is one of the more overlooked effects of the disease. "It seems to me," said David Mason, a gay professor at Fairhaven College, "that there's so many dangers of a kind of moral escalation associated with quarantines. It doesn't appear from the epidemiology of the situation that quarantines are going to do it. The primary way that it's going to be stopped is by education."

A red punching bag hovers just above Mason's head as he speaks. He is intense and animated as he discusses his theories of his sexual orientation and AIDS. And if he weren't rocking back and forth in his chair, he might blend completely into the colorfully intense and animated woodwork of his office. Books by the thousands are stacked on sagging shelves which Mason had reinforced last year to avoid being squashed to juice should they collapse. A Frankenstein mask, complete with Bach-style wig and sunglasses, a set of wooden teeth and a mounted unicorn's head also dwell in the spacious yet cluttered office which Mason describes as "ordered chaos."

Mason sees the need for education "both in terms of how the disease is passed—what safety measures are needed—and what one's ethical and moral responsibilities are."

It was this sense of responsibility that spurred Mason into action in September. Through his private physician, he got "the test." Two days later, he received the comforting results—negative.

"You can't just walk out in the street and get AIDS. If someone is sitting in this room breathing, you're not gonna get AIDS from them. Unless you're having sex with someone who has AIDS you're not gonna get AIDS."

Scott Lennon

Unfortunately, every member of the gay community is not as ethically responsible as Mason. A large percentage have not been tested, and do not know whether or not they actually have AIDS, or are carriers of the virus. However, Mason continued, the closing of the baths would only eliminate a prime classroom in which both of these types of education could occur. Should the baths be eliminated, Mason asserted, promiscuous gay men would turn elsewhere for sex. One such place may be the park.

Several parks in Seattle, such as Volunteer and Kaneer, serve as cruising grounds for gay men on the hunt for anonymous sex. Also, a few notorious freeway rest stops and truck stops are playgrounds of Seattle area gay men. This so-called "T-room" trade would overflow in already established spots and spill to new ones should the baths be closed.

Bellingham, however, has no park scene to speak of, and only one bar and one bath. And, as the volume is at a lower level, so is the level of activity and diversity from the norm, which Mason calls "a small town atmosphere."

"Bellingham has always had pretensions to being a big city but always disappointments in the same regard. I think that the gay community in Bellingham just recognizes—if the people are committed to living and staying in Bellingham—that they are going to be friends or at least acquaintances of those people who they may not be sexual partners with this week, but they might be in five years."

One major change that is seen all through the gay subculture, regardless of geographical location, is a major push toward a physically healthier style of living. Like any virus, the AIDS bug is more easily accessible to a system that is already somewhat weak. "I get really mad at him if he doesn't take his vitamins," said Wright of Peglow. "He'll say, 'Oh, I forgot,' you know, but hey, I don't care if he forgot or not, just start doing it! I don't know what I'd do if anything ever happened to him. I'd be lost."

The vocal tones of the couple seemed to shift down a gear at this point, reflecting a sensitive chord. Both have had AIDS scares, which turned out to be just that, but the squeamish feeling of the unknown for those short periods has stayed with them.

Peglow's experience was actually with a former lover who was suspected to have AIDS—it turned out to be shingles. Wright's call was a bit closer.

"I went through a period of two weeks when I just wanted to sleep all the time, had intense diarrhea, an upset stomach almost like an ulcer—all of these sure signs. And I wasn't getting any better. "So I'm thinking, 'Well, this is it. I've got AIDS.' " He paused, "See, I've never been a very lucky person."

But just when he really needed the ace, Wright's luck changed, and his tests came back negative. The worst part of the entire ordeal, he said, was the wait for the results. The unknown.

"We went through a three-week period of not knowing, and it was worse on him," Wright said pointing to Peglow. "He just was real freaked."

The Wils have had too many opportunities to do serious freaking over people they've known and friends they've lost to AIDS.

Wright tells, in the same breath, of one friend who was hospitalized for a bad flu and died two days later, and another who died two weeks after hospitalization for similar symptoms. Both were diagnosed as having died of AIDS.

"It's a real weird trip to have to tell people who call on the phone, 'No, he died,'" Wright, rolling his eyes, "when I was just going 'God, what is the
Scott Lennon of Western's Sexual Minorities Center: "There's always been a kind of hysteria surrounding gay people."

fucking sense of even living or making any plans for the future? I mean, what is the sense? You're gonna die, so why look forward to anything?"

Peglow explained that this is a common attitude among those who have been close to AIDS-related tragedy. "But six months or a year later when you're still here," he shrugged, "what do you do? You have to go on."

Some individuals, however, simply handle stress, even to this degree, differently.

"Patrick, a friend of mine from San Francisco, has just been diagnosed as having AIDS," commented Wright. "He and his lover just moved to New York, and they bought a house out in the country. And apparently his attitude and outlook are quite good."

This line of thinking, which stresses rational acceptance in victims and a sort of rise-above attitude in survivors and potential victims is becoming more prevalent in the national gay community. Also, an ongoing safe sex campaign is being strongly promoted by the gay media and subculture. The exclusion of oral and anal sex, and in many cases open-mouthed kissing is being widely promoted.

One example of the drive are the so-called jerk-off clubs where gay men gather to masturbate together. Physical contact, except for very limited touching, is unacceptable. Oddly enough, these "J.O." clubs are developing at, and being sponsored by, the baths. However, Mason sees the effort as a correction of, rather than a contradiction to, the baths' more popular function.

"If I see it as a natural development," he said, nodding. "If the baths recognize as an institution that what they are doing is making their clientele worse, or the social environment worse, they are naturally going to try and correct that. I see it as a logical self-corrective mechanism."

Lennon, on the other hand, views the "J.O." clubs as less than sexual, preferring to subscribe to the philosophy of: "If it's sex, it's not safe; and if it's safe, it's not sex."

"On a personal level," he said, "I'm not willing to spend the rest of my life wrapped in Saran Wrap with no human contact."

As an alternative to Saran Wrap, there has been, say the Wils, a trend lately toward a more monogamous, or couple-oriented gay community. Wright and Peglow's relationship is completely monogamous, and they cite the risk of contracting AIDS as the main reason.

"You're seeing a lot more people pairing off lately, and those people who aren't with somebody else want to be," Peglow said, the light flashing off a diamond mounted on a gold band around his left ring finger. Wright wears a similar ring.

One thing that is agreed upon is the fact that the fear of AIDS should not control one's life to the point of ruining it. Safety and selection are two of the best defenses one can have, said Lennon, since most of the cold, hard facts about the disease are still hiding under some unturned stone.

"It's understandable," Lennon said of the straight community's AIDS-spurred hyper-homophobia. "I mean it's a disease; it's a plague. But it's not (launching into feigned hysterics) SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE—OUT OF CONTROL, you know. It's a disease like any other disease—some people are going to get it and they are going to die. And the best we can do is to just make them comfortable."
Black cats and leering gargoyles; bodiless faces and a fire-breathing dragon: you will come face to face with all of these if the spirit moves you to visit the Gamwell House or Wardner’s Castle in Bellingham’s Fairhaven District.

The two are strikingly different examples of the work of Boston architects Frank Longstaff and H.N. Black. They designed the Queen Ann-style Victorian houses in 1890 at the request of Roland G. Gamwell and James F. Wardner, two entrepreneurs who prospered during the Fairhaven boom.

Painted in subdued tones of classic mauve, black plum and magenta, Wardner’s Castle faces southwest, resting atop five city lots at the corner of 15th Street and Knox Avenue.

Its owners, Larry and Gloria Harriman, run Lar-Glo Antiques in downtown Bellingham. They have lived in the “castle” for eight years. Larry Harriman said they moved to Bellingham because they liked the area. As they drove by the house one day, “My wife said she would live here one day.” They bought the house, which originally cost about $10,000 to build, after they came up with $25,000 for a down payment.

They now occupy the three-story, twenty-three room house with their 15-year-old daughter, Amber.

Its massive exterior is simple, relieved only by a wraparound porch, a three-story turret topped with an ornament reminiscent of the Space Needle, a porte-cochere (once used to shelter passengers as they entered or exited their carriages) and numerous diamond-paned windows.

The Harrimans say the house has been owned by a milliner, who set up shop in the house; a woman and her aunt, who operated Hilltop House, a chicken restaurant, in it; and, most recently, by a man who was in the process of converting the house into housing for college students, but was refused the permit that would allow him to house the students. It is rumored that the castle was once a brothel. When asked about this bit of history, Gloria Harriman responded, “I think that’s just hearsay. That’s the one story no one’s ever been able to confirm.”

The Harrimans have decorated the house as they think befits a castle, which “has to be deep and dark,” guided by what they feel is right for the house. “We like to get a particular feeling of the place and go from there,” Gloria Harriman said. The process of restoring and decorating has been a long one, but they wouldn’t have it any other way. “I just absolutely cannot live in a new home. There’s something about it that stifles me,” she said. “It means warmth (to live in the castle). I feel there’s a lot of personality in it.”

Asked if the house’s personality had ever taken tangible form, she said they had never seen any ghosts, but possibly had felt their presence. She said that one evening, she and her husband were sitting on a davenport and talking in front of the fireplace in the living room, when she detected the aroma of pipe tobacco. “Man, did you smell that?” she asked her husband. She doesn’t remember his reply, but he did not smell it. Not everyone can feel spiritual presences, she said. Nobody had smoked in the house since they moved in.

She said she doesn’t know if Wardner smoked a pipe, but that he enjoyed looking out from his spyglass in the top story of the turret.

She said sometimes when she enters the kitchen from outside the house, she senses a warm presence, even though the kitchen is cold. This only occurs in the kitchen. But several times she has gotten up at night, entered the hallway, and felt something brush past her. “I think any house with history must have some kind of presence in it,” she said.

The entrance to the house that appears to be most frequently
used is on the northeast side. Through the door in the side porch is a narrow hallway with walls boarded with dark wood from the Harrimans' blown-down farmhouse. At the end of the hallway is a bathroom. The entrance to the bathroom and kitchen the Harrimans have aptly dubbed the "cave." In what once was a coal cellar is now a jacuzzi.

A massive living room adjoins the bathroom. It is filled with a preponderance of heavy, ornately carved, dark furniture. Gloria Harriman said the furniture, which is pre-Victorian or Victorian, is from the Black Forest of Germany. Mushroom-shaped slag glass electric lamps sprout up everywhere. On the center shelf of a dark, wood buffet (a cabinet for china display and linen storage), several white statues of gargoyles leer in various poses. A back porch with a nearly wall-length rectangular window, installed by the Harrimans, faces south. Original bull's-eye or bottle glass windows spot another wall.

The family room is behind the library. Its focal point is a chandelier from Vienna, composed of glass grapes, pears and apples. In the same room, a carved buffet hides a television from sight. Next to the buffet, in a carved box once used in a Catholic church for storing bread and wine for Holy Communion are the television controls.

Some of the finer details of the house, such as an old floor grate or woodwork on fireplaces, are overwhelmed by the ornate furniture and decor.

The bedrooms, on the second floor, are decorated in a more subdued manner. One room is furnished with Victorian, Eastlake-style furniture, which is characterized by heavy gouging of the wood. Another room contains antiques from both sides of the Harrimans' family. The Harrimans occupy the turret bedroom, which gives a good view of the south—the mountains and the Bellingham Bay area.

Amber's bedroom on the third floor is filled with stuffed animals she is fond of collecting and the walls are decorated with posters of her favorite musical groups, but her bed and enormous matching wardrobe are ornate and old. An eerie "spirit painting"

An eerie "spirit painting" adorns the walls of what the Harrimans call the "ballroom," also on the third floor. Painted in 1983 by local artist Laurie Gorjedovich (who died a few months after she finished the painting), it depicts in faded colors of mauve, blue and purple, Wardner and his castle, Harriman family members, Sacred Heart Church, the Marketplace and the Fairhaven Hotel (which no longer exists), and on another wall, a sailing ship escorted on both sides by black cats. In the background of the scene is the faded image of an island. The scene illustrates an elaborate joke played by Wardner on an unsuspecting reporter.

Tired of being hounded by press and public alike, Wardner decided one day to perpetrate the "black cat" hoax. He told the reporter that he was going to raise black cats for their pelts on nearby Eliza Island, feeding them fish from surrounding waters. Convinced that like his past successful ventures, this one would be profitable too, investors sent money to the Black Cat Consolidated Company, Ltd. Later, Wardner revealed the hoax, returning the investors' money.

It is said that Wardner only stayed in the house for a year before leaving for better prospects, never to return. Gloria Harriman said she thinks he did return to the house, in between numerous trips to make more money from mining or real-estate schemes. She said he would lose millions cheerfully one day and go on a new money-making venture the next. Along with Nelson Bennett, a millionaire who persuaded him to come to Bellingham to turn Fairhaven into a big city, he "boomed" Fairhaven. Wardner purchased 135 building lots, organized a bank, an electric-light company, hotels and stores. This much is known. Much about Wardner and his castle remain enshrouded in mystery. There appears to be little mystery connected to the history of the Gamwell House.
Marcia Culver said they knew the house’s original colors were oatmeal with black trim, but they thought if they repainted in the same colors, the house might look like “an enormous white elephant.” So they painted it in subtler, more subdued shades to blend in with nature—khaki tan with charcoal trim.

The house is a marvelous conglomerate of huge bay windows with their original glass facing north, to a panoramic view of Bellingham Bay; numerous balconies; detailed woodwork everywhere, from the arched pediments (similar to roofs) over windows, to the starburst or sunbeam motif, which is repeated inside the house; and a stained glass window on the left side.

The main entrance contains a vestibule, which leads to the grand hall. An ornately carved oak staircase dominates the room. It was carved by woodcutters from the village of Oberammergau, Germany, Marcia Culver said. Local historian Gaylen Biery, who knew Gamwell, said during the Depression years, the woodcutters were stranded in Bellingham, so Gamwell decided to put them to work. At the bottom of the staircase is a newel post with three carved faces. Biery said the faces were a common theme in old-time theatrical performances. The faces are of a fair maiden in front, her smiling, successful suitor to her left, and her scowling, unsuccessful suitor to her right.

On the underside of the staircase is an archway. Beneath the archway, which is decorated with egg and dart moulding (an alternating pattern of ovals and arrows), the starburst motif and other designs, is an attached, carved wooden bench on the left, and a fireplace on the right.

Above the fireplace, at the rightmost corner of the arch, as if in hiding, is a dragon with the body of a horse, two webbed feet and a pointed tail. Fire appears to be emanating from its nostrils. If it is true that dragons usually hoard treasure in their lairs, this one won’t disappoint. Above the bench on the right side of the arch is a secret panel. Marcia Culver said the area behind the panel was supposedly where Gamwell hid his supply of liquor during the Prohibition.

Every room has antiques original to the house or purchased by the Culvers at antique auctions.

The guest bedroom upstairs has a matching dresser and bed made of bird’s eye maple (dotted with round curlicues). The dresser and bed are in their original positions. The pantry is original as is the ice house. Marcia Culver said ice houses were used before refrigerators were invented. A block of ice was dropped from an outside entrance above the room. The cold air generated from the ice would filter down, cooling items placed in the room. The original chandeliers are still in the house, some with ormolu fixtures. (Ormolu was made to look like gold and is tarnish-resistant.) Upstairs in the master bedroom are the original bathtub with a dark wood rim, and an old pull-toilet that flushes with a great whoosh.

Because the house is on the National Register, the Culvers could have accepted matching funds to restore what is considered the finest example of Victorian architecture in Bellingham. Instead, they declined to do so—for two reasons. The first is the restrictive way the restoration would be handled—to the registry’s specifications. The second is that the Culvers don’t want any visitors; if they chose to accept the funds, they would be required to show the house a number of times each year.

The house was designed and built by the architectural firm of Longstaff and Black. Gamwell was responsible for bringing the firm to the area where they first designed the Fairhaven House. Gamwell worked for Prudential Life Insurance Company in Seattle when millionaire Nelson Bennett approached him in 1889, convincing him to get in on the “ground floor” of the Fairhaven boom. Begun in 1890, the house took two years to complete.

Marcia Culver described Gamwell as a “real entrepreneur” who loved flowers, especially roses. “He had a horrendously huge rose garden.” Gamwell also liked showdogs—he had quite a few spaniels—and was active in many social organizations in town. Biery said Gamwell was a good speaker who especially liked to talk about the rise and fall of the town of Fairhaven. “He always put lots of flower in his programs,” he said.

Gamwell’s enthusiasm for history seems to have rubbed off on the Culvers. Marcia Culver said their nine-year-old son, Jeff, is excited that he will turn 16 when the house is one hundred years old. Ken Culver said, “It’s fun (to live at the house). It’s exciting. We just feel like guests here. . . . we’re taking care of it for our lifetime.”
Everybody's Store in Van Zandt just ain't any old grocery store, according to Jeff Margolis, owner and proprietor. Where else can you get ginseng, Harper's Magazine and three kinds of gas?

Van Zandt is part of the greater community in the valley from Wickersham to the Mount Baker Highway, off Highway 9. "There are old-time Christians, aging hippies, loggers, outlaws and all kinds of people living here," said Margolis in a booming bass voice.

He was working in the garden in back of the store. Fingers dug deep in the dirt, he was planting shallots while the perspiration beaded, ran down his face and splotched his shirt. "You work out here, you really get in touch with your ancestors... ah, the dirt," he sighed. "I've got things coming out of the ground... it's compulsive, a compulsive trap." He grinned into the sun.

He went to replenish his stock of shallot bulbs (shallots are gourmet onions) and continued, "When I was a kid I used to play cops and robbers and I used to surrender so I could go dig in the garden. When I go to bed at night, I can just think of being in the dirt and being real satisfied that the dirt is soft.

"Incidentally, did you know Prince Charles is now doing organic gardening?"

Margolis, his life, the earth and the store are twined together inseparable from one another. Many of the produce items sold in the store are grown in this garden. Bright fuchsia-pink spinach growing tall like corn comes from seeds he received from a pen pal in Portugal. Her name is Jutta Espanca and she is the Associate Editor of Offshoots of Orgonomy. Margolis explained orgonomy; "Orgone energy is made up really of two terms, one biological in nature, and orgasm. Wilhelm Reich did primary research on the subject." (Reich, an Austrian psychoanalyst, dealt with the release of psychic energy bound up in the repression of instincts.)

Margolis studied for his doctorate in political science at Amherst in Massachusetts and taught philosophy at Whatcom Community College for five years.

"I'm planting crimson clover over there," he said now pointing to the next plot in the garden, "It is a legume, a fixer." He uses as few chemicals as possible to enrich the garden. Nitrogen nodules grow on the stalk part of the clover and can be used for soil enrichment instead of buying nitrogen. "What we strive for in this garden is volunteers; things to grow by themselves—really a political, social and physical philosophy.

"Instead of poisoning our weeds, we feed them to the chickens. This is God's little acre. It is a primitive garden; we rototill once and year and the rest is done by hand."

A few chickens wandered into the garden looking around furtively. "Those chickens, they are going to be killed," Margolis said. "They have become pests who forage in the garden." Pests lead short lives under Margolis' rule. "Oh, I get great pleasure out of killing slugs. I come out at night with a flashlight and squirt a bottle of ammonia and they writhe," he said, twisting his face into a parody. "I think of myself as J. Edgar Hoover undermining the slug community."

Margolis was aggressively working the Missouri Mule, (a non-mechanical farm implement). "Too much is getting corrupted, people don't want to kill (pests), they want unpleasant things to disappear by magic." He stopped to wipe his brow. "Roadside spraying is a real problem. The agricultural establishment thrives..."
on chemicals. Organic farming, that's like a dirty word. Meanwhile, we are losing our topsoil and everyone is threatened by cancer."

People today can't afford to test their drinking water so they don't know the real story—the carcinogens they're drinking. Margolis said, his voice getting louder. "This is common knowledge in the water utility business, okay?" He explained: the chemicals put in drinking water create a family substance commonly called THMs (carcinogens). All public drinking water has THMs plus alum (aluminum) to make the water clear. When you combine this combination with cooking in aluminum, it contributes to the problem of overdosing on aluminum. This, in turn, contributes to Alzheimer's disease.

"You know," he said, "Past generations were troubled by contagious diseases such as polio, flu, tuberculosis... now we have the degenerative diseases such as heart disease, cancer and Alzheimers."

Margolis' eyes twinkled mischievously as he added, "But of course those of us who garden organically, we will live forever. We have no vices."

How did he make the radical change from studying political science in North Hampton, Massachusetts to becoming a storekeeper and a gardener?

"It's really not much different. The same philosophy exists for the garden that I lived in Massachusetts. If I'd gone on teaching I would have been dumped by now," he said emphatically. "I mean they really don't want people to demonstrate the political process—only teach it. They don't want anyone to make waves."

"I've been through the whole smear, Babbitt, The Man with the Gray Flannel Suit," Margolis continued. "I want to respect the temper of the community, but I've always walked a tightrope and usually trip on it. Things are not just black and white."

"I've been to encounter groups, LSD, all of those places. Any philosopher worth his salt has to go find out what things are about. If it ruins your cells, that's the price you pay for not walking the straight and narrow." 

His philosophy and gardening roots are connected to his past. His grandfather worked the ground in Russia and later was a labor leader in the United States. His great uncles were rabbis in Minsk. Last year, Margolis did Fiddler, at the Gallery Theater. "In Fiddler, there was always trouble in town. I read a lot of Jewish history of that period—when people were coming to the United States, the pogroms. It was the story of my family."
THE CHOICES:
ASHES, UNDERGROUND, OR AN ORBIT IN SPACE

By John Pavitt

Ashes to ashes . . . and now to the stars. For the first time in history, cremated human remains can be sent into orbit around the earth. Viewed in terms of the modern American funeral industry, this development is not too surprising.

Death is big business. Americans spend $6.5 billion a year on funeral products and services. For individuals, funerals are now the third largest lifetime purchase—after houses and cars. The industry is a dynamic world of competition, mergers, and lavish preoccupation with style.

A future giant in the death industry is Space Services, Inc., the company that will actually be launching the ashes of thousands of cremated humans, or "cremains," into space. Former astronaut Donald (Deke) Slayton, president of the company, said in an interview in Aviation Week & Space Technology, January 21, 1985, that Space Services estimates it could make about $30 million profit per year by the mid-1990s from space burial. Imagine, for roughly the same price as a traditional earth-bound burial ($2,500 to $3,000), loved ones can be memorialized through spaceflight.

There's no need to worry about overcrowding in the spacecraft. A special "recremation" technique has been developed that reduces passenger ash to fit in a capsule smaller than a roll of dimes. While a coffin and its contents will inevitably decompose, loved ones in space will stay vacuum-packed during their 63-million-year orbit in the Van Allen radiation belts. Maybe they will even send up cremated flowers for Memorial Day services . . . ?

Celestis is the group of Florida funeral directors that is signing up customers for burial in earth's orbit. In the future, Celest-
tis hopes to offer burial in deep space (which will cost a little more). James Kuhl, a partner in Celestis, admits the service is "different. It's unique." In a phone interview from his Melborn, Fla., office, Kuhl said that public response has been encouraging. "After we got permission for it, we had a lot of publicity. In the first three or four months we had between 500 and 600 calls from people interested in space burial. We're very happy with the response," he added.

Kuhl said that Celestis is international in scope. "We're talking to people in Japan. Their cremation rate there is 98 percent. We're also talking to people in England and West Germany." Kuhl added that Celestis is using global television to reach potential customers in Brazil.

If people want to sign up for the trip-of-their-lives they can pay in advance. For those who have immediate need—if someone has already passed away—reservations for the first flight will be on a first-come, first-go basis.

Paul Spinelli, a funeral director with Jones Funeral Home in Bellingham, said he thinks that space burial is "kind of silly. It's probably just a fad. But," he said, "it is available to people in Bellingham if they want that kind of thing. I mean, they say that the cremains will be in orbit for 63 million years—nothing lasts forever."

Another mover in the death industry is Service Corporation International, the largest owner of funeral homes in America. With 281 funeral homes, over 50 cemeteries, and 4,300 acres of burial grounds, the Houston-based company's profits in 1982 were $28 million. Its growth has been impressive. While the number of deaths in America crept up at a sluggish four percent a year between 1980 and 1983, SCI's earnings increased more than 40 percent annually.

While the funeral industry is massive in size, it is also facing stiff competition. No-frills memorial societies, which offer simplicity and economy in death, now claim more than 900,000 members. In the last 25 years, the number of funeral homes in the United States has dropped from 24,000 to somewhere between 22,000 and 20,000. The number of Americans cremated each year has doubled in the last decade, showing the public's growing demand for a low-cost alternative to burial. This shift away from elaborate funeral ceremonies may also indicate a change in public attitude.

Dr. Robert Keller, who teaches a class entitled "Death and Dying" at Fairhaven College, thinks that space burial is just an example of how people feel about death. Keller is critical of the idea. "It's a clear expression of human egotism," he said. "It places too much emphasis on the corpse. Really, it's just an exaggerated form of eternalizing or building monuments. It's similar to the water-proof caskets that 'prevent decay.'"

Dr. Keller's "Death and Dying" class explores attitudes about the process of death, and students visit a mortuary to see funeral directors in the work place. Keller said many students initially have bad feelings about morticians, and even the funeral ceremony itself, but change their opinions by the end of the course. "They feel animosity, sometimes hostility about people making a profit off of death. It seems like a creepy kind of business. 'Who'd want to do that sort of thing anyway?'"

Keller said many students feel that in the ceremony it is "barbaric that corpses should be out at all." However, he has no patience with those who "dismiss out of hand the ways in which the dead are taken care of. Morticians have gotten a bum rap because of the unethical practices of a few people in the profession."

One neighborhood group in Bellingham is so upset that a crematory is operating near their homes, they have gone to court to prevent it from burning bodies. Bellingham attorney T.B. Asmundson, who has already gone to the appellate court with the case (and lost), said he will petition the state's Supreme Court to shut down the crematory. The argument being used by the group against the crematory, run by Jems and LeVeck, is that its operation violates state zoning laws. Asmundson, also a resident of the neighborhood, said, "People don't like the idea of bodies being burned in the neighborhood. The idea is abhorrent to them." Another concern is the closeness of the crematory to a school. "The school is just a block away. It has a playground and kids play there all the time," he said.

Keller thinks that one reason people feel uncomfortable with funerals is because they are associated with emotional stress. Americans "want to deny grief and sorrow as part of life." He used a recent airline crash to illustrate his point. "The crash in Japan killed something like 500 people. And people felt bad about it. It was a terrible thing. And yet highway accidents claim 500 lives every three or four days in this country, and you hardly hear about it. Recently, a high school student from Bellingham was killed in an auto accident, and the Herald had a notice about this size," he said.
measuring off a couple of inches between his thumb and forefinger.

Keller paused for a moment. "It's just the frequency of death that numbs people," he said. "You pick up the paper and read about serial murders, or the death of someone on the other side of the planet. It's an overload, called psychic numbing." The ultimate example of psychic numbing, said Keller, is the threat of nuclear destruction.

"Funeral directors traditionally mitigate death—make it seem less real. One way they do this is by using euphemisms (substituting kind words for harsh ones). For example, they say 'sleep' when they mean 'death.' 'Oh, he's sleeping now.' 'Passed away' for 'died.' The word casket is more appropriate than coffin. Even the way a coffin looks is related to the euphemism 'sleep.' They're stuffed with pillows, silk lining, inner-spring mattresses. Then they're put on display in the 'slumber room.'"

Keller has taken surveys of his students, and found that many of them have never experienced the death of someone close. "Many students have had a cat that died or something like that."

The first critical look into the high cost of dying was The American Way of Death, a book written by Jessica Mitford in 1963. Mitford wrote that funeral ceremonies were exploitive in nature and that they capitalized on the bereaved, who often did not know what was appropriate or required of them by law. "... It is to this end that a fantastic array of costly merchandise and services is pyramided to dazzle the mourners and facilitate the plunder of the next of kin."

Mitford's attack two decades ago has generally been accredited as a principal inspiration for new federal regulations for funeral directors. After 12 years of lobbying efforts (at a cost of $1.5 million) and a battle in court, funeral directors have now accepted the regulations that force them to provide price information on request, and prohibits them from misleading customers into thinking that some services, like embalming, are always required by law.

Spinelli agrees the public should be cautious when selecting a funeral home. "There are a lot of nerdy funeral directors out there that I'd never go to. There's some real creeps out there." He does, however, think they are the minority.

"Just like the medical profession has its quacks," he said, "the funeral profession has people in it that don't belong."

One result of the new regulations is that the industry is much more self-conscious about its public image, and what Spinelli called "quality control." This has led to a more serious mood at industry conventions. "Useful criticism can do nothing but good," he said. "Sometimes out of the turmoil comes good change. We had to look at what we were doing and ask, 'Is this what the public wants?'"

Spinelli is disturbed by trends in the industry typified by Service Corporation International, which, because of its size, can offer lower prices. He thinks that funeral homes doing over a thousand cases a year might lose the personal contact with communities that typifies the family-owned funeral home, passed on from generation to generation.

As the name suggests, funeral homes have the look and feel of a home. Jones' brightly-lit reception area and hallways are graced with landscape paintings of harvest browns, living greens and clear blue skies. Antique-looking wooden chairs and a small lamp-table make a comfortable spot to sit. A family of three came in the front door and were ushered into a small room. As Spinelli talked, their crying could be heard.

"One trend going on now is that the smaller funeral homes are being bought up by chains." (Jones is locally owned.) "Someone discovered that funeral homes could be turned into big business. They're there to turn a profit. It's kind of like McDonalds—let's measure out and trim, so everything's very rigid so that we know exactly what it's going to cost us. They're going for high volume, so the service is deteriorating."

Death is not such a private part of our lives anymore. Massive networks of private enterprise depend on a steady flow of the deceased to survive in the market. Once in a while a customer gets taken advantage of, and as a consequence, the federal government has stepped into one of the most private of human events.

As public attitudes about death and funerals have changed, more options have become available. Dr. Keller said that when it comes to dying, "Choices are wide open. Costs range from $50 to $6,000 or $7,000, depending on what you want."

With the development of space burial, the public has discovered that funeral homes will serve it their way, even in the Milky Way. □