Fall 2009

Klipsun Magazine 2009, Volume 40, Issue 01 - Fall

Jennifer Oato
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/klipsun_magazine

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Journalism Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
https://cedar.wwu.edu/klipsun_magazine/248

This Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Western Student Publications at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Klipsun Magazine by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.
When I was a kid, I always wished I was older. My friends and I would play games pretending we were 'grown-ups.' I was sure I would be an actress, living in a mansion in Malibu, with a wonderful husband—all because the game 'M.A.S.H' told me so. My mother used to say, "Trust me, Jen. When you're older, you'll wish you were young again."

The games I played as a child were full of imagination and innocence. There were no dating games or addictions to games, and playing 'make-believe' did not automatically stereotype you as a nerd. It seems to me as we grow up, the games get a lot more complicated. In a way, life becomes a game.

This issue of Klipsun takes a look at all meanings of the word 'games.' From a new type of treasure hunting to the depths of Bond Hall on a Saturday night, this issue covers the variety of games played today. Klipsun features a spin on an old American classic, Bingo, and the underlying games that exist in the online dating world. The Locker Room reveals the spirit of sports in every aspect as it has been passed down through the generations of the Locker family. And, as you probably expected, we couldn't resist the temptation of highlighting the most popular drinking games played in college in Competitive Consumption.

I would like to thank my hardworking staff of editors and writers, and to the sources that were willing to share their stories.

Thanks for reading!

Jennifer Oato
Editor-In-Chief
FEATURED STORIES

16 Howling at the Moon Gabrielle Nomura
   “Every Saturday night, when students are at distant off-campus parties and professors are safely at home with their families, the corridors of Bond Hall are inhabited by a different kind of creature... The werewolves come out of hiding.”

24 The Locker Room Katie Greene
   “While ‘Locker’ has become an esteemed name for the thousands of Husky football fans, the name has been well known throughout Whatcom County for far longer. In fact, Jake Locker, quarterback for University of Washington, comes from a long line of sports-playing Lockers.”
Old vs. NEW

Story by Mandi Brady

Companies who make board games are laying down their cards, and gamers can see they've been bluffing for quite a while. While companies like Activision, the business that owns the popular "World of Warcraft," have been dominating the gaming table for the past few years, there have been other companies quietly contending for the gaming spotlight with their poker faces on. The game is not won and companies aren't leaving the table easily.

Hasbro, an international game company, has a near-monopoly in the old-fashioned toy and game business, with brands such as Milton Bradley, Parker Brothers and Trivial Pursuit.

Every gaming company must now continually reinvent its games for survival. According to Hasbro's 2008 annual report, it has embraced the digital market and launched nearly 30 games across console, handheld, mobile, iPod, iPhone and other online platforms in 2008. Hasbro's goal is to keep its classics relevant.

After 75 years, Monopoly is still alive. Hundreds of Monopoly editions have been produced while being officially published in 27 languages and licensed in more than 81 countries, according to the official Monopoly Web site.

Expect to be seeing your favorite childhood games on the computer screen, phone applications, television and now even on the big screen.

According to Hasbro's 2008 annual report, Hasbro joined with Universal Pictures and plans to make at least four motion pictures based on its brands, like Monopoly, by 2014.

For now, board games aren’t going extinct, but the majority are transitioning into the digital age.
Shenk started Marianne's House five years ago in the memory of her sister Marianne Barden, who passed away in 2003. Barden had dedicated her time to helping developmentally disabled adults before she passed.

Shenk decided to open a service center in honor of her sister and her two sons who are developmentally disabled. She envisioned a place that offered activities and self-care to help encourage relationships and natural therapy for the developmentally disabled adults and give them a chance to interact. They also have the opportunity to have fun through games.

“Games offer anyone a chance for interaction but the ability to play is usually taken for granted by most people,” says Scott Watts, manager of Marianne’s House.

This interaction through playing games like Bingo and Go Fish and I-Spy allows developmentally disabled adults to regain motor skills and learn how to interact with people in a safe and encouraging environment, Watts says.

Marianne’s House creates a fun way to learn by playing games, he says.

“Even making up our own game is a way of teaching or remembering a task at hand,” Watts says.

Watts believes that the developmentally disabled adults, or “team members” as they are referred to, get a successful experience out of each day they come to Marianne’s House.

“The team members here create their own success whether they are playing a game and thinking about winning or learning, or being a part of the group and having fun,” Watts says. “Either way they have succeeded.”

S-K-A-T-E

Story by Angelo Spagnolo
Photo by Katie Greene

Skateboarders have no teams, no games or practices. The motivation comes from within. But wherever skaters gather—schoolyards, skate parks, alleys or driveways—one can find the game of S-K-A-T-E. For many skaters, the game is a daily ritual and the only platform on which to showcase their skills.

S-K-A-T-E is an adaptation of basketball’s well-known shoot-off game, H-O-R-S-E. The game pits skaters against one another in a most basic test of skill. One skater demonstrates a trick and if his competitors fail to land the trick as the first skater does, they earn a letter. The first skater to accrue all five letters is out, until there is one player remaining.

Some skateboarders see it as an important forum for praise and critique, as it settles the essential question, “Who is better?” Others view the game as a way to keep the skating interesting when familiar surroundings become stale. Whichever way you look at it, S-K-A-T-E has established itself in a sport based on constant progression and creativity.


As H-O-R-S-E is to basketball, S-K-A-T-E embodies the street-level democracy of skateboarding. There is no need for a court or a referee or a coach, as the purest forms of competition can take place anywhere, at anytime.
Welcome to the world of competitive drinking games, where the winners drink and the losers drink more. Here, each game, no matter how similar or different, shares one constant underlying and fundamental similarity: alcohol.

In an upscale section of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, a college student in basketball shorts and a T-shirt walks toward the casino’s convention center carrying a 30-pack of Natural Light beer. His destination is lined with more than 100 regulation-size beer pong tables, each with 10 plastic cups arranged in perfect triangles at both ends. A pitcher of caramel-colored beer sits in the middle of each table, as rows of Las Vegas’ finest stand near the walls, making sure things don’t get out of hand.

ESPN camera crews mill around the convention center, waiting for the day’s events to begin. Teams of two slowly start to fill the room, check their brackets and sign in.

“It’s just one of those things,” Elliot Neiditz, a World Series of Beer Pong competitor, says. “You don’t usually drink at 10 a.m. But you walk into this arena and see all these people pounding beers and getting into that mindset and you start hyping yourself up.”

“Let’s get ready to rummmmmmbble!” reverberates loudly off the walls of the convention center, and suddenly, it’s clear: this is not your typical game of Beer Pong.

Welcome to the world of competitive drinking games, where the winners drink and the losers drink more. Here, each game, no matter how similar or different, shares one constant underlying and fundamental similarity: alcohol. Lots and lots of alcohol. In this world, the stakes are high and the title of number one is up for grabs, making these drinking games less about entertainment and more about the glory, competition and in some cases, the cash prizes that come with winning.

Neiditz, a Bellingham resident who has competed in the World Series of Beer Pong in Las Vegas for the past two years, says the entire casino seems to have a buzz, and not from the large amounts of beer being consumed, but from the excitement and energy the competitors bring to the event.

“Beer pong is the original. It’s the classic gentleman’s
Drinking games can be fun, but they can also be dangerous:

- Between 1999 and 2005, 157 college-aged people, ages 18-23, drank themselves to death. (This number does not include other deaths caused by drunk driving or alcohol-related behavior.)
- More than half of the 157 people were under the age of 21.
- Roughly 1,400 college students die in America annually from alcohol-related incidents.

Facts according to an Associated Press examination of federal records.
race to the finish, according to MajorLeagueFlipCup.com. The game imitates the hit CBS show “Survivor” by forcing the slower team to vote someone off, leaving one of the remaining team members to make up for the missing player’s absence by drinking their cup in the next round. The remaining players continue competing round after round, trying to out-bounce, out-flip and out-drink their opponents until a team has voted off all of its players and the winning team is crowned, according to MajorLeagueFlipCup.com.

About six years ago, an enterprising Western student decided to take the popular drinking game out of the typical house party setting and into a new location where it would be mixed with costumes, prizes and music to create what would soon become a drinking game legacy at Western. It may not be as highly attended and professional as the World Series of Beer Pong, but this amateur version of yet another drinking game phenomenon remains one step above the typical house party variety.

Aaron Yoon is the most recent Western student to pass down the honor of planning the annual Survivor tournament. The competition consists of 32 teams of four that all compete for the title of the ultimate Survivor champion as well as one elusive trophy: a Fisher-Price doll house.

“Whether you are there to play for fun or really serious about the competition, with 50 to 100 people watching each game, it can get pretty intense,” Yoon says.

Just like any tournament, teams must wear uniforms—or in this case, costumes—and the more creative, the better. Most teams choose to dress in a theme, such as characters from the board game Clue or colors from a box of crayons. Yoon says one of the best parts of the night is watching the teams arrive and seeing the different themes people have come up with. The most creative costume or theme receives a prize, which Yoon says is usually more alcohol. Last year, the team that came dressed as the 70s rock band Kiss, complete with white and black face paint, wigs, leather jackets and tight black jeans, won the most creative costume award, Yoon says.

To compete in the tournament, each participant pays $20, which Yoon says goes toward renting the space, purchasing the beer and prizes, and making T-shirts for the event. Security is hired for the night, and all participants must hand over their car keys at the door in an effort to prevent drunk driving.

“Everybody comes to the conclusion that everyone who plays drinking games is just playing them to get drunk,” Yoon says. “But once you’ve been [to the tournament], you see it’s more about tradition, meeting people and seeing how it has changed over the past couple years.”

Yoon has passed on the honor of planning the tournament to Western sophomore Gerrit Stoker, who will be responsible for planning the tournament for the next two to three years.

Stoker met Yoon while attending Summerstart, Western's official welcome to incoming freshman, a few weeks before starting his freshman year at Western. Stoker stayed at a friend's house while in Bellingham, where he was introduced to both Yoon and Survivor. After a few rounds of the fast-paced game, which Stoker says he ended up being half-way decent at, Yoon asked him to take over planning and hosting the annual Survivor tournaments. Although he was unsure of what exactly it entailed, Stoker agreed.

“I got thrown head first into running this,” Stoker says. “I was pretty much clueless.”

But Stoker learned fast, helping Yoon plan last year’s tournament so he would be prepared to do it on his own once Yoon graduated. Months of planning and organizing go into putting together the tournament, and after taking care of all the last-minute details, Stoker says his favorite part of the night is getting to enjoy the event he has put so much work into planning.

“It turned out to be one of the greatest experiences ever,” Stoker says. “It was an adventure and a half.”

The legacy doesn’t appear to be ending any time soon.

Whether it be in a rented space in Bellingham, a house party in a college town or a glamorous Las Vegas hotel, the aftermath of a night of drinking games is always the same: red plastic cups scattered across the floor, a sticky layer of what was once beer covering just about every surface in the room, and Ping-Pong balls, some intact and others crushed, hiding under chairs, tables and passed-out partiers.

The night may be over and the games may have ended, but the memories, at least those the participants can recall, will last forever.
Twenty-three-year-old Teddy Seybold unwinds the cord wrapped around his Nintendo GameCube controller as he squirms his way to the nearest available television. Thirty others are doing the same in a room that might comfortably fit 20. Half-empty cans of soda and energy drinks line the edges of any available table on which the TVs are resting. Breathing, especially through one's nose, has become less desirable than it was outside. No one seems to mind. Bursting from the inaudible chatter of many smiling faces, a thunderous voice emerges, "No Johns, son!" In this community, "No Johns" is the equivalent of telling someone, "Don't make excuses!"

This is a competitive Super Smash Bros. tournament. Arriving at his destination, Seybold takes a seat in one of the available computer chairs surrounding the TV before shaking the hand of the person sitting next to him. His thin frame ensures a little extra elbow room. Upon plugging his controller into the setup, he takes one last chance to adjust his glasses and position himself. Again, emerging from the waves of inaudible chitchat, comes the distinct and authoritative voice, "For those who haven't already, please begin your tournament matches!" Electricity fills the air. Within seconds, the chitchat has vanished. Instead, thousands of rapid "clack! clack! clack's!" fill ones eardrums as people input commands into their controllers. Few are still smiling. Sitting where Seybold once was, lays a hawk, still and focused, hell-bent on devouring its prey. For the next few minutes, nothing else matters.

For Seybold and a select group of others, scenes like this are commonplace. This group of people belongs to the group known as "smashers," or, those who competitively play Super Smash Bros.

According to Teddy, Super Smash Bros. was first released in 1999 by Nintendo as a party game—up to four people could simultaneously play as their favorite Nintendo characters, such as Mario. Since then, Nintendo has released two more versions of the game, Super Smash Bros. Melee for the Nintendo GameCube in 2001, and Super Smash Bros. Brawl for the Nintendo Wii in 2007. The object of the game in every version is the same, to use your selected character...
to knock your opponent's characters off of the visible limits of the television screen, which is the game "board." Every
class character comes equipped with a plethora of available
attacks, which are controlled by the players and used to
knock your opponents off the screen. Every time an opponent
is vanquished, they lose a life. Once all of their lives are used,
they are eliminated. The last standing character wins.

"On the surface, the game looks very simple," Seybold
says. "But beneath the simplicity lies a game with an infinite
amount of strategy—you have to be able to detect patterns
in your opponents. Your feel for the game has to be second
nature and that takes years of practice."

Seybold, a Washington State University transfer student
who now attends Western, began playing Super Smash Bros.
as a freshman in late 2004 with other people in his dorm.

"I had no intention of playing [Super Smash Bros.] compet­
itively at first. It was just a fun game to play with my friends," he says.

Fascinated by the game, Seybold used the Web to look
up videos of other people playing Super Smash Bros. at a
supposed "high level." The result left him awestruck.

"The players in the videos were controlling their characters
in a way I had never seen before. The level of play was so
deep and fancy ... I wanted to play how they were playing."

Seybold soon discovered that he was not alone. Smashers
from all around the country shared his passion. By using
an online forum created by smashers, currently known as
"Smashboards," smashers from every region in the country
were able to network and communicate, enabling them to
hold events where smashers could compete against each
other, Seybold says.

Thousands of hours of dedication and practice with other
smashers got Seybold to where he is now—a fierce contender
in any Super Smash Bros. tournament.

The first tournament match is now over. Where the hawk
once was lies Seybold, victorious, though not above shaking
his opponent's hand and saying, "good game." As he unplugs
his controller and stands up, spectators of Seybold's match
clap and offer nods of approval.

"So far, so good," Seybold says, squirming his way away
from the station. He smiles and breathes deeply. The first few
matches are always the easiest.

For now, he waits and observes as one of the spectators.
His next match will come soon.

After dispatching a few more opponents in similar fashion,
the clear, distinct voice of the tournament director emerges,
"Teddy versus Shane! Please report to a setup and play your
tournament match!"

The smile on Seybold face vanishes as he once again
squirms his way to a setup. His solemn expression foretells a
match that will be anything but easy. These two have played
before. A group of seven or eight crowd behind Seybold and
Shane as they take their seats—their intent stares show they
are as invested in the game as the players in front of them.

His opponent, 19-year-old Shane Johns, like Seybold, has
spent thousands of hours molding himself into a high-level
competitive smasher.

One may wonder how anyone could spend that amount of
time on a single activity on such a consistent basis.

For Seybold, playing Super Smash Bros. competitively
provides him with an outlet that he has not found elsewhere.

"[Super Smash Bros.] provides me with an exhilarating
experience that I can't get anywhere else," Seybold says.
"I am a competitive person and Super Smash Bros. fills
that need. I love the adrenaline rush that I get from playing
it competitively. Most of all, Super Smash Bros. is just fun
and interesting. No matter how many thousands of matches I
play, I can still find something new to appreciate."

For Johns, who says he is one of the top Super Smash
Bros. players in the state, reputation is most important,

"I used to be so settled with my somewhat self-proclaimed
title as best in the Pacific Northwest at [Super Smash Bros.]
Melee that I stopped caring to try at bigger tournaments,
which lowered my reputation as a contender at the national
level," Johns says. "My current goal is to gain my lost respect
and become a top contender in the nation."

Most tournaments require that players buy into the event
by putting anywhere from $10 to $50 into a prize pool. The
prize money is usually distributed to the top three finishers of the tournament.

"At a typical tournament, there are usually between 30 and 40 players, so there is decent money to be made for getting first or second place."

For Seybold and Johns, the prospect of making money by playing competitive Super Smash Bros. is not very important. "The money is nice, but it's not the reason why we play," Seybold says. "We just love the game."

Johns, who began playing Super Smash Bros. competitively when he was 15, says Super Smash Bros. has provided him with life skills that go beyond playing the game itself.

"I learned a lot from traveling [to various Super Smash Bros. tournaments.] My first airplane, train, cab and greyhound trips were all for Smash events. I also learned how to drive by driving for people who were too tired to do it themselves. I'm better at predicting, reading and manipulating people in real life as well as in games," Johns says.

Business owner Chris Anderson, who owns a local area networking center in Lynnwood has been hosting and directing gaming tournaments since 2006 for games such as Halo, Counterstrike, Street Fighter and Super Smash Bros.

Anderson says the Smash community is different from the other competitive gaming communities because of the participants' love for the game.

"Compared to the players who play Halo or Counterstrike, you get a real sense that the smashers enjoy what they're doing," Anderson says. "Other gaming communities are all business; they just want to win and make money, whereas the Smashers just enjoy getting together and playing against tough competition."

Tenacity and pride are what separate competitive smashers from other people, Johns says.

"Competitive smashers thrive on improving," Johns says. "The best smashers believe they can beat anyone, or at least get better than them eventually. They are arrogant almost to a fault."

The match between Seybold and Johns trudges on. The various "oooh's" and "aaah's" coming from the spectators announce every life taken, impressive play executed, or mistakes made. Hordes of smashers continue to pile behind the two combatants, wanting to catch a glimpse of a clearly intense match.

Noise might distract the two warriors—it is silent, other than the "clack! clack! clack!" of the controllers being hammered on. Both are down to their last life and spectators seem to be holding their breath—it's anybody's game.

"Oooohhhh!" is the only sound left as everyone exhales simultaneously. Applause soon follows.

The grimace on Seybold's face, as he leans back and looks toward the sky, speaks only one thing—he lost. Johns exhales vigorously before shaking Seybold's hand and saying, "good game."

Although the sting of losing is never pleasant, Seybold knows he'll get another chance, at least for a few more years. "I don't see myself playing Super Smash Bros. as I do now once I graduate from college and start a career," Seybold says. "I will still play when it is convenient, but not nearly as much as I do nowadays."

Seybold says the future of competitive Super Smash Bros. looks bright, as there is a strong community of smashers who love the game just as much as he does.

"So long as there are smashers, there will be tournaments. I don't think that will change," Seybold says.

Methodically wrapping his cord back around his controller, Seybold squirms his way to the exit, leaving the hawk behind. He'll need it for next time. For now, his tournament experience is over. ■
On the northern edge of Deception Pass lays a small island of rock, which bears a light to warn boaters of its immovable presence. While the light sends boaters away, it welcomes those in search of a treasure hidden on the island.

When the tide is high, beachcombers can only admire the rock from a distance. But, as the tide washes out with the moon’s pull, the beach begins to grow and the rock becomes reachable on foot.

On one summery day in September 2001, Jon Stanley, accompanied by a friend, makes his way out to the rock. As he approaches it, his nerves kick in. He stares up at the climb ahead of him and his jaw falls open. Although deathly afraid of heights, he fights off his fears and climbs up a slippery aluminum ladder.

When Stanley and his friend reach the top, they spend several minutes searching for the treasure. Just when they are about to give up, they spot it. Hidden in a nook on the island is a black garbage bag. Inside the bag is a small Tupperware container - the treasure. After noting the container's contents, he takes the picture-filled CD and in its place, leaves a coin specially minted to celebrate this event—his 100th found geocache.

Stanley, 43, is a geocacher. He plays a game using a GPS to locate items hidden by other geocachers. As of October 2009 Stanley has found more than 7,500 caches.

"It combines so many of my interests," Stanley says. He has always been attracted to the outdoors, technology, computers, social networks and navigation. "All those things together merge perfectly into this activity for me."

The geocaching community, which started with a few players more than nine years ago, has grown to an estimated two million to three million active geocachers globally, says Jen Sonstelie, director of marketing at Groundspeak.

Groundspeak is a Seattle-based company that runs geocaching.com, a Web site used by geocachers to keep track of everything geocaching. Traditional geocaches are made of waterproof boxes filled with small toys, but a variety of other caches have been introduced.

"One reason [geocaching] is still growing is that it's an activity that appeals to a wide market," Sonstelie says. "There are caches that appeal to everyone from families with small children, to people who have a hard time getting out and walking."

Laurie Freeman, president of the Washington State Geocachers Association is known as Half-Canadian on geocaching.com. She says she got hooked on geocaching because it introduced her to unique places in her own backyard.

"It's like having this really awesome tour guide in your pocket," Freeman says. "Whether you're traveling or you just want to go around the county, you can find all these neat spots that other people know about and are sharing with you through a geocache."

While some geocachers enjoy discovering new places, others get addicted to the numbers. Glenn E. Malone 49, known to the geocaching world as GEM's, started geocaching in 2002.

"I did it compulsively for a long time until I got to 1,000," Malone says. "I couldn't drive past a cache without stopping to see it."

Malone has a lot of experience caching, some excursions more memorable than others. One that stands out was a cache called Buck's Crossing, which he visited during the winter of 2003. After he and two fellow cachers raced to be the first ones to find it, they celebrated with some loud cheers and made their way down the trail to the parking lot below.

Malone says when they reached the lot, two drunk men on horseback with Milwaukee's Best in hand met them with revolvers claiming that the cachers had been trespassing. The group thought they were parked on Department of Natural Resource land, which is public property. The gunmen had also stolen the ignition coil from their jeep, leaving them without a vehicle. One of the gunmen, called Ronnie, continually yelled at, and threatened the group.

Malone says Ronnie yelled things like "We're gonna scalp you. We're gonna teach you a lesson. We're gonna tie you up and drag you behind our horses. Where's my rope? I don't like you. You're a threat to me."

The three eventually negotiated their release, replaced the coil and drove off. Despite his memory, Malone returned to Buck's Crossing a year later to celebrate his 1000th cache, which he logged on geocaching.com.

"I needed to go back on my 1000th find hunt because I want everyone to know that it is a worthy and safe cache location that deserves your attention," Malone logged. "And with the stuff we left, I'm sure it'll have a visit very soon."
The time had finally come. It was 7 p.m. on a cold night in October. After weeks of chatting online and exchanging e-mails, it was time to meet.

Amanda Allington slowly pulled up to his house and stopped in the driveway. Adjusting the review mirror, she checked her lipstick and unbuttoned the top two buttons of her vintage red sweater. Gazing into the mirror for a brief moment, she recognized the nervous expression hidden behind her deep blue eyes. Trying to push her nerves aside, she reminded herself of what a nice guy he was. Allington reached for the door handle and stepped out of the car. Taking a deep breath, she approached the front door and found him waiting for her outside on the porch.

All the initial signs were good. He hugged her and the two made their way inside. They laughed, smiled and were beginning to have a great conversation. Everything seemed to be going well.

“So, what do you think?” Allington asked him.

“Well you’re really pretty, but honestly, you’re a bit fat,” he says.

Allington was speechless. After a few seconds of awkward silence, she was finally able to utter that she needed to leave. She got up and walked herself to the door, but he ran after her.

“Wait! I still really want to kiss you!” he exclaimed.

“Oh my God! Are you kidding me? Don’t ever call me again!” she screamed at him as she slammed the door behind her.

Looking back over her first online dating experience, Allington is now at a place in her life where she can laugh about it.

“Dating online has as many trials, tribulations and successes as dating someone from a bar or a club,” she says. “All the same people exist there—the booty callers, the idiots, the jerks.”

Let’s face it—dating is never easy. But, in recent years, online dating has become a new form for finding meaningful relationships, and if you’re lucky, maybe even that special someone.

When it comes to this new dating scene, however, the game can be even tougher to play.

Your typical traditional dating experience, complete with meeting someone face-to-face, having the initial bonding experience and perhaps sharing in pleasant conversation over coffee or a meal, is replaced with instant messaging, online gifts, e-mailing and virtual hugs and kisses that often times only leave daters with more questions than they started with.

What does it mean when JonJon418 blows you a kiss,
but doesn’t say hello? How do you see through people’s fabricated and embellished profiles? Is this really a way to find your next meaningful relationship?

During Allington’s three-year online dating period, the 24-year-old says she felt “played” a number of times by people pretending to be someone they weren’t. Allington constantly found herself being left in a state of confusion and frustration.

“I met this one guy in particular through Match.com. After a few weeks, he asked to meet me and I agreed,” she says. “He had mentioned he was a little heavy and I knew he was in his late 20s. Well, it turned out he was 400 pounds and in his late 30s.”

Needless to say, this was their last encounter.

Alida Hammond, a 21-year-old Western student, says she used a free trial of Match.com for a few months to see what it was like, but quickly got sick of how guys interacted with her.

“I found that people just put in their profiles what looks good on paper in a sense,” Hammond says. “While some seemed more authentic than others, it was hard to weed out what was actually truthful and what was embellished a bit.”

After months of finding only frogs instead of a prince charming, Hammond decided to log off Match.com for good.

Although the online dating world can seem hopeless at times, success stories are out there.

PlentyofFish.com Director of Love Kate Bilenki says members of their online dating site will go on more than 18 million dates with other online users this year alone.

“Through exit surveys, we know our site generates approximately 800,000 relationships per year,” Bilenki says. “Out of those relationships, we estimate 200,000 end in marriages.”

After three years of dating guys both on and offline, Allington met her husband of two years, Dane, on a dating Web site for a specific interest they shared.

After a few weeks, they decided to meet on a Sunday afternoon.

“By the end of the night, I had decided I really liked him. We had a steamy kiss in the parking lot and I walked back to my apartment seeing stars and hearts,” she says.

Dating can be full of heartache and games, but there’s still a reason we all play. You never know where you might meet that special someone—perhaps through a friend or a family member, in the cereal aisle of a grocery store, in your college English class, or even on an online dating site.

“I am happily married to a man I met online and have been for the last two years,” Allington says with a smile. “You’ll know when you meet the right person, no matter how it is you find them.”
During weekdays at Western, Bond Hall is like any other building on campus. The smell of pencil shavings and dusty chalk hang in the air. The routine academic hustle, the throng of students and professors rush through the corridors. At least, that's what fills the building during the light of day.

But, on weekends after dark, something else lurks in Bond Hall.

Every Saturday night, when students are at distant off-campus parties and professors are safely at home with their families, the corridors of Bond Hall are inhabited by a different kind of creature. They shape shift between human and beast, teeth and fangs, flesh and fur. The werewolves come out of hiding.

They're gentle with their friends and family members. But, werewolves can still leave their prey in fleshy shreds and make entrails out of their enemies, such as vampires. Going from human to wolf forms at will, they live, fight and die. In beast form, they can tread on all fours like normal wolves or walk on two legs with horrific canine claws and jaws—hell's version of "Thriller."

But without an imagination, these shape shifters won't frighten anyone. They don't even exist. Without an imagination, instead of 30 to 40 werewolves, one would see a pack of costumed eccentrics spouting incoherent jargon as they play make-believe.

Welcome to live action role-playing, or LARP—where people create and act out their own characters. Only it's not theater; it's a game.

If a person can commit to the game—learning the story, the rules of how to play, plus creating a character with depth and dimension—LARP holds the same dangerously-addictive thrill of a video game, only better because "you are the hero," says Western sophomore Lauren Raine.

Raine is the president of Role Playing the Critical Failure, Western's LARP club. She says people play for a sense of fantastic adventure that could never be found in real life. An epic quest is brought to life.

"Your normal life might be blah—but, when you get the chance to play another character, it's do or die," Raine says. "We play for that sense of heroism. Our characters are powerful and can do things in the game that we could never do normally."

There is no winner or loser. The object is to create an authentic experience, much like students playing an improvisation game in an acting class. For the "Werewolf the Apocalypse" game in Bond Hall, the goal is also to fight the forces of evil that threaten to bring the supernatural world to an end.

**Fight or flight**

At 6:50 p.m. on a Saturday, a small group of Western students become werewolves. Some wear costumes as simple as a white T-shirt and black jeans, where others sport trench coats with fedora hats, colored wigs and animal furs slung over their backs. No character looks the same. One woman in her early 20s wears a sarong, a wig with crimped black-and-brown locks and a cut-off T-shirt with neon colors.

As the game starts, it spreads into classrooms, the main corridor, and the entranceways of ground-level Bond Hall. Two to 10-person groups act out the game's different scenes.

"I am but a harmless traveler," says a man in his early 20s wearing a trench coat and a fedora hat before a pack of female players. Only better because "you are the hero," says Western sophomore Lauren Raine.
land to life, where spirits rule and supernatural creatures roam. The stranger in the trench coat stands before a pack of four werewolves lurched toward him. It’s fight-or-flight.

The newcomer forces his voice into a mysterious, raspy tenor for his character—an obvious departure from his normal voice outside of the game. He wants to get past the pack to the cave where werewolves convene, but they won’t let him.

“It’s a social ground for us supposed-geeks.”

They must determine whether he is a werewolf, like one of them, in human form or perhaps a threat, a hidden imposter. “We do not know this stranger,” comes the brute voice of a stout female werewolf. “We must call upon the alpha female—she’s the head of this pack and it’s her word that goes.” Although the speaker’s costume is simple: T-shirt, jeans and her hair thrown into a low ponytail, her diction is as commanding as a trained actor. Her stern face withholds warmth for the groveling newcomer.

The alpha female emerges. Played by a young woman in a brown dress, she pushes her way to the front of the pack. Sniffing, eyeing, and grunting, the werewolves contemplate the traveler, some crouched in a mock four-legged stance to signify they’re in wolf form.

With downcast eyes, the newcomer waits at the mercy of the pack—a morsel before monsters.

**Fantastic adventure**

People play this game for the thrill—imagine taking part in “The Lord of the Rings” saga. Within the game exists a world as vast, complex and magical as that of “Middle Earth.” The forces of good and evil go head-to-head. The chance to be a hero is within reach.

These are the same reasons people play video or computer games, Paine says. But LARP carries an even greater reward: face-to-face interaction.

“It’s a social ground for us supposed-geeks,” Raine says. “Unlike what it might have been for many of us in high school, we get to be social in a big group with people we fit in with.”

Students started playing the “Werewolf the Apocalypse” game at Western five years ago, but this recent version in Bond Hall sprang up in September 2009.

In the game, the forces of nature are controlled by three powers: the Wyld (the infinite realm of possibility) the Weaver (the embodiment of order) and the Wyrm (once the restorer of balance). The Wyrm has gone haywire, causing destruction and chaos and with a dark army of spirits at its disposal. The werewolves fight to save the world, including humans and all living things, from the apocalypse promised by the Wyrm’s destruction.

Although rules, materials and books associated with “Werewolf the Apocalypse” are provided by an American gaming company and book publisher, White Wolf Inc., in Georgia, the players get to decide how long the game lasts, what happens in the game and the fate of the characters.

Players use hand signals in the game. To determine a player’s fate or a winner in a battle, people play “rock, paper, scissors” for the outcome. Character stats sheets are made up by the players inform their abilities and limitations within the game.

Three designated storytellers, distinguished by the fact that they often wander around the players as opposed to acting in the scenes, help narrate the game. They often provide description of the imaginary backdrop, play extra characters as needed, and act as an authority in the plot.

Players start arriving and getting into character at 6 p.m., and an hour later, the game has begun. By 10 p.m., the game is set to end (but sometimes an important death or battle makes it run overtime).

Final scenes wrap up, and werewolves become Western students once again. They change out of costumes, take off wigs and put plastic swords away.

A Stereotype

Returning to normal life again after a night of running around “playing werewolf,” can mean donning unfortunate stereotypes: geeks and nerds.

There’s no way of getting around it, says Western sophomore Libby Chapman. Yes, most people who LARP—people who often love video games like “World of Warcraft,” fantasy literature and table top games—are geeks. At least, that’s how they’re stereotyped, she says.

Lauren Raine regards herself in her character, Resist-the-Wyrm. Photo illustration by Casey Bennett.
Some group members of Western's LARP club. The members, Dustin Massey, Niles McDonald, Gage Halihuran, Stephen Mihnard, Lauren Paine, James Kappand, and Alex Gardipe all play weekly in Bond Hall.

"We have a 30-year-old who plays, a high schooler, a law student and an art student," Chapman says. "We're well versed in things considered geeky like Dungeons and Dragons. We have this inner child that we all hold on to. But [LARP] is definitely a way to play that's more intense and adult."

Don't be so quick to judge geeks, says Western senior Michael Godwin, who plays a skilled werewolf warrior called Tarence. People who LARP develop their own characters, which means they're skilled at putting themselves in other people's shoes, he says.

"Even though [LARPers] might not have the best social skills in some ways, [players] have the freedom to develop social skills through the game, and explore the human psyche, to do and say things from other people's perspective," he says.

People who LARP are charismatic and highly creative, Raine says. This is just another way of expressing oneself or having fun, like playing a sport.

"I can understand being wary of people who get mixed up with reality and fantasy," Raine says. "But at college-age, we're able to distinguish between that. Honestly, it's really thrilling—you're creating this whole other world where you can be whoever you want."

**Step into the game**

Wearing a black hood over a black-and-red wig, crimson lipstick, patent leather sneakers and an eye patch, Raine stands in Bond Hall room 108, the "Out of Character Room," where people get into costume and can come take breaks from the game. Technically, she is a political science major. But now, she is getting ready to become a 16-year-old werewolf called Resist-the-Wyrm.

Raine's character is the complete opposite of herself. Raine can be wordy and chatty, but her character uses words sparingly. Raine speaks in a high register, but her character's voice is low and smooth. Raine walks upright. Her character walks with stealth low to the ground, behavior typical of a werewolf born under a new moon.

Personal belongings and bags are scattered across the "Out of Character Room" floor. A male in his early 20s stands behind Raine, drawing scars on his arms with a black marker. Other players write personal notes about their character (names and physical attributes like breed of werewolf) on small squares of paper. Then, they safety pin the tags onto their costumes. The tag on Raine's costume reads: "Pure Breed 2 Shadow Lord."

"My character was raised to be ever-watchful and aware of her surroundings—a little investigator," Raine says. "If there's anything mysterious that pops up, she must explore it. She's mentally powerful but not a strong fighter, generally sneaky, and kind of a trickster."

As the game begins, Raine reminds herself that she is no longer bound to her pale, petite human frame. She is also a wild thing—a creature with wolf-jaws, claws and fur but no tail (a deformity from being born of two werewolf parents).

She makes for the exit of the "Out of Character Room" to enter the game. But for the next few hours, Lauren Raine will disappear—her only traces left behind are that of a young werewolf, trying to save the world. ■
Big House team member Ridley Latimer watches the result of his turn at the first Wii bowling tournament at Merrill Gardens.
Spectators trickle in 25 minutes early to score prime viewing spots in the room that has been transformed to offer arena-style seating. As game time approaches, the opponents exchange hearty handshakes. Small conversations about the weather and recent hospital visits are quickly hushed as the familiar binging medley of Nintendo Wii fills the room. A booming voice sends a wave of chuckles over the high-spirited residents.

“All bowlers to the arena,” says Brenda Graves, former active living director at Merrill Gardens in Bellingham.

The first Wii Bowling Tournament at Merrill Gardens, a senior community with independent and assisted living programs, is proof that video games are no longer reserved for the young. From college dorm rooms to retirement centers, video games are played by all ages. Some consider video games a leisure activity, some play to be social and others play competitively. The increasing popularity of interactive gaming has promoted the use of video games for physical therapy and fitness.

With its release in 2006, the Wii introduced a new style of gaming. Wii features wireless motion-sensitive controllers and many Wii games require full body movement. The revolutionary interactive system gets players off the couch and on the court. Whether it’s tennis, baseball or boxing, players become active participants without leaving their home.

Eighty-eight year old Peggy Latimer, a Merrill Gardens assisted living resident, rises from her chair with help from her husband and teammate Ridley Latimer, then carefully positions herself at the top of the bowling lane. With her wireless remote securely fastened to her wrist, Peggy winds up. As she presses the small round button, her arm brushes past her side and behind her body. With a quick flick of the wrist and a few steps forward, Peggy releases the button and watches the television as her virtual bowling ball travels down the lane.

Peggy says she likes Wii bowling because of the competition and the friendships. She plays twice per week for about an hour, each enjoy the fitness aspect of bowling, and appreciates the company of her peers, she says.

“We’re all a bunch of cripples,” Peggy says with a laugh. “But it’s good exercise, it’s good mentally, and they’re a great group of bowlers.”

Wii is becoming a popular purchase in nursing homes, says Derrick Mears, physical education, health and recreation professor at Western. Wii bowling leagues and tournaments are more common than Wii Fit within the retired population because they are easier to operate. A majority of the games associated with Wii Fit involve balance and stability exercises like yoga or hula-hooping; movements that may make elderly players more susceptible to falling, he says.

Wii has a step-aerobics module with beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. Mears says even the highest level does not imitate the same degree of intensity a super-cardio workout would provide. For an older population however, Mears says forward and side steps allow a forward-lateral movement that can be beneficial, despite their cardiovascular limitations.

One of the toughest obstacles within nursing homes is often a lack of space, so large fitness areas aren’t always available, Mears says. With minimal floor space and a television, Mears says nursing facilities now have virtual exercising capability.

“It provides some recreational activities that weren’t possible before,” Mears says. “That alone is worth it regardless of whether it actually improves their fitness level.”

The pins tumble to the ground and team Big House voices excited congratulations to Peggy. She has just bowled a strike. This is one of many for team Big House, who represent the assisted living residents. Across the room facing the celebratory navy blue shirts is
team Cottage, who are independent living residents. Like the bumpers at a child's bowling birthday party, team Big House and team Cottage form a virtual bowling lane.

Graves says she began experimenting with the Wii approximately seven months ago. Tennis, boxing, baseball and golf are included in the Wii Sports package, but it was bowling that most residents chose because they could understand and navigate the game easily, she says.

She says the biggest concern is getting residents who need assistance from their chair or walker to the "top of the lane" safely. "They love it," Graves says. "And, we haven't had any accidents, incidents, sprains or anything."

While some residents expressed reluctance toward the game at first, Graves says she has noticed social and physical improvements in bowling participants. Graves says she would like to purchase a Wheel of Fortune game for the Wii because she tries to engage the residents both physically and intellectually. She says interactive games are especially helpful for engaging residents with varying degrees of dementia.

"I like things that challenge their minds," Graves says. "Those types of things really keep their minds alert and active, and they enjoy it."

Mary confidently walks to the top of the lane to bowl first for team Cottage. She looks from the controller to the television and then back to the controller. She side-steps to the left and continues to strategically choose the location and angle from which her virtual bowling ball will travel. When satisfied with her settings, she takes another step to the left, swings her arm back then simultaneously brings her left leg and right arm forward in one fluid sweeping motion.

"She's little, but she's fierce," warns one Cottage teammate.

The 94-year-old didn't bowl a strike, or a spare for that matter. But, she did set a high score of 161 for team Cottage.

While the Wii has become a popular social tool within nursing and retirement communities, it has also made an appearance in the world of physical therapy. Occupational Therapist Lara Whitley says the Wii is a motivational activity used for therapy because patients have fun playing games, but still complete exercises and movements necessary for rehabilitation. Whitley, who works at Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital in Santa Barbara, Calif., says games that require minimal button pushing, like bowling, are most beneficial for the elderly. Wii bowling is slow moving, but allows older patients to become comfortable with the interactive system, she says.

Whitley says Wii bowling is especially helpful for patients who have had hip or knee replacements. Simply getting patients out of bed to play a game standing upright works strength and tolerance while the bowling movement is good for increasing range of motion, Whitley says. Socially, the Wii may also unite generations, she says.

"Grandma can play it in therapy and become familiar with bowling or tennis," Whitley says. "Then she can go home and play with her grandson."

In addition to physical benefits, the Wii has cognitive advantages, Whitley says. Measuring a patient's comprehension of the game, how many directions they need or how long they can tolerate play, provides information therapists can use to track a patient's progress, she says. Besides the elderly, Whitley has used Wii Sports with patients who have suffered strokes, brain injuries and spinal cord injuries, she says. No matter what age group she is working with, Whitley says she plays most Wii games with her patients because it is fun to do together and it helps build rapport.

The tournament at Merrill Gardens continues as players from each team compete two at a time for the duration of one complete game. Each player has a different form. Big House bowler Sandy emphasizes the follow-through on her swinging arm by raising her wrist as high as she can toward the ceiling. Cottage member Muriel stands with feet slightly farther apart. She concentrates on the screen and makes one quick swinging motion with her right arm. Muriel does not take any steps forward; instead she shifts her weight from her back foot to her front foot and then nonchalantly shifts back to her starting position as her eyes remain glued to the screen.

Some players take multiple steps, some emphasize the wrist flick and others analyze the angles; but not all elderly populations have had positive experiences from interactive video games. Activities Director Michael Berg has used an interactive game called Xavix at Highgate Senior Living, an Alzheimer's facility in Bellingham.

Xavix is similar to Nintendo Wii; it uses wireless controllers, requires full body movement and has applications such as tennis, baseball, ping pong and fishing. The limitations of Alzheimer's, which is basically a wasting away of the brain, make it difficult for most patients to use the interactive system effectively, Berg says.

"Different functions slowly go away," Berg says. "Their long-term memory
Team Cottage selects their generic Mii before play begins. The teams are competing for a trophy and bragging rights.

is good, but their short-term memory goes."

The biggest obstacle within the game is that the residents lose the ability to remember what they are doing, Berg says. This may hurt their self esteem causing them to get discouraged, and allowing them to walk away. Berg started using Xavix approximately nine months ago with a sizeable group of 13 people.

Each week the group dwindled until only two residents remained. Berg says this is because it becomes harder for the residents to participate as they digress further through levels of Alzheimer's.

Berg says his job is all about stimulating people, so he will continue to introduce new residents to the interactive video gaming system. Products like Xaxis and Nintendo Wii are good for hand-eye coordination, mind-body connections and physical fitness, he says.

"But, if their self esteem goes down because they can't accomplish it, I don't want to keep pushing," he says.

While Berg has not seen progress in the Alzheimer population he works with, interactive gaming has shown health and social benefits in nursing homes and physical therapy centers.

In a world of rapidly changing technology, video games have evolved from a sedentary activity only requiring the use of thumbs, to a fully interactive system in which a living room becomes a virtual sports arena or a fitness center.

The scores are tallied back at Merrill Gardens and team Big House, with 1,824 points, is victorious. Tony, Mary, Sandy, Ridley, Peggy and Norma, whose names will be engraved on a shiny plaque, will share the trophy throughout the year.

Team Cottage is not far behind with 1,462 points and they will return to battle team Big House for champion status next year. Residents at Merrill Gardens will continue to sharpen their Wii bowling technique, but for now the celebration continues down the hall with an ice cream social.

"It provides some recreational activities that weren't possible before. That alone is worth it regardless of whether it actually improves their fitness level."
Hugh Locker, Jake Locker's grandfather, in the starting line-up for the 1956 Western football team. He wears the number 85 jersey on the far right for the Vikings. Photo courtesy of the WWU Athletic Department.

It's a typical fall Saturday morning for Barbara and Hugh Locker as they sit outside Husky Stadium with an array of people decked out in purple and gold anticipating the kickoff of the weekly Husky football game. They chat with a huge entourage from Ferndale near a motor home that says the word 'Ferndog' on its side.

This is the life of the Lockers. Barbara has covered her fingernails with a fresh coat of purple nail polish and is ready to enter the stadium with roughly 70,000 other fans, many sporting number 10 jerseys with the name Locker printed across the back. While “Locker” has become an esteemed name for the thousands of Husky football fans, the name has been well known throughout Whatcom County for far longer. In fact, Jake Locker, quarterback for University of Washington, comes from a long line of sports-playing Lockers.

Beginning with Hugh Locker, the patriarch of the Locker clan, the game has been passed down through the generations. Hugh played football throughout his youth, including time at Western, and has taught his four sons the joys of the game. Pat, Hugh's most renowned son, was inducted into Western’s Hall of Fame and the Pacific Northwest Football Hall of Fame. He set 12 records at Western and was the first player to rush for 4,000 yards in northwest collegiate history. The four Locker boys have since passed down the game to their children, who have won numerous championships in various sports.

Barbara and Hugh sit around their long kitchen table, now only big enough to host one of their son's families at a time, reading a stack of articles printed off the Internet about Jake Locker’s latest game—some praise him, others do not. Barbara and Hugh, with their big smiles, loving eyes and open hearts, are typical of the warm grandparents portrayed in the movies. They offer anyone who walks through their door something to eat or drink. They adore their sons—Mike, 52, Pat, 51, John, 45, and Scott, 44—their 12 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. You can see the affection radiate from their faces when they talk about any of their kin and how their lives revolve around each one and the games they play.

The Locker grandchildren play a myriad of sports and on any given
Jake Locker warms up before the University of Washington vs. Notre Dame game on October 3, 2009. Photo by Brian Spurlock.
night that’s where Barbara and Hugh will be—up in the stands rooting them on. The game brings them together.

"All throughout high school when I was younger I can probably think of only a handful of games that [my grandparents] weren’t at. And I’m sure my 11 other cousins could tell you the same thing," says Jake, 21, son of Scott. "They were at everything. Their week consisted of going and watching us play sports. Just to have that kind of support and always seeing them up in the stands—they just were very supportive and loved coming and watching us play. I think having them around all the time meant a lot to all of us."

With their grandchildren playing a variety of sports, Hugh says he and Barbara try to be as fair as possible when deciding which games to attend—making sure to allot equal amounts of time to each sport.

"Their biggest worry is ‘Jeez how do we spend our time, we’ve got to make sure to go to every kid’s game,’” Pat says. "They’re so supportive, not only in life but in sports and marriage and our kids and babysitting and taking care of four boys that were not always angels. They’ve just done a good job, and I’m very thankful I have them. They’re a great example of how I want to live my life.”

The eldest Lockers live on a large plot of land out in Ferndale. With not a whole lot to do in a small town growing up, the four Locker children spent most of their free time shooting hoops in the old barn beside their house—which housed a full basketball court—or playing catch with a football in the open fields behind it.

"Most of our lives were wrapped around sports," Hugh says. "We would try to take vacations and they had either tournaments or they had games."

"That was our vacation," Barbara adds referring to the out-of-town competitions.

The Lockers eat, breathe and sleep sports; it’s what their family life was built around. Not much will get in the way of them seeing their family compete. Barbara recalls an instance when they traveled to Tacoma to watch their grandson Marc, Pat’s son, participate in the football state championship and the family brought their Thanksgiving turkey with them to the hotel.

"A lot of my quality time with my kids was spent in the gym or on the field," says Scott, the father of Jake, Alyssa and Erika. "That’s one thing I’m really proud of—that I had a chance to be a part of that part of their life because I think sports is a really great way not only to be an athlete, but to be a character person. I think sports brings out the best in kids, so it was great for us as a family to be able to do those kinds of things together and to spend that time."

Jake is becoming a big name around the Northwest sports scene. He has set records in passing, and at the University of Washington as its standout quarterback. He and his two cousins won the football state championship Jake’s senior year at Ferndale High School. He says he has always played sports with his cousins and has learned everything about sports from his family.

"It was just kind of something I was born into," Jake says. "My toys when I was little were a football or a basketball, a glove and a ball and a bat."

Scott says he knew from an early age that Jake could succeed in sports. "Jake was seven when I first got asked for him to actually play on a baseball team with nine and 10-year-old boys. He was a couple years younger and I didn’t know if that was going to be the best thing for Jake. I kind of thought maybe he’d be in over his head," Scott says. Despite being a few years younger than his teammates, Jake ended up winning the MVP trophy in a Blaine baseball tournament that season.

"He showed then he could play with the older boys. That was probably the first time that he was actually in a structured environment that I thought he may be a different-level kind of"
Mike Locker, who played for Western in the late 1970s, sits on the bench at a Western football game. Photo Courtesy of the WWU Athletic Department.

"It was just kind of something I was born into. My toys when I was little were a football or a basketball, a glove and a ball and a bat."

Jake Locker

player," Scott says.

Sports go beyond the playing field, Pat says. The lessons learned from sports are valuable to anyone who participates.

"I think [sports has] just been a good influence on all of us. Anytime you have to participate in a team sport, you learn to work with people. You learn that every person or every position is different. And I think sports is a lot like business," Pat says. "I've owned two businesses ... and my daily interaction is very much like playing football and playing baseball. You have to be able to communicate. You have to get along with everyone. You have to have a team effort to be successful."

The Lockers believe sports are invaluable and therefore pass the game down to anyone who participates.

"I think kids and coaches and teachers and parents all need to take a step back and really enjoy what sports are all about," Pat says. "It's supposed to be a meeting of a group of people that have a contest, and at the end you shake hands, give each other a hug and walk off the field, the court or the playing area and just say, 'hey that was fun.' And, I don't think we do that much any more. I think it's very serious and competitive to the point that it's counterproductive for kids in some ways."

Scott coached all three of his children until they reached high school and he says there were times he was coaching three sports simultaneously.

"I can't say enough about what he did for me, and he is definitely the biggest impact on my life than anybody," Jake says.

Scott says he had high expectations for his children in each sport, and it paid off. "It made them into the players they turned out to be," he says.

Even though the Lockers are a sports family, Hugh's most memorable family moment was not a game-winning touchdown pass over a defender with two seconds left on the clock nor a buzzer-beating three-point shot. The tough-looking man shows his sensitive side and tears up thinking about it.

"I was on the Ferndale school board for 17 years and I got to hand each one of my boys their graduation diploma," he says. "That was quite emotional at the time."

Barbara and Hugh walk out of Husky stadium alongside their sons. They reflect on the game they've just witnessed and Barbara is thankful her grandson came out of the game unscathed. They embark on their trek home and plan out what game they need to be at next.

This is life for the Lockers.
Dario Ré, a 21-year-old fourth-year Fairhaven student, drives a disc down the fairway at the Cornwall Park disc golf course.

Story by Jeff Twining
Photos by Angelo Spagnolo

Five miles east on Lakeway Drive in Sudden Valley, amongst the ruins of a deserted campsite, three friends hike their way through the course. Nestled in a grove of trees a few hundred yards away is the destination: the hole. Each player makes their shot selection and one-by-one they approach the tee box.

Western senior Dario Ré is up first. He looks into his bag and selects his driver, aligns his feet with his destination and, after a couple practice swings, takes his shot. His two companions praise him with approving remarks after his shot lands within 10 meters of the hole, on the green.

After two hours of playing this relatively new game, the trio approaches the final tee box and Ré congratulates them with a firm handshake.

“Alright last hole; good frolfing today,” Ré says, shaking hands with Western junior Corey Sloan and freshman Gabe Barnow.

Disc golf, also known as “frolf,” which Ré describes as a full-body workout, involves throwing discs through the air toward a target hole a few hundred feet away. Strokes are counted cumulatively for each hole and the fewer shots the better, just like the traditional form of golf.

Ré, 21, is a professional, sponsored disc golfer and member of the Professional Disc Golf Association. Coming off a career year with the PDGA, Ré founded the Disc Golf Club upon enrolling at Western in 2006 with 10 years of playing experience, Ré was eyeing a more traditional life in college and had a newfound interest in teaching others to play.

“Looking back, it’s frustrating because I committed my whole life to it and now I realize that I wanted to have a life, have relationships with friends,” Ré laments. “I like teaching way more than playing now.”

Sloan, 20, was introduced to the game of disc golf his freshman year when he noticed a flyer, which Ré had posted, advertising the club. Ré's introduction to the game was much different.

Eleven-year-old Ré sits on the couch watching TV at his family's home in Spokane, when his dad comes into the room with an intriguing question.

“Do you want to check out a new game, Frisbee golf?” his dad asks.

As any active, curious fifth grader would do, Ré agrees and joins his dad for the hour-long drive from Spokane, to a new course at Farragut State Park...
in Athol, Idaho.

It was the first time Ré or his father had experienced disc golf and they witnessed athletic feats neither had seen. The game consumed them.

“As luck would have it, we showed up to the course and there just happened to be a tournament going on that very day,” Ré says, recalling that fateful day when he was introduced to the game that would vault him to celebrity status in the local disc golf community.

Ré says he remembers seeing competitors throwing the disc “a mile” and he and his dad were hooked immediately. Eventually, after a few weeks of throwing discs back-and-forth, Ré’s dad built a 9-hole course on his 5-acre property.

Ré describes his tall, lengthy frame as ideal for disc golfers; his lanky arms provide more whip on his throws. His long, boney fingers help him stabilize the disc in his hand, providing more control and accuracy in his throws.

After quickly becoming a well-known amateur disc golfer, Ré jumped into the professional scene when he finished second in the Junior Division of the World Championships in 2004. Ré turned pro a year later and was named PDGA Rookie of the Year after winning the Washington State Series, consisting of six to eight PDGA-sanctioned tournaments.

“I was young and in that school mindset of learning and dove into it,” Ré says. “At school, in my physics class I wanted to shape the class around the Frisbee because I wanted to learn everything I could. And, my teacher let me.”

Constant frolfing paid off for Ré and everything has come full-circle now that his focus has shifted to teaching others.

“When you’re learning to play, it’s like learning a language. There’s a bunch you’ll forget but other stuff will come naturally,” he says.

With such an intricate knowledge of the game, Ré’s presence on the course has made both Sloan and Barnow better frolfers. Ré is quick to offer a tip or pointer without solicitation and Sloan and Barnow eagerly listen.

“When I first started I had never played before and there was nowhere to go but up,” Sloan says. “Having Dario out there really helps; he’s taught me a lot.”

“I thought I’d be decent because I was good at throwing around a normal Frisbee,” Barnow explains, approaching a particularly tricky lie amidst the brush and trees. “But that’s not the case.”

Throughout the round, bad shots are met with laughter while good shots incite cheers and congratulatory remarks from playing partners.

“Even if you are having a crappy day, there are cool people there to talk to and joke around with,” Sloan says. “It’s not so much about the Frisbee golf, but it’s about having something to do with your friends every week.”

When the round is finished, another weekly Disc Golf Club meeting has adjourned. By establishing the club, Ré has introduced this fast growing game to Western, helping students learn and appreciate the game he has grown to love. ■
Bingo, a simple game of chance, has become an American cultural icon in the last century, growing to the point where annual attendance numbers in Washington state alone reach into the millions.

In a culture obsessed with the extreme makeover of our houses, bodies and style, grandma and her favorite game are due for one of their own.

“When we think of Bingo, we think of the old lady sitting in the church Bingo hall,” says Terrie Hendrix, Bingo manager at Swinomish Casino in Anacortes.

Bingo, a simple game of chance, has become an American cultural icon in the last century, growing to the point where annual attendance numbers in Washington state alone reach into the millions. But times are a-changin’.

Technology, laws, economy and culture are forcing the game to take on a new face in order to survive. Younger generations have grown up on video games that constantly develop more realistic and complex qualities that make traditional board games, well, dusty.

Hendrix, who has been worked in the Bingo industry for 22 years, says the younger generations desire a quicker entertainment fix and constant changes to the game.

“I think we have to push the limits (of Bingo),” Hendrix says. “The game is based on an older generation, so if we don’t change it up and create new ways to play and create new players in the younger generation, then we have to worry about the survival of the game.”

So how do we bring Bingo into 21st century culture?

- Dress the caller in drag.
- Turn out the lights.
- Blare Lady Gaga.
- Put the cards in a computer.
- And of course, use crude humor when O-69 is pulled.

Within the charity fundraising world of today, Bingo could not get any further from the church basement. Drag Bingo, or Gay Bingo, was developed in the 1990s as an AIDS charity benefit. Male callers dress extravagantly in women’s clothing and provide charismatic entertainment for the crowd with their edgy humor and sexual innuendos.

In Washington state, traditional Bingo halls are close to extinction. As of Dec. 8, 2005, Initiative 901 banned smoking in all indoor public places, pushing the game into the tribal casinos.

The Washington State Gambling Commission reported the largest attendance decrease in the year and a half after Initiative 901 was put into place, losing the charity Bingo halls almost 50 percent of their players.

“A lot of organizations put their heart and soul into that industry, says Hendrix, who used to work in charity Bingo. “Unfortunately, other things came along and pushed it to the wayside.”

Bingo 262, a charity Bingo hall in Ferndale that benefitted Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS), was forced to close after its attendance numbers decreased by more than 80 percent within a year and a half of the smoking ban coming into affect, according to the Washington State Gambling Commission.

Sharon Kingsley, business manager of DVSAS, says the closure of Bingo 262 was an “unintended consequence” of the smoking ban, as many Bingo players smoke. The Bingo hall provided one third of the charity’s yearly budget.

But it’s still a challenge for casinos to attract new players, especially within the younger generation, where players as young as 16 are allowed to play. Last May, Swinomish Casino launched Cosmic Bingo, taking the traditional game of Bingo and turning it into a dance club setting to try to hold the minimal attention spans of the texting, iPod and video game generation.

When Hendrix first proposed the idea of Cosmic Bingo to Paula Maylor, a shift supervisor who has worked in the Swinomish Bingo hall for 15 years, Maylor remembers thinking, “Is she nuts? People aren’t going to do that.”

Cosmic Bingo is more about the fun experience, and less about winning large sums of money.

Cosmic Bingo incorporates the nightclub atmosphere by pumping loud music through speakers, turning on black lights and having an MC conduct mini-game shows throughout the session. Alcohol is also served.

Who thought Bingo would ever need a disclaimer?
Accompanied by her daubers and Betty Boop Bingo bag Pam Wasmund, 53, plays Bingo on paper cards while her computer plays for her simultaneously during an evening session of regular Bingo on Oct. 15, 2009 at Swinomish Casino in Anacortes.

Boldly printed on the bottom of the Cosmic Bingo schedule, players are warned: "Participation in any of our promotions may result in injury, play at your own risk."

Hendrix says the Bingo staff cautions its traditional players who think about giving Cosmic Bingo a shot.

"We warn them it's going to be loud and [they] won't be able to hear the caller through the music."

A Saturday night draws 115 people to the Bingo room at Swinomish Casino for the Cosmic experience. The regulars are easy to distinguish from the first-timers. They don 'Cosmic Bingo' T-shirts, surround themselves with luck trinkets and meticulously line up their collection of brightly colored daubers.

As Michael Jackson booms through the speakers, Bingo Caller Leon Church yells, "Who can Moonwalk?" from his perch in the front of the room. Immediately, a young woman jumps from her seat, kicks off her shoes and gracefully glides backwards over the floor. Before she has finished, a man two tables down, who could easily be her father, jumps up and shows off his rendition of the dance, which more resembles stumbling backwards than MJ's signature move. His companions laugh and cheer.

Thirty-year Bingo veteran, Susan House of Snohomish, decided to give Cosmic Bingo a try after coming up for the regular game that day and saw it advertised. After the Cosmic session both House and her husband expressed that they enjoyed the twist on the old game, saying that there was more positive energy than traditional Bingo.

"It felt like we were at a club," says Bruce House. "I almost expected to see a pool table in the corner."

Although the slightest modifications to regular Bingo can create uproar, the introduction of computerized cards is one that seems to be a crowd-pleaser. The computers, which players rent and can hold up to 66 cards, require no interaction with the player as they 'stamp' the digitalized cards themselves when signaled wirelessly by the caller's computer. When a player gets a bingo the computer notifies the player.

Holding the attention a group of people that are hungry for change and sensory stimulation is Hendrix's constant challenge.

"It's a matter of how do we keep reinventing to keep the crowd coming," she says.

So how far will the quaint game of Bingo be pushed to appeal to new generations? No one seems to know. All that can be said is: Hold on to your dauber, grandma – the makeover has just begun. ■
Klipsun is a native word meaning "beautiful sunset."