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Dear reader,

I just consumed a Big Mac, fries and a Dr. Pepper. The cows used for my burger probably grazed where the Amazon Rainforest stood before it was devoured to make way for the crowd of lumbering bovine. The soda was sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup. Furthermore, I could have walked to the restaurant, but instead I wasted a non-renewable resource by driving.

And I don't really care.

Our campus community is highly aware of consumption. We're powered by green energy. Instead of dumping our trays into an all-encompassing receptacle, we sort trash into a variety of containers marked food-waste or compost. We generally agree that consumption is bad. But like any word in the English language, consumption has a variety of meanings.

Some of those meanings are delicious, like the 6-pound burrito at Jalapenos. Some make you ask questions: Why would Canadians drive many miles and endure lengthy border-waits just to scour Wal-Mart's overflowing shelves? For some, the negative force of consumption resonates in more ways than just environmentally, like those with the rare chromosomal disorder Prader-Willi syndrome, which causes an insatiable and life-threatening desire to eat.

Though I see nothing wrong with an occasional fast-food indulgence, I'm not asking anyone to stop recycling, composting or biking. I'm only asking that as you flip through these pages, and as you navigate your daily lives, keep an open mind when encountering that omnipresent and multidimensional presence; consumption.
Dear reader,

For 40 years, the definition: “Klipsun is a Lummi word meaning beautiful sunset” has been printed in our magazine.

Although our high turnover brings in new staff and a new set of stories each quarter, the iconic Klipsun definition has united current and former Western journalists and readers as a cherished slogan, and given us a chance to pay homage to the Lummi Nation, the first people of Whatcom County.

Klipsun Magazine took its name from Western’s annual yearbook, a tradition that dates back to the early years of the university. In 1970, when yearbooks were falling out of fashion across the country, our publication replaced the old annual. Western’s journalism department was created several years later and the Lummi-Klipsun definition emerged as a signature part of the magazine that was never challenged. Until now, that is.

As it turns out, we have some amends to make and some clarifying to do; Klipsun is in fact, not a Lummi word.

The word “Klipsun” originates from Chinuk Wawa, or Chinook jargon, an intertribal language from the Pacific Northwest. It developed out of the need for communication and trade between Native Americans and European settlers and was widely spoken by all people in our region in the 1800s and 1900s, according to Daniel Boxberger, Western Anthropology Department chair. It comes as no surprise then that the jargon combines Native American languages, in addition to French and English.

The first part of the word, “Klip,” means “deep; sunken” and the “sun” part of the word is the same as in English, according to Boxberger’s copy of “Gill’s Dictionary of Chinook Jargon” published in 1909.

Boxberger works as an advocate for different first nations groups on natural resource issues and treaty rights. In the 1970s and ‘80s, he worked with the Lummi Nation as an instructor and administrator at Northwest Indian College. He also authored a book on Lummi salmon fishing practices.

Boxberger says the name Chinuk Wawa comes from the Chinook tribe that lived along the banks of the Columbia River and the coast of the Pacific Ocean. “Wawa” means talk, or language. Today, the language is still spoken among The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in Oregon. But Chinuk Wawa, along with other Coast Salish Native American languages, is endangered. Cultural revitalization efforts within the tribes are being made to preserve them.

Those revitalization efforts include a more widespread return to the teaching and studying of Lummi language. This spring, editors of our magazine contacted and drew the interest of educators at Northwest Indian College, where a language instructor and the Lummi Nation Language Department director have offered to determine an appropriate word for “sunset” in Lummi.

We, the editorial staff of spring 2010, carry on the Klipsun title to respect a Western tradition—a magazine that’s been sharing stories from our region since 1970. But, to show respect to the original members of our community, we sincerely apologize for the magazine’s history of misrepresenting the Lummi language, and are setting the record straight: Klipsun, is in fact, a Chinuk Wawa word meaning sunset.

Gabrielle Nomura
Managing Editor
BUFFALO RANCHING

A local, healthy alternative to the beef industry

Story by Sim Paxman
Photos by Jordan Stead

From the porch of their log home on the Lone Boot Ranch in Ferndale, John and Sue Muggy eagerly wait with binoculars in hand for final confirmation that this year’s calves are suckling. Five of the eight bison cows, or American Bison, on the ranch have already given birth, and the deer-sized, light brown babies lie near their mothers out in the timber-lined pasture.

The husband and wife know all too well the hardest part is still to come. As the clock ticks and the hours turn to days, the Muggys hope the mother bison take to their young, or the Muggys could once again be faced with the challenge of saving an orphaned buffalo.

As the couple sit on their porch, there isn’t any indication the 20th century ever came or went. It’s decorated with an eclectic collection of rusted antique farm equipment; nearly everything has a picture of a buffalo on it. The massive logs that make up the walls of the house are capped with a pitched roof that extends over the porch, offering shade and a tranquil place to view the rolling pastureland. The occasional squawk of pheasants pierce the air and a bald eagle passes over in the distance, while a turkey vulture circles something dead or dying nearby. Stacks of pillows and folded blankets on the wicker benches testify to the amount of time spent watching over the herd from the porch’s vantage point.

Sue is particularly concerned for the young of her favorite buffalo, June Bug. “Juney,” as Sue calls her because she was born in June, was an orphaned buffalo whom Sue laboriously bottle fed and saved from certain death more than eight years ago.

Saving an orphaned buffalo is nearly impossible. The Muggys must first separate the orphaned calf from
John Muggy holds buffalo hair, which his herd sheds every spring. Birds come from miles around to use the buffalo hair for nesting. Muggy tests the flammability of buffalo dung.

John Muggy holds buffalo hair, which his herd sheds every spring. Birds come from miles around to use the buffalo hair for nesting. Muggy tests the flammability of buffalo dung.

the herd, which is guarded by General Custer, the herd bull.

Sue says a bottle-fed calf must eventually be dehorned and will forever be considered a loner. As they age, female orphaned calves have trouble understanding their role as a mother. Sue knows this from experience because Juney orphaned her first calf, who then died of starvation because the Muggys could not separate him from the herd.

The Muggys started raising buffalo in 1993 and have been selling meat from their Lone Boot Ranch since 1995. They currently have two commercial accounts, one with Tony’s Tavern in Custer and the other with the Bellingham Golf and Country Club. Throughout their 15 years in the business, the Muggys have supplied buffalo meat to local businesses including Nimbus, The Willows, Boundary Bay Brewery and Bistro, Brandywine Kitchen and Ciao Thyme.

“Buffalo is the meat that beef wishes it could be,” John says. He says the meat is healthier than the ubiquitous American beef. It is much leaner, darker and tastes better, he says.

Sue says she eats buffalo meat every day, especially in the morning with her latte.

Now in his first year of retirement from British Petroleum (BP), John has focused almost entirely on the buffalo business. He has 30 head of stock, and imports about 30 percent of the meat he sells from other buffalo ranches in Canada. A store is below the porch on the ground level of their home, open to the public on the weekends and available during the week by phone. The Muggys sell out of everything in about two months, so the turnaround keeps their products fresh in the nine freezers they keep stocked.

Buffalo can live to be 30 years old, but most steaks are made from 3-year-old males that weigh around 600 to 700 pounds. Buffalo burgers, roasts and jerky are often made from older buffalo, John says.

“We sell it all. We sell dog bones and skulls, green hides for tanning and I am even getting into rawhides for making drums and rattles,” John says. “I even had someone come and buy some dung once. It was a girl from Seattle who wanted to show how efficient burning buffalo chips was for the early pioneers. I told her I would trade her for something, so she brought me a four-pack of brownies from the store. She won first prize at her science fair.”

At Tony’s Tavern, Nicole McDonald says that the buffalo burgers they buy and sell from the Muggys are a top seller at the establishment. Nicole’s daughter, Taylor, occasionally helps run the couple’s buffalo meat booth at the farmers market in Ferndale.

Kelly Dooley, a 47-year-old patron of Tony’s Tavern who loves the buffalo burgers, says he likes the unique aftertaste of the meat. He says it’s hard to describe, not quite a gamey flavor, but with a bit of a wild taste. He says he especially likes the Buff Dogs the Muggys sell, and bought a few packs after trying them at a BP company luncheon for which John supplied the meat. Dooley says the Buff Dogs are better than any hot dog he has ever had.

The buffalo the Muggys raise are grass-fed. The animals aren’t castrated or injected with any vaccinations other than the necessary de-worming. Selling the meat is an integral part of keeping their herd healthy and at a manageable size. They send the weaned yearlings off to a cutting horse ranch where they get to run and graze like wild buffalo. Sue says she tires of the troublesome and rambunctious young bulls and often tells them jokingly, “You’re going to be the first to go,” when they test her patience.

“If you’re born a bull around here, you’re pretty much done for,” Sue says with a chuckle.

John says he likes to remind customers that his
buffalo are wild animals and his herd is “trained, not tamed;” they can run 35 miles per hour and jump six feet from a standstill.

Although the Muggys’ herd is relatively large, caring for the herd is fairly inexpensive, and Sue says she appreciates the tradeoff. In the summer, the buffalo mow her 13 acres of pastures and another 10 acres they lease from the neighbors, saving money and time. In the winter, the 30 buffalo eat about one round bail of grass or hay per week; each bail costs about $45.

Buffalo do not have the dental problems cows have, mainly because buffalo don’t regurgitate their cud as much, and have less bacteria and acids in their stomachs, John says.

John first entered the buffalo raising business because of Bruce Wilson of Ferndale, who worked with him at BP. Wilson urged John to utilize his pasture for raising buffalo and sold him his first herd bull. Subsequently, Wilson also handed down his Buff Dog recipe to John who now has exclusive rights to the recipe and Hempler’s, who makes the Buff Dogs, respects his proprietary rights. John says he sells 2,000 pounds of Buff Dogs annually. A package of six costs about $6.

The Muggys say they believe buffalo meat is superior to grocery store beef in that a consumer knows what he or she is getting. The Muggys often mention the film “Food, Inc.” and the book “Omnivore’s Dilemma” when talking about the recent awareness of questionable feedlot and commercial butchering practices. When they used to buy meat at the store, they thought they were buying healthy beef, but have since come to discover that it may have been from a diseased animal or an old dairy cow.

The awareness of the antibiotics used in the beef industry and the unethical treatment and feeding of corn to cows in feedlots has driven them and their customers to eat more buffalo.

John is interested in sharing his expertise on buffalo with others and finds he talks about buffalo at least four times a day. He holds classes and informative sessions with students, and he and Sue sometimes travel to fairs and other events to show off the yearlings or orphans they have tamed. John says he is working on a children’s book so children can understand the history and significance of the creatures he has grown to love.

During the informative sessions, John tells people to close their eyes and imagine crossing the great plains on a wagon with the roar and thunder of 1 million buffalo hooves pounding the ground, and the vibration of the earth shaking underneath. He then tells them to open their eyes: The reality is that this experience is not possible anymore.

Once numbering in the tens of millions, buffalo were killed by white settlers to near-extinction in the 1800s for game and sport, depriving Native Americans of an important part of their culture. Despite conservation efforts to preserve Buffalo populations, John worries about the depletion of an incredibly sustainable and healthy food resource, not to mention the depletion of a majestic animal.

He says he’s doing more than supplying a healthy alternative to the beef industry. To John, his small herd is a testament to the millions of hooves that will never shake the ground again.
It's late afternoon on a typical Sunday shopping day at Bellis Fair Mall in Bellingham. Behind Target, two women huddle over the trunk of a red Honda Accord. Clothing with the tags yanked off, shoes taken out of boxes and canned goods removed from plastic bags; all are neatly placed into empty luggage. The well-practiced routine resembles a two-women show performed numerous times.

In reality, it has been—almost bi-monthly. But Jennifer Anderson, a business entrepreneur from Vancouver, British Columbia, and her daughter Olivia are not performers. They are Canadian shoppers with one goal: avoiding duty, a tax associated with international customs, at the border.

Contending with Canadian shoppers is nothing new to Bellingham residents, especially considering the city's location: 45 minutes from Vancouver.

For decades, these shoppers have traveled across the border to buy American goods, but one might wonder if their presence is a blessing, or a burden. "It's no secret that Canadian citizens travel south to get cheaper gas, groceries and particular items with higher taxing tariffs," says Cory Leiferman, Western graduate and manager of the Bellis Fair Abercrombie and Fitch. "It's also no secret that any person you talk to working in the mall could give you a list of reasons why Canadian shoppers are different than American shoppers."

Leiferman is referring to what Canadian shoppers expect in terms of customer service in retail shops. Customer service, by definition, is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction. But the problem is that many people have different ideas of what that means in a given situation.

Cole Price, manager of Payless Shoe Source at Bellis Fair, which has a customer base that is almost 50 percent Canadian shoppers, says after working in his store for more than six months, he can easily tell
the difference between Canadian shoppers and American shoppers.

"On some weekends, especially Canadian holiday weekends, you can almost pick them out on the floor," Price says. "If you talk to any other employee in the mall, you'd probably hear the same thing."

Price says helping Canadian shoppers can involve personal bargaining, constant customer service and bigger messes.

He says he has to remind himself that even though Canada is so close, it is still a country with a different culture and expectations. Through conversations with other Payless managers who get Canadian customers further south, he realized American shoppers are much more used to what he referred to as "independent shopping."

Before Leiferman worked as the manager for Abercrombie and Fitch, he worked at Boston's, a restaurant near Beilis Fair. He says many Canadians ate at the restaurant and he assumed the work and customers wouldn't be much different in retail, but soon realized retail is a different situation.

"It's not a bad thing, it's just different. They really do shop differently. I've been told by many customers that they are used to smaller shops and more one-on-one customer attention," Leiferman says. "The problem with that is we get hundreds of customers every day with no way to deliver that sort of service."

Jennifer agrees, saying that the lack of large retail stores in Canada has taught her to shop differently.

"I'll admit I get thrown off when I'm not immediately approached by an employee in a store [in the U.S.], or when I'm brushed off when the store doesn't have what I'm looking for," she says.

Jennifer says she understands the reputation Canadian shoppers have in U.S. stores because she's personally witnessed how many fellow citizens act in stores and has watched her daughter's friends when they go shopping in the United States. But Jennifer doesn't like the generalization applied to all Canadians.

"Stores ask for telephone numbers or ZIP codes, and the second they find out you're Canadian, sometimes it shifts with the employee," Anderson says. "Sometimes, I'm looked down upon, even though I'm putting money into the U.S. economy."

Olivia, 23, agrees and says she's heard employees complain about how Canadians are constantly looking for bigger discounts. Olivia says America is known for its cheap consumer goods.

In Canada, she expects higher quality goods and, as a result, the shopping isn't as fast-paced; impulse buying is less frequent. She says this is why many Canadians fish for lower prices in U.S. stores.

"Canadian customers aren't much different in the sense that they shop and are spending money, it's just how they go about it that's a bit different," Price says.

In Canada, Jennifer says stores like Target, Bath & Body Works or Macy's don't exist. The country is full of smaller, locally owned retail stores and small international chains, she says.

High wages, costs of transportation and fixed exchange rates when ordering products for stores affect the price differences between Canada and the United States, says Cara Buckingham, former marketing manager for Beilis Fair Mall. This makes it harder for Canadian retailers to match U.S. retail prices.

According to New York Fashion magazine, more U.S. retailers, such as J Crew, have opened shop in Canada in the last two years because international expansion is an economic benefit to the United States.
in the improving economy. Expansion in Canada is seen as a smart move because it's a similar country in terms of style, but the progression is slow.

Price says an American shopper's usual tendency is to shop first and ask questions later. He's found Canadians use the opposite technique; they ask questions before they shop.

"It's difficult to explain the difference, but there is one," Price says. "For a comparison, in Italy [some consider it] rude to hand a cashier money; you set it on the counter. But in America, it's rude if you don't. I think it's sort of like that — we think the way they shop is rude and in return, they think our customer service is rude. Maybe it's just a matter of perspective."

U.S. retail stores opening in Canada should become more commonplace, especially with the expanding economy and the fact that crossing over into Europe and Asia is more difficult because companies must adapt to different labor laws, shopping habits, body types and taste, according to New York Fashion magazine.

Jennifer says she comes down at least once a month to stock up on dairy products and gas, sometimes even staying the night in a local hotel. She says avoiding duty can be easy with clothing and gas purchases, and the duty on food is almost nonexistent.

Once, her family purchased a car in the United States. Even with all the taxes and duty paid on the car before taking it into Canada, it was still a cheaper purchase.

"A gallon of milk costs double the price and a gallon of gas is almost half as much," Olivia says. "Anything made in China is double because of the import tariffs. Why not come down here? U.S. teens are constantly fueling money into our economy through the bars, we're just doing it through dairy."

When Jennifer and her daughter have filled their luggage, they will toss their garbage into the large, pale-yellow, trash and recycling receptacles behind Target. She says she would leave the boxes and bags in the mall, but this way, she knows they're recycled properly.

"It's natural to want to avoid duty and it probably explains why a mall-goer might find hoards of trash lying around the parking lots," Jennifer says. "But, with anything, if you shop smart it's still always cheaper in the states."
FORGOTTEN PHONEBOOKS

Story by David Gonzales
Photo by Rhys Logan

Yellow and white stacks of unwanted phonebooks accumulate every couple years on front porches, business lobbies and college dormitories.

Common uses such as stacking a phonebook or two under the computer monitor to raise it to eye level or tearing a phonebook in half for an impressive party trick have become a couple current ways to utilize these behemoth directories.

Although most phonebook companies produce their products from recycled materials and use eco-friendly, soy-based inks, the unresolved issue is that most people don’t recycle them, or even use them. The result — millions of tons of phonebooks end up in landfills each year.

SOLUTIONS
If you don’t want to receive phonebooks, opt out of all phonebook publications by visiting yellowpagesgoesgreen.org. Fill in your name and address, and they will send you the opt-out request form.

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR PHONEBOOKS

AROUND THE HOUSE
- Stepstool
- Door stop
- Garden mulch
- Animal bedding
- Child booster seat
- Packing paper
- Fire starter
- Fly swatter
- Hotel room cutting board
- Glass cleaner (add water and vinegar)

FOR FUN
- Dart board
- Flower press
- White Elephant gift

840,000 tons of phonebooks were produced in the United States in 2008. Less than 22 percent were recycled.

660,000 tons were discarded into landfills...
...the equivalent of 44,000 full-grown elephants

Source: Environmental Protection Agency
It's the Fourth of July and 40,000 loyal fans stand in the streets of Coney Island. Although they're sweltering in the brightness of the summer sun, they'll tough it out. For four or more hours, they will wait — all for a competition that only lasts 10 minutes.

"Once in every 10 generations a hero rises to lead a broken nation to victory," the announcer bellows as he introduces the reigning champion, Joey Chestnut, to the anxious, screaming crowd members, who clap yellow noisemakers together as their favorite competitors are each called to the stage.

More than 600 hot dogs are about to be consumed by 20 Major League Eating (MLE) competitors. The winner will walk away with the famous mustard-yellow belt, a $10,000 cash prize and eternal glory in the competitive eating world. It's the 2009 Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog Eating Contest.

The announcer signals the start of the competition and the contestants begin stuffing hot dog after hot dog down their throats. They dunk the food into water to help swallow massive amounts in minimal time. After a minute-and-a-half, Chestnut has consumed 16 hot dogs. After eight-and-a-half more minutes, he's downed 52. With a total of 68 hot dogs consumed, he wins.

As competitive eating has increased in publicity and popularity over the past decade, concerns from scientists, and others who fear the dangers of a sport that's based on over-consumption and a potential waste of food, have grown as well.

According to a 2007 University of Pennsylvania study, competitive eating can lead to life-threatening problems such as obesity, nausea, vomiting, and gastrectomy, a surgery to remove part of the stomach.

GLUTTONS OR ATHLETES?

But despite health risks, the MLE organization hosts more than 80 competitions each year around the globe, in countries ranging from Singapore to Australia. The organization maintains eating records and oversees all professional eating competitions. It is "the governing body of what we call a stomach-centric sport," says
Richard Shea, MLE president and co-founder.

The Super Bowl of eating competitions, Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest, began in 1916, and helped form what the sport is today, Shea says. MLE, on the other hand, which wasn’t established until 1998 when Richard Shea and his brother, George Shea, decided the sport needed an official organization to promote its advancement and encourage new competitors—many of who are surprisingly slim and fit despite their remarkable ability to consume.

According to the MLE, the number-one ranked competitor Chestnut weighs 230 pounds. Number five, Sonya Thomas, weighs only 105 pounds.

Shea says he once saw the petite Thomas eat 50 hardboiled eggs in five minutes during a basketball game halftime, and then return to her seat to eat a large popcorn and drink a Diet Coke.

Shea admits to not knowing the health risks associated with competitive eating, and while emergency medical technicians are on site at competitions just in case, he says medical assistance has never been needed.

And what of the concern that the sport is a waste of food?

“You could argue that NASCAR is a waste of gas, or that they use too much fertilizer on a golf

HUNGRY SISTERS

A number of loyal fans follow the sport, including 24-year-old Sadie Simpson.

Simpson and her younger sister, Jamie Carpenter, both from North Carolina, always watched Nathan’s hot dog eating contest on ESPN. In 2007, they attended their first live competition, Krystal Square Off World Hamburger Eating Championship, in Chattanooga, Tenn.

After the contest, Simpson and Carpenter started a blog, Hungry Sisters, in order to follow and write about the sport. Since then, Simpson says they have gone to more than a dozen competitions.

In 2009 Simpson and Carpenter drove 11 hours from North Carolina to New York in order to see Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest. Simpson has made friends from all over the country through watching competitive eating and often hangs out with competitors after competitions.

“It’s just this common interest that we have in some weird thing that not a lot of people understand,” Simpson says. “We just think it’s cool that people can eat a lot of food, and they can make a living doing it.”

Shea says the top few competitors can make more
than $100,000 a year from competitive eating competitions. Despite this, most competitors still have jobs outside of the professional eating realm—including Erik "The Red" Denmark, a Seattle-based professional competitive eater. Denmark is ranked eighth in the MLE. Denmark works full time at Boeing in addition to competing.

**THE ELITE**

Successful competitive eating is not just about appetite. It’s about skill.

“You’ve got to have an athletic mindset to be good at it,” Denmark says. “You can’t just like to eat, or have a good appetite. That’s not enough.”

Although MLE discourages training, since the organization can’t monitor that the athletes go about it safely, many competitors still take part in some form of training.

Denmark says he drinks one-to-two gallons of water a day to help stretch out his stomach. He will also practice eating large amounts of food the week before a competition.

For the most prestigious competitions, Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest and the Krystal Square Off, Denmark begins training a few months in advance, doing several practices each week.

Denmark says it’s the athletic and competitive aspect of the sport that draws him in. “I’ve been in sports my whole life ... and the feeling I have before an eating contest is way more stressful than any other athletic event,” he says. “It’s always pushing your body to new heights, and I’m interested in that no matter what it is.”

**SOMETHING TO SAVOR**

Pushing the human body to new heights is certainly accurate.

The same 2007 University of Pennsylvania study that suggests serious health complications with competitive eating compares the stomach of a competitive eater to that of an average person. Results show that the competitive eater's stomach can hold larger amounts than an average eater, and may also empty more quickly.

The study also finds that competitive eaters may not feel the same sense of fullness that other eaters do.

Similarly, Denmark says he feels a little jaded about what his sense of being full is now. “My feeling of being full is this intense pressure on your body and it’s in a competitive sense, and so anything compared to that is not even a blip on the radar.”

But despite the science and research that warn of the dangers of competitive eating, Denmark says he feels competing has made him take care of, and understand his body more. He hopes to continue eating competitively.

“I’m into things that are sort of off the beaten path,” he says. “It’s just kind of a fun and crazy thing.”
Take some time to think about food — not just eating food, but consuming massive amounts of it. Everyone needs to eat, but not all of us can start off the day with a triple stack of blueberry pancakes for breakfast, a monster six-pound burrito for lunch, a two-foot sub sandwich for a snack and a 2,500 calorie burger for dinner. But if you can, here’s your guide to pigging out in Bellingham.

Finish the two-foot challenge in 30 minutes to get a free medium sandwich and your picture on the wall of fame. Only 33 pictures line the wall of people who have finished the challenge.

Expect to see a lot of customers walking out holding a doggie bag in one hand, and their stomach with the other. Owner Jim Green says he offers a lot of big meals, but nothing compares to his pancakes.

The Myocardial Infarction Burger consists of two-thirds pound beef patty, two fried eggs, two types of cheese, bacon, ham, mushrooms and onions, which adds up to 2,500 calories and 100 grams of fat.

The six-pound Biggest Burrito in Bellingham, or BBB, feeds four-to-six people. Owner Jesse Cantu says he has seen only three people eat it in five years. If you can finish the BBB by yourself, it’s on the house.
FOR THOSE BORN WITH PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME, DEATH FROM OVER-CONSUMPTION IS AN ALL-TOO-REAL POSSIBILITY.

The conglomerated wad of barbecued chicken bits, watermelon chunks and corn kernels rolling around in 3-year-old Abby McLean’s mouth does not stop her from asking for more as soon the last piece of food from her dinner plate has been added to the growing mass inside her mouth.


Her mother, Beth McLean, made the mistake of not finishing her dinner as quickly as Abby. If anyone at the McLean table still has food when Abby finishes hers, she’ll plead for more or try to eat what’s left on the neighboring plate.

During the past year, Abby has begun to feel one of the most severe effects of Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), a rare chromosomal disorder she has had since birth. She has started showing signs of the insatiable hunger — a trademark of the syndrome — that has the potential to drive her to consume fatal amounts of food.

Aside from being easily upset when others have food and she doesn’t, Abby has also started to show other small signs of a food fixation. Lately, when Beth reads Abby storybooks, Abby forces her mother to constantly return to pages where the characters are eating. Once she notices the little sketched images of food on a page, Abby almost completely loses interest in the storyline.

PWS develops because of an error in the 15th chromosome. The Prader-Willi Syndrome Association estimates one in 15,000 are born with the disorder.

Lauren Thomas, a pediatric genetic counselor at Seattle Children’s Hospital, says when PWS is present, a genetic error has caused the mother’s genes to be expressed in what is called the “Prader-Willi critical region” of an individual’s DNA. In a person without PWS, the father’s genes are expressed in the critical region.
Why the expression of the maternal gene causes the symptoms associated with PWS is still not clearly understood, Thomas says.

One of the disorder's most noticeable effects makes individuals feel as though they are constantly starving, no matter how much they consume. A big concern for individuals with the disorder is that many cannot vomit, according to the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association.

The combination of the inability to throw up and the feeling of constant starvation is part of why PWS can become life-threatening. The urge to eat more than the body can process can lead to severe health concerns related to obesity or even death. Thomas says the extremity of the hunger PWS causes in individuals and the other symptoms they exhibit can vary greatly. There is no way to cure a genetic mutation, Thomas says, just treatments and therapies to help control the effects.

At just 3 years old, Abby has already begun to develop the intense feelings of hunger.

"When [the food-seeking] first started a year ago, it was more of she was just excited if she could sneak into the cupboard ... and then she'd grab something and come show you," Beth says. "It wasn't necessarily about eating, but now ... if she gets into the kitchen and no one's watching her - if there's anything she can get to, it'll go into her mouth."

Abby's parents recently remodeled their house to enclose the kitchen and added locks to both entrances. The keys to the locked doorknobs hang on a nail, high on the wall and out of Abby's reach. When she gets older and taller, the McLeans will need to find a new way to keep the keys away from Abby.

Beth says the locks on the doors have helped, but Abby still manages to get in on occasion.

"She's very smart about it because she'll know the
door is open, yet she won't even make a move for it until you leave the room and aren't looking,” Beth says.

Abby’s metabolism is also much slower than a typical 3-year-old, which is another common effect of the syndrome. Her slow metabolic rate means she needs to eat less than the average child her age even though her body is telling her she always needs more.

Currently, Abby is on a strict 800- to 900-calorie-a-day diet, but after a recent checkup, her doctor said she is still gaining too much weight too quickly. At 49 pounds, she is only a few pounds lighter than her 6-year-old brother.

“[Nutrition] is getting to be a bigger issue now,” Beth says. “Every day, she asks for cheese and cookies and can’t always have them. And she’s not as interested in her veggies anymore, so it’s getting tougher to get the right nutrients in those few amount of calories that she can have. That’s the biggest struggle — to make sure she’s getting the right stuff.”

Dave McLean, Abby’s father, says he and Beth struggle with limiting her food intake.

“I have a hard time telling her no,” he says. “I mean, she’s hungry; you want to feed her even though you know you’re not supposed to.”

Despite having seven regular doctors, four therapists, a dietician and a nutritionist, Abby and her family still have not felt the full impact of PWS. Abby’s parents say they worry she still has yet to feel the true starvation.

Katie Davis of Spanaway, has been living with PWS for 26 years and still struggles to control her consumption. Verna Davis, Katie’s mother, knew raising Katie would be different than her three other children. Now 63, Verna still has to take constant care of Katie.

“It’s getting harder on me physically and mentally at times,” Verna says. “There’s so much physical stuff she should be doing and I’m just not as able to do it anymore.”

So far, Verna has not found any group homes or programs in Washington where she would feel comfortable putting Katie. She says Katie’s care requires 24/7 supervision and most programs do not offer that. Verna says the syndrome becomes harder to deal with as Katie gets older because Katie continually thinks up new ways to get food. Verna says she often finds Katie with food and has no idea how, where or when she got it.

The Davis house is equipped with locks on all the cupboards and refrigerators, but Verna says sometimes Katie still manages to find food in the house and occasionally pockets snack foods and treats in grocery stores. Verna says the family also has to make sure to take any trash outside immediately or else Katie will eat from the garbage when no one is looking.

Aside from food-seeking behaviors, people with PWS can have an array of symptoms. Such symptoms include low muscle tone, which causes a slow metabolism and can lead to speech difficulties, a highly increased pain tolerance, small hands and feet, short stature,
ABOVE: Abby McLean reaches to put a ring on physical therapist Sheridan Ranley’s arm at hippotherapy. She attends once a week to ride a horse and perform exercises to help build her core muscles, which are extremely weak because of PWS.

respiratory problems and slower development of cognitive and motor skills.

For Katie, most of the potential symptoms exist. She is shorter than 5 feet tall, weighs 200 pounds, has type 2 diabetes, struggles with pneumonia, has size-one feet, sleep apnea and some cognitive difficulties.

Abby has yet to show many of these symptoms. She does not struggle with respiratory problems and is on a nightly dose of human growth hormone to help with her height. Whether she will develop any or all of the symptoms is still unknown.

Beth says the biggest challenge so far has been speech. Beth finds this frustrating because Abby understands most things but cannot communicate well in response.

Because the syndrome evolves over time, the McLean family tries to maintain hope despite a future they know will be challenging. They try to be proactive in anticipating what care and treatments Abby will need, but Dave says they already have no time to relax, and they never know what symptoms to expect next.

“That’s probably been one of the most frustrating things,” Beth says. “It’s hard to plan for what things are going to be like. We’ve met and read stories about some people who are super functional, totally independent and can manage it and others who can’t and have to be supervised 100 percent of the time.”

Dave and Beth have discussed the idea of setting up a group home with charity funds when Abby is older, but say they will wait and see what the future brings.

“We just kind of have to roll with the punches,” Beth says.

For now, the McLean family is focused on dealing with the issues at hand. They say they have to figure out new ways to distract Abby daily to keep her mind off eating.

“It’s not to the point where it’s all-consuming,” Beth says. “If you come up with something fun for her to do, she’ll forget somebody is in the kitchen and she’ll go play.”

Dave says Abby’s condition requires constant attention, which can make teachers, therapists, friends or even parents of those who have PWS think more about the disorder than their child. He says they think about PWS all the time because the disorder necessitates it, but they need to balance that with giving Abby the same attention as any other child.

Since PWS has no treatment or cure at this time, it remains a daily struggle of resistance for those who have it. The disorder not only leads to the constant consumption of food, but also a family’s time, energy and attention.

People need to remember she’s just a normal child who needs a little extra care, Dave says. “Her name is not Prader-Willi. It’s Abigail.”
Since human beings first discovered fire, and charcoal, pornography has flourished from crudely sketched figures on cave walls to Internet videos streaming at fiber optic velocity.

Though the Internet now dominates the distribution of pornography, it is not the only form of technology that has propelled the accessibility of pornography in recent history.

The home video format Betamax lost its battle to VHS in the 1980s when the porn industry chose to produce for VCRs. HD-DVDs disappeared when the porn industry endorsed Blu-Ray.

Though the porn industry now produces its films in Blu-Ray format, employees at the adult shop Great Northern Bookstore in downtown Bellingham admit the Internet has taken a huge bite out of their business.

"The Internet has killed us," says bookstore employee Scott Anderson.

Anderson says even though the bookstore carries the largest selection of porn movies in town, they are only able to mark up the videos a few dollars because the hard-copy market is dwindling so drastically.

Despite having recently taken out a $100,000 loan to remodel their back room, which is made up of nine viewing booths each containing a flat panel TV controlled by a dollar-bill insert similar to those seen on vending machines, owner Ross Rowell says the business is struggling to survive.

Great Northern Bookstore is the only adult shop north of Everett with viewing booths, and if they close, there will not be another because it is against Whatcom County ordinances for another shop with a back room to open up. Rowell says his 37-year-old business is only allowed to keep its back room because it is grandfathered into the system.

Opposition to porn distribution in Whatcom County made its first mark in 1988 when a voter initiative that passed in Bellingham banned the distribution of pornography. However, the ordinance was struck down by the federal court, which ruled that the ordinance gave such a broad definition of pornography that it could potentially censor erotic artwork and even implement a ban on scientific books containing pictures of human anatomy.

The most recent anti-porn group to hit Whatcom County is the Bellingham chapter of the national organization, Stop Porn Culture. The Bellingham chapter’s organizer Cameron Murphey says Stop Porn Culture’s problem with pornography is that it perpetuates male dominance and degradation of women.

Western’s Sexual Awareness Center Coordinator Jennifer Veliz says while Stop Porn Culture’s position is valid, it does not justify their outcry against pornography as a whole.

"I think pornography has positive aspects in that it can offer diverse sexual choices for couples to try,
and can offer some variety into sex lives of people who might be in a little bit of a slump in their relationship,” Veliz says. “I also think that it can be positive for young women to see women who can potentially be liberated by sexual choices as opposed to oppressed by them.”

In the next 10 years, the porn industry is sure to utilize new technologies such as Glacier Media System’s IceBurg 3D entertainment system, which was unveiled at the 2010 Consumer Electronics Show.

Perhaps 3D TV technology will save adult shops such as the Great Northern Bookstore by allowing them to stock their racks with products that can’t be viewed on the Internet. One thing to be sure of is the demand for pornography will continue to grow as long as advancing technologies bring new ways of viewing pornography into living rooms and bedrooms across the world.

The United States generates $13.3 billion of the $97 billion international print and film porn industry

1 in 4 Internet searches are for porn

1 in 3 Internet downloads are porn

The average age of a first-time porn viewer is 11 years old

Source: 2006 Internet Filter Review study
the CORNERSTONE OF FOOD

Story by Kevin Minnick
Photo by Rhys Logan
Corn is here for you—it’s all ears. Unfortunately, corn is here for you all too often, whether you know it or not. It lingers in the background and hangs out on your plate, even when you just want to hang out with Potato or Lettuce for a while. Time to face it: We’re all being corn-stalked.

Consider the classic summer barbecue: Dried cornhusks are in the charcoal briquettes, which are used to cook the corn-fed beef burgers that sit on corn-based paper plates and taste great with a cold beer that, yes, has corn syrup in it. And don’t forget the cheese—that has corn too. Corn is in the vinegar in the ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise. It’s even in table salt. And after all the cornsumption at dinnertime, several hours later, people brush their teeth with the corn sugar in toothpaste getting ready for bed.

“Corn is in everything, and it’s in nothing,” says Western senior Cailan Murray, who gave up corn products for a month in honor of Lent last spring. “It doesn’t belong [everywhere]. You can make pretty much anything without all these [corn-derived] ingredients.”

Just how easy is avoiding corn, though? It hangs around more often than the barbecue scenario. Corn byproducts are in a cornucopia of everyday items, from coffee to suntan lotion.

Murray weighed the pros and cons of attempting her corn-free diet after finding an allergen list from cornallergens.com that detailed what products to avoid. After all, people with corn allergies stand to be the most concerned.

“I think it’s an amazing plant. You can eat mostly corn and lead a perfectly good life nutritionally,” says Fairhaven Assistant Professor John Tuxill. “In my mind, you should be eating corn directly. It’s not the raw material that is the problem, it’s what we do with it to create a refined product.”

Tuxill says corn byproducts such as high fructose corn syrup lack the minerals, vitamins and fiber that eating corn directly provides.

CORNIVORE NO MORE

Murray’s roommate, Leanne Rone, gave the diet some consideration, but says she probably wouldn’t have lasted very long.

“I just really like to give up things that are difficult,” Murray says. “That seemed like it would be the hardest, and it definitely was.”

It’s hard to end a relationship with corn because it’s so reliable. Even Murray knew she would come back to the familiar yellow kernels eventually. She used the allergen list like a restraining order during trips to the grocery store.

“The first time something freaked me out was when I was looking at guacamole, and avocados were like the fourth ingredient,” Murray says with a laugh. “I’m like, ‘Hey, what is possibly in here?’ Everything before it was some chemical name.”

Rone says it was interesting to see how long Murray’s corn allergen list was.

“One unusual observation I had was that you can’t buy corn on the cob in stores during the winter,” Rone says. “It’s weird that it’s in everything we eat, but you can’t get an ear of corn.”

A CORNY TRADITION

Tuxill says the agricultural market is cornered because corn is the most productive grain crop per acre and federal regulation helps ensure surplus production.

“Corn just happens to be the raw material that fits into the agro-industrial food chain,” Tuxill says. “One of the ways this model can be sustained over time is that it’s heavily supported by government subsidies.”

Tuxill attributes corn’s widespread usage to a
government policy shift in the 1970s under the direction of Nixon’s Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz that replaced the agricultural price floor system with a new emphasis on overproduction.

Prior to the change, farmers were paid federal subsidies if the market price for their crops dipped below a certain level. After the policy shift, the federal government began paying subsidies based solely on the quantity of crops produced as an incentive for farmers to boost production of all crops.

Competition and production technology throughout the years has led to affordable and hyper-processed food for the masses. Essentially, consumers have traded quality for quantity. Now, people like Murray need to consult a translation guide just to understand what they are buying at the grocery store.

For example: “Natural flavoring?” Murray says. “Everything in the world is natural. Everything comes from something that was found on this world, so what does that mean?”

Murray says she was successful in her fast except for one night. While at local bar the Beaver Inn, she accidentally ate some free popcorn at her table in a state of cornfusion.

“I wasn’t really thinking ... I was so used to looking for subliminal messaging about corn that I forgot — popcorn is corn,” Murray says, laughing at her error. “It’s not really in the same category, you know, because corn on the cob and popcorn are edible foods you are supposed to eat.”

Murray can now enjoy a piece of cornbread with a little margarine and reflect on the feasibility of her no-corn diet. She says she felt healthier during the process, but buying alternative ingredients was more expensive.

Tuxill says avoiding corn products altogether could prove overwhelming.

He suggests alternatives such as a diet of only recognizable ingredients, or capping the amount of ingredients per food item one eats. Both options would ensure a more thorough understanding of what one consumes.

“You can bake a perfectly good cake, or muffins with only six ingredients,” Tuxill says.

“I don’t have a problem with corn,” Tuxill says. “I have a problem with the agro-industrial food system and the whole model for producing, processing and distributing food.”

Tuxill says government legislation favoring smaller, more diversified farms could lead to a healthier agricultural model.

“It’s important to realize our local food supply has developed over the last thirty years entirely without government subsidy,” Tuxill says. “So what if the government gave equal incentive to subsidize local food as agro industrial food? We could substantially increase the availability of local food, bring that price down over time and still have a food system that allows farmers to make a decent living.”

More than 400,000 farms in the United States grow corn

20 percent of U.S. corn is exported to countries around the world

As it is now, consumers get their food fast, cheap and mysterious.

“If you think you are getting home-cooked food now, you’re not,” Rone says. “The transition between you buying a frozen pizza and your mom making a pizza from scratch is completely blurred, because now the scratch products are full of what the frozen pizza is made of.”

Processed foods may seem like the most viable consumer option, but they don’t have to be. “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” author Michael Pollan said, “You vote three times a day with your fork.” So read the labels if you care about what you are consuming. Otherwise you may be cornsuming.
A mid towering piles of cracked concrete and splintered furniture that fill Haiti's streets, it's nearly impossible to find a solid building, let alone a stable Internet signal. But when Huxley Professor Scott Miles and the three other members of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute's (EERI) reconnaissance team that specialized in social impact, spent a week in early March documenting the impact of the recent earthquake, they turned to a service that many were quick to brush off as the latest in a slew of Internet trends: Twitter.

A specialist in disaster risk reduction, Miles says he frequently used Twitter in Haiti to post quick updates about the team members' work, or alert their sponsors and other followers about recent news and photos on the EERI blog. When Internet access was spotty, Miles—under the screen name of "geomando"—posted tweets by texting them from his phone. A micro-blogging service launched in 2006, the Twitter website enables members to update their accounts via Web, smart phone, or text from a regular cell phone.

Miles and his team flew to Haiti to conduct post-earthquake impact assessments through observations, interviews and photography, and reported their findings as part of an event looking at disaster risk reduction in Haiti and Whatcom County.

Upon arrival, Miles' first tweet off the plane set the scene for the rest of his trip.

**Landed in Haiti. Blue tarps dot the ground everywhere. 9:18 AM Feb 28th via txt**

Miles continued posting several updates a day.

**My Haiti photo set on Flickr on the EERI Social Impacts team Flickr stream is here: http://ping.fm/nWLtA 4:59 PM Feb 28th via Ping.fm**

**Finished interviews around PaP's Iron Market and tent city outside of presidential palace. Many stories become one. 10:24 AM Mar 1st via txt**

**I've fallen in love with Haiti. And tonight I finally have a chance to cry. Haiti is alive. 8:46 PM Mar 5th via txt**

Using Twitter during the trip generated much more public interest in Miles's work than he expected. Tweeting kept followers in the loop and often linked them to the EERI blog, where the team posted longer and more detailed updates.

"It provided people with the opportunity to come along for the ride," Miles says.

Now a social media fanatic, Miles says he hasn't always been such a dedicated tweeter. It took some serious persuasion to get him to sign up.

"I was kind of skeptical and squeamish about social media because of my personality," Miles says. "I'm..."
an anti-peer pressure, anti-groupthink kind of person.

While at a meeting for the National Academy of Sciences a year and a half ago, Miles sat next to a man who changed Miles' mind. Eric Holdeman, now the emergency manager for the Port of Tacoma, explained how important it is for professionals in emergency management to understand and use Twitter because of its ability to provide immediate information to a large audience.

While Twitter is now huge in the emergency management field, more professionals in various industries are taking advantage of the site's power as an information resource and communication tool.

Western Marketing Professor Ed Love says Twitter is beginning to play a major role in marketing. Companies will set up an account, post updates on new products or brands, and enable customers to choose whether to follow their progress. This strategy is called opt-in advertising, Love says.

Boundary Bay Brewery and Bistro, whose Twitter "BoundaryBay" has more than 2,000 followers, frequently tweets about current promotional deals or brewery events.

"I think part of Twitter that is really significant is how beautifully targeted it is," Love says. "Your message only goes to people who are really interested, and so they're highly involved and more likely to respond to it."

While Twitter is quickly gaining popularity in the professional sphere, few high school and college students are actively tweeting.

"I feel like [Twitter] is just a watered-down Facebook," says Michael Warncke, president of Western's Student Marketing Association. "I'd like to have the option to not only see what people are doing, but also interact with them."

Warncke says he recognizes the explosion of social media as a marketing tool, but plans to wait until after college to get more involved in sites like Twitter. Very few students he knows even have a Twitter account.

According to a study by the Pew Research Center in late 2009, only 8 percent of online teens between the ages of 12 and 17 use Twitter, compared to 19 percent of online adults (18 and older). To put this in perspective, 73 percent of online teens use social networking sites like Facebook.

Twitter's simple interface and limited functionality makes it more appealing to individuals interested in sharing and receiving information, rather than committing to online friendships, Miles says. The service offers older generations a less overwhelming gateway into the social media craze and connects users with real-time news and articles that often appeal to working professionals.

"I've found it to be a pretty amazing information resource," Miles says. "It's a way of saying, 'Hey, this is over here.' It's most useful for people who have just done something bigger and then want other people to know it's out there."
The materials: mason jar, small rubber hose, metal straw, zip tie, spray paint and some putty. The goal: better gas mileage, cleaner combustion chambers, a cooler engine and a little more of what no gearhead can do without—horsepower. In the latest chapter of a six-year saga of upgrades and revisions to his 1980 Chevrolet Monza Spyder, 17-year-old Jordan van Dommelen installed a water injection system to his engine that helps the cooling and efficiency.

The cost of the upgrade was minimal; less than $5 for the hose, and an hour of labor spent under the hood — an addition to his estimated 1,500 hours of labor already clocked on his car. Sound Truck and Auto Repair, a repair shop on Irongate Road in Bellingham, charges $95 per hour for labor on cars like his.

Although van Dommelen’s Monza was built a few years after the heyday of American muscle cars in the early 60s and 70s, it retains all the basic features of a classic: terrible gas mileage, a throaty exhaust note, unique looks, impossible-to-find parts and a die-hard enthusiast behind the wheel. Van Dommelen, who estimates he has spent no more than $1,100 on his ride, says the newer cars his friends drive are nice, but expensive. Not to mention they can’t perform a proper burnout.

“This thing’s got the posi [positive traction that encourages both rear wheels to turn at the same speed] in the back so I can do two wheel [burnouts]. It’s pretty cool,” van Dommelen says. “I see all my friends doing their one wheel in theirs, and I just laugh. It’s kind of a joke with their cars.”

He’s a classic car nut, someone who values the
raw power and unique styling of the cars of yesteryear over the corporate-designed, cup holder-laden autos of today. He works two part-time jobs to pay for gas, parts and insurance.

Muscle cars are a subset of classic cars — anything old with wheels that someone can obsess over. But despite all his Monza Spyder consumes — vast quantities of his time and money for operating costs — it is also the product of a vast recycling program connecting all classic cars. He found the car rusting in a wrecking yard, bought it for $400 and hauled it home. Using his father’s 1979 Chevrolet Monza Spyder for parts, he began restoring it. He found some mechanical parts and model-specific trim pieces by combing through junkyards and wrenching on 30-year-old dinosaurs.

Classic car owners like van Dommelen continue to reuse parts as a matter of necessity and thrift. Original parts or reproductions are a requirement for stringent restorers of valuable all-original cars, but for price-conscious experts like van Dommelen, the decision to scavenge through junkyards for used parts is fiscally sound.

The only problem is after decades of picking, selection is getting thin. Fortunately swap meets, events where local collectors, traveling parts salesmen and classic car hobbyists can meet to exchange goods, information and stories, are frequent.

Pete Lowman, organizer of the Early Ford V-8 Club’s annual swap meet in Monroe, says event turnout has never been better. Lowman says more than 562 vendors of parts, tools and artifacts like airport signs and chainsaws came for the weekend of May 15, the largest number he’s seen since joining the club 17 years ago. He estimates attendance was 18,000 people or more. The decreasing number of used parts is dearly felt by Dale Stere, 61, who collects hard-to-find chrome pieces, gauges, emblems and any other valuables from old cars and antique stores to sell at swap meets. He has been peddling used car parts for 30 years, and says it has become increasingly difficult to find sellable parts.

“Twenty-five, 30 years ago, it took me half a day and 400 bucks and I was restocked. Now I can spend a month-and-a-half or two months and put on 4 or 5,000 miles and still not have much. That’s why my inventory is so depleted,” Stere says. “I’m selling junk. I’m carrying junk now that I wouldn’t have even picked up 15 years ago.”

Stere says people who sell old cars to the crusher for the price of scrap metal eliminate reusable parts and worsen the situation. He also thinks his industry, one that caters to car restorers, is dying due to a low interest shown by today’s youth.

“Younger people don’t want anything to do with anything that’s more than two years old. So you’re selling to people who’re too old to do much work anymore, and they’re dying off at the upper end,” Stere says.

Van Dommelen is one of two people at his high school with a muscle car and says his friends don’t appreciate his classic wheels.

“They kinda think it’s a piece of crap, because they all have new cars,” he says.

Whatever the allure of these historic machines may be, his friends, along with the majority of the driving public, don’t get it. Van Dommelen, along with the rest of the followers of these gas-guzzling, money-hungry attention hogs, will continue to drive, scrounge, work, and not care.
In the back of a Mobil 1 gas station, a refrigerator hums its daily tune, keeping the contents inside a cool 37 degrees.

Inside the refrigerator, a plethora of eye-catching beverages become a lure to any thirst-stricken college student who has spent the majority of his or her day in a lecture hall, or stayed up all night cramming for a test. Alcoholic drinks dressed with labels promoting a good time or relaxing experience—with a hint of lime—gleam in the light. Farther down the line of beverages sit rows of sugared and caffeinated beverages awaiting consumption. Each drink promotes its own slogan, including the promise of “partying like a rock star” or the ability to grow wings and fly.

Black cans that look as if a mythical beast tore a fluorescent blue “M” into the side of them sit among their brightly colored brethren. The caffeinated liquid inside has a sour kick and provides an energy boost that Western chemistry major Peter Im has come to rely on.

Energy drinks such as Rockstar, Red Bull and Monster, have increasingly become an alternative to coffee, the old standby for exhausted students.

Sixty-seven percent of people surveyed say they drink at least one energy drink per month due to insufficient sleep, according to a study on energy drink consumption in the October 2007 issue of Nutrition Journal.

“Every chemistry class I have had after general chemistry has forced me to drink a copious amount of energy drinks,” Im says with a laugh.

Usually, he is just a casual coffee drinker, but come test-time, he is an avid energy-drink consumer.

His weapon of choice: Monster Lo-Carb, which he chooses over all other drinks because of the lower amount of sugar and the sour taste.

A day or two before a test is when Im normally consumes 16-ounce cans of Monster in large quantities, pulling all-night study sessions. And the days preceding a test, he gets about three hours of sleep each night. But ultimately, how much he consumes depends on how the tests in his classes line up during the week.

Caffeine has not always been the only weapon in Im’s studying arsenal. Up until midterms last quarter, he was also taking diet pills for the ephedrine. He says he bought Hydroxycut and Xenadrine because of the price—about $20 for 90 pills.

“Those are basically pharmaceutical meth,” he says. “The problem with [diet pills] is that once you start coming off of those, you go through withdrawals.”

Before the test isn’t the only time that he has a Monster on hand either; he says fueling up during and after the test are also necessary.

Im always brings two Monsters to every test. Chemistry tests last from one to two hours and, on most occasions, he consumes one energy drink. In case of an emergency however, he carries another Monster in his backpack.

“If I am drinking more than one [Monster] during a test there are serious issues; more so than just being tired,” Im says.

Western’s Nutritionist Jill Kelly says caffeine can function as a way to stay more alert. However, she says
the maximum amount of caffeine intake for a person should be 300 milligrams in one day, consuming any more will start to cause adverse effects.

A 16-ounce can of Monster Lo-Carb energy drink has 160 milligrams of caffeine and includes a label that warns drinkers not to consume more than three cans in a day.

“If a person drinks too much caffeine, they will start to become dehydrated and feel tired ... the exact opposite of what someone wants when they are drinking an energy drink,” Kelly says.

Western psychology professor Ira Hyman says if a student consumes caffeine while studying, it is possible that consuming a similar amount of caffeine in moderate doses while taking a test could be beneficial. Aside from caffeine helping a person stay alert, drinking similar amounts of caffeine while taking a test may help with state-dependent retrieval, which is linked to memory recall. Things such as listening to the same music while studying and taking a test are also linked to memory recall.

However, Hyman says drinking too much caffeine will result in negative effects and make concentration more difficult.

“If you have drank enough caffeine to get the shakes, I think it is safe to say that all bets are off that the caffeine is helping,” Hyman says.

Once a test is completed, Im will normally drink Monster the day after the test as well. He says the lack of sleep he gets while studying for a test makes getting to class the day after almost too much to bear.

Kelly says substituting caffeine for sleep, especially after studying so hard, is not a good idea because it will reduce a student’s ability to concentrate and hormone levels will begin to fluctuate, resulting in mood swings. She says nothing beats sleep, but if students find themselves tired in class, healthier alternatives to help deal with fatigue include taking deep breaths or a quick walk outside.

Western junior Mora Shaw, who works as a cashier at the Viking Union, often sees a spike in the sales of coffee and energy drinks a week or two before finals. She says the majority of people who are buying energy drinks normally look worn out.

“If [students] don’t look tired, then they are [buying energy drinks] as they prepare for things to come,” Shaw says. “Students need to give 100 percent.”

Im would agree.

As he entered chemistry 461, his mind was set on the two-hour test he would soon face. He clutched his secret weapon: caffeine.

And his backup weapon: more caffeine.
HUMANS AREN'T THE ONLY CAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING. OUR BOVINE FRIENDS MAY NOT BE THAT EARTH-FRIENDLY.

Humans depend on cows for many things. We wear their skin, eat their meat and drink their milk. But there's one thing coming out of cows that is far from useful to humans. In fact, it could be harmful. It's cow farts.

Technically, it's cow exhalation and manure that contribute to most of the greenhouse gases, such as methane and nitrous oxide, emitted from every one of the 496 dairy farms in Washington, says professor Kristen Johnson in an e-mail conversation. Johnson is a professor of animal science at Washington State University and has been studying what goes into, and what comes out of, cows and other hoofed mammals for 25 years.

Methane and nitrous oxide may be more potent contributors to global climate change than carbon dioxide, but far more carbon dioxide is produced state-wide from transportation and energy production. In 2005, emissions sources in Washington produced an amount of all greenhouse gases equivalent to 94.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. Emissions from cars and trucks alone contributed approximately 34 percent of that amount. Greenhouse gases released from agricultural sources, such as dairy farms, accounted for roughly 5 percent of the Washington emissions levels for 2005.