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Dear Reader,

When I was little I loved to play hide-and-go-seek. I don't remember what the appeal was exactly; maybe it was the challenge to try and stay quiet or finding the perfect hiding spot. Either way, I wasn't really good at the game. The thrill and excitement got the best of me and I usually started giggling and I was always the first person to be found.

Although staying hidden has always been a challenge for me, my curiosity of hidden objects and issues has always been a constant in my life. The saying goes, "curiosity killed the cat;" and with the amount of technology readily available today, our curiosity can be satisfied in seconds. But what about the answers not found on the Internet? Like hidden gender roles, food label censorship or buried delicacies? This is where Klipsun steps in to fill the gaps.

In this issue Klipsun strives to discover objects and issues that have been hidden from plain sight.

There are always new things to be discovered, some more hidden than others or less hidden than we may think or want. I hope these stories satisfy any new or old curiosities; and magnify the hidden things in life.

LINDSEY OTTA
EDITOR IN CHIEF
Following on Twitter or "friending" on Facebook — hiding behind technology has never been easier.

Check Facebook. Attempt homework. Check cell phone for a text message. Attempt homework again. Update Twitter. Send an email. Chat on Facebook. It can't be denied: this routine is all too familiar to our tech-savvy generation.

Technology may be a convenient way to quickly spark up a conversation with a friend, or even meet someone new, but it has the potential to damage valuable interpersonal relationships. It is not foreign to hear a person say, "Find me on Facebook," instead of asking for a number. Hiding behind technology has become a norm.

Despite being a new student in the fall, Western freshman Kali Rice was willing to branch out and meet new people. Rice claims she would have never met her first boyfriend had she not visited the Viking Village Forums. Rice says it was her first weekend at Western and none of her friends stayed in town. Not knowing anyone else in Bellingham, she decided to visit the forums. The pair chatted online for a few weeks before they finally met for lunch. The lunch date developed into a three-month relationship.

“Our relationship was mostly covered through texting," Rice says. “When we saw each other in person, we did not have much to talk about; we got along easier over the Internet and through texting because we were both shy.”

MY PLACE, NOT MYSPACE

Western sophomore Phillip Vuong prefers not to have a social networking account at all. Vuong would much rather communicate with friends in person. “I think Facebook has cut experiences,” Vuong says. “It is just our generation right now. You do not have to meet a person anymore. Instead you can just chat online; you don’t spend quality time with one another.”

Steven Woods, a communication professor at Western, is concerned that people are equating their virtual presence with their actual presence. “It is incredibly disturbing to be talking to someone and have them check a text message or start typing away instead of talking to you,” Woods explains. “There is this issue
in terms of present-ness that is a really important dimension to conversation that people's over-reliance on mediated technologies has destroyed.

Western junior Nathan Shigeta believes Facebook has altered our culture. “Creating [online] profiles has made our culture self-obsessed,” he says. “People try to become someone they are not. I also find that it has made stalking acceptable.”

MEET ME ONLINE

Websites such as LikeALittle allow students to flirt anonymously with others behind the comfort of a computer screen. In November, Western senior Michael Stoothoff started a similar thread on the Viking Village forum called “Hey You & The moment weVe been waiting for.” In five months, 1,186 students replied. Stoothoff started the thread for a combination of reasons. He was trying to find that “one girl I have been waiting for,” and help others in the dating game.

“There she was, that brown-eyed girl staring at me from across the bus aisle,” Stoothoff says. “As I was working up the courage to make a move beyond looking deep into her eyes, my classmate gets on the bus and ruins my perfect opportunity. I wanted to make sure she knew I was single, appreciated her attraction, and that I was taking some steps to reach her heart like she had done for me.”

Stoothoff says he likes to add philosophical hints to encourage girls to keep up the pursuit. He sometimes feels more comfortable posting certain things on the Internet, he jokes. “In some situations, I have been relying too much on easing my conscience by posting on ‘Hey You’ rather than talking to the girl.” He stresses that “Hey You” is not like other “Missed Connections” sites; he is not looking for direct results. He says his posts are kept vague with the intention of making it harder to figure out.

Western sophomore Zach Cranny says it is easier to communicate using Facebook. “When it comes to Facebook, there is no facial expression. You can hide your emotions and keep people out of your life,” he says.

Cranny finds he has preconceptions of others due to viewing profiles on Facebook. “Instead of asking someone for their number, you are able to go to their profile and look at their photos.”

In this hyper-connected world, it might be difficult to find a moment to oneself. Many studies have stated the importance of spending “alone time” and the sense of freedom it may bring.

People give up a lot of themselves with technology, Woods says. “Isn’t there some meditative time when you do not have to interact with others?” He believes some people might be perfectly happy with virtual communication because it means they do not have to put themselves out there.

“Ultimately, when all you are doing is sharing a few words with somebody and sharing these status updates that don’t really communicate anything, people will figure out they want something more in-depth,” Woods says.

While authentic emotions have been substituted with sideways smiley faces and hearts formed from the number three, we are left to question if face-to-face interactions will one day lose their spark.
SECRET INGREDIENTS

How food labels don’t always tell the whole story

Nothing unexpected hides on the 86 acres that make up Ben Elenbaas’ beef, pork and egg farm in Lynden. Cows roam through an open pasture grazing on green grass; chickens meander among the cows or peck at grain inside their “egg-mobile” coop.

“This is the definition of free-range,” Elenbaas says, looking out over his fields.

When Elenbaas sits down to dinner with his wife, Jessica, and their three children, he doesn’t wonder what he’s eating. He knows the steak he enjoys is from a registered Angus cow raised on a 100-percent grass-fed diet with no extra hormones or antibiotics; a cow raised with love, who had space to roam and graze as it pleased, and who grew and was butchered at a normal, healthy rate. Elenbaas doesn’t have to question where his dinner came from or what is in it, but others might.

THE HIDDEN TRUTH

The average grocery store is a maze of shelves filled with cans, jars, bags, boxes and bottles of all shapes and sizes awaiting purchase. Each package looks different from another, but no matter what type of packaging it comes in, these products all have one thing in common: a label. The labels in question are front-of-the-package labels: the vague claims on the front of food packaging meant to convince customers to buy a particular item. “All natural,” “free-range,” “heart healthy,” “local” — the list could go on forever. Though labels are supposed to be informative and help consumers make informed food purchases, how many know what these claims really mean?

The purpose of the label’s message is marketing, says Dan Bolton, founder of Natural Food Network. “Marketers want to create the perception that everything is healthier for you, so they tread as close to the line as possible,” Bolton says. “[They] can put [“heart healthy”] on a label, but don’t have to follow [American Heart Association] rules if they don’t use the [heart checkmark] symbol or claim association rules.”

Products must meet certain criteria for fat, sodium and other nutritional content in order to use the American Heart Association’s checkmark. The symbol indicates it meets standards that make the food heart-healthy, such as no more than 3 grams of fat and 480 mg of sodium for standard, nonmeat products. No stipulations exist to include “heart healthy” on the label without the symbol; it’s free game.
AU NATUREL

One of the most common, new claims on labels is “all natural.” Dennis L. Weaver, opinion piece writer for NaturalFoodNet.com and founder of the organic health education company Change Your Food - Change Your Life!, says a perception exists among consumers that natural foods are better, but no standard definition exists for what makes a product “natural.”

“[‘Natural’] is simply a greenwashing term for non-organic,” Weaver says. “[Companies] can use it any way they want. They can call it ‘natural’ and it can still be covered in chemicals, can contain genetically modified ingredients, can contain hormones, can be grown in sewage sludge.”

The term has meaning only when applied to meat products, and means the product “contains no artificial ingredients” and “is only minimally processed,” according to the United States Department of Agriculture. But Consumer Reports says even then, these claims aren’t verified before the food is labeled.

The “non-GMO project verified” label is another recent trend, but like “all natural,” its meaning is hidden, Weaver says. GMOs are genetically modified organisms, meaning the genes of the food have been altered by

0.9% maximum amount of ingredients that can be genetically modified in a product labeled “non-GMO project certified”
A chicken nests in a cubby in its "egg-mobile" — a chicken coop on wheels — that it is free to enter and leave throughout the day. Elenbass says the farm is usually home to about 300 chickens.

TOP: A chicken nests in a cubby in its "egg-mobile" — a chicken coop on wheels — that it is free to enter and leave throughout the day. Elenbass says the farm is usually home to about 300 chickens. ABOVE: Elenbass sells his "cage-free" eggs for $4 a dozen. "Cage-free" doesn’t mean much on a label at the grocery store, but chickens on Elenbass’ farm don’t have cages.

biotechnology. About 80 percent of packaged foods contain GMOs, according to the Non-GMO Project.

"[Non-GMO project verified] doesn’t mean [the product] is not genetically modified," Weaver says. "It’s a straight con job."

What it does mean is that all ingredients are individually below .9 percent genetically modified. This information is easily available on the organization’s website, but is hidden from consumers who don’t think to look beyond the label.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Weaver says only food products labeled organic can be trusted. Organic foods are real food, he says, and are closely regulated by the USDA and third-party certification organizations.

Bolton says it’s rare for companies to violate USDA organic standards because of the risk of penalties. However, while the general meaning of organic is consistent for food products, meaning no synthetic ingredients have been introduced in the process, all foods are not equally organic. This fact is hidden from most consumers.

Items labeled "100 percent organic" may contain only organically produced ingredients and processing agents; those labeled "organic" must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients; and products labeled "made with organic ingredients" must contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients according to USDA National Organic Program requirements. Products containing 70 percent or less organic ingredients cannot use the USDA Organic Label, but may list any organic ingredients used on the back label.

THE “LOCAL” GIMMICK

Weaver says the term “local” is a gimmick used by marketers because of the recent idea that buying local is healthier and more sustainable.

“There is no equation between local and wholesomeness,” he says. “[Local] can mean anything.”

Like many other labels, no standard definition exists for what can be considered “local,” Bolton says. Some may consider local to mean the food was produced 100 miles from where it was bought; others may consider anything bought within the state to be local.

“There are different standards because [companies] are trying to convince people that products are locally produced when they aren’t,” Bolton says.

At the downtown Community Food Co–op, foods from Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties are considered local. The Co-op sells produce, meat, eggs and dairy from within these counties, but how much comes from these sources depends upon what’s currently in season.

"There are different standards because [companies] are trying to convince people that products are locally produced when they aren’t."

DAN BOLTON
"We like to be as local as possible, but if local isn't available we try to bring in Washington state products, which is fairly local," store manager Denise Black says.

At Haggen Food & Pharmacy, local is considered anything from Washington and some parts of Oregon, including apples from Eastern Washington and berries from Whatcom County in the summer, according to store managers. Again, the availability of "local" produce is determined by the season.

The label on Elenbaas' products is generic — white with simple black print stating the basic facts, including what it is, its weight, when it was packaged and that it's approved to be sold. Although his farm is run with a mostly organic process — the animals are free-range and fed either grass or organic grains, and he doesn't use insecticides, commercial fertilizers or antibiotics (except in life-or-death situations) — Elenbaas doesn't feel the need to cover his labels with these terms.

"The quality sells it. We don't need to label it," Elenbaas says, pointing to the animals. "The fact that you're buying it from the source means you don't need a label because you can see how it's raised, you can see what it eats."

On his farm, "free-range" means 86 acres of freedom for his animals to roam. USDA standards for free-range apply only to poultry and require only that "poultry has been allowed access to the outside." However, the USDA does not specify how long they must be allowed access, or the expanse or quality of that access. The use of the term on beef, eggs and other products is unregulated.

**LIFTING THE VEIL**

While front-of-the-package labels are often poorly regulated and misleading, the back label can provide real information about the ingredients and nutritional quality of the food. Weaver says third-party verification is key — know which seals and claims can be trusted, and which may be hiding something. When you can see the quality of the food the way Elenbaas and his customers can, labels may not be as important. But when making purchases in the maze of the grocery store, labels and third-party verification seals are the only way to know what is in the food lining all the shelves — so it's important to know what those labels really mean.

**LABEL LINGO**

- **Organic** - official seal, no synthetic ingredients have been introduced in the process
- **Natural** - has meaning only when applied to meat products, and means the product "contains no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed; claims are not verified before label is used"
- **Local** - no standard definition
- **Free-range** - apply only to poultry and require only that "poultry has been allowed access to the outside"
IT WOULDN'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT THEM

Rarely-heard stories from Western's valued employees

Story and photos by Andrew Donaldson

Professors, administrators and students are the limelight of Western. But who are the people responsible for keeping the dormitories and lawns clean, or enforcing parking regulations? Without them, Western's campus would not function properly.

These people have remained hidden to most of Western's population and deserve recognition for their contributions to the community. Each employee has a distinct personality that contributes to the behind-the-scenes functionality of Western.

AT A RESIDENCE HALL

"You can't sleep at night," Akbar Jamalzada says softly, shaking his head as he speaks of his life back in the Middle East. "We have a lots problem. Two years ago we lost every month 400 people."

Akbar Jamalzada, a custodian in Kappa dormitory, studied law and political science in Kabul, Afghanistan before moving his family to Pakistan in 1996 and then the U.S in 2001, he says. When the Taliban came to Kabul, he chose to move out of the country to establish a better life for his family.

When living in Kabul, he says he was the Afghani administrator of foreign affairs to Iran. His move from the Middle East was a huge change for his family.

"From sky to floor the culture is different," Jamalzada says pointing to the ceiling then looking down to the ground. "In the village a woman cannot go outside. They work inside the house, husband works outside in the farm."

Jamalzada lived in Seattle, but had to move to Bellingham because the cost of living was too expensive.

Jamalzada says he has worked as a custodian at Western for six years and enjoys working in Kappa dormitory.

"I like all students," Jamalzada says with a radiant smile and thick accent.

He says he enjoys going to different parks around Bellingham and likes to visit the Cascade Mountains.

Hidden in Kappa is this humble man with many stories to tell. You just have to ask.
IN THE PARKING LOT

"Hello," Allen Pack says with a smile on his face as heavy rain starts forming rivulets in the parking lot. "I like to say hi and smile at everyone to see if they react."

Pack does not conform to the pesky parking enforcement officer stereotype; he says he is willing to negotiate with people and help if a driver is having mechanical trouble.

"The main thing I go for with people is common courtesy," Pack says. "If [the driver] comes out and I haven't hit print, then we can talk. But if I've hit print [on my ticket-recording device] I can't do anything."

Pack, who graduated from Washington State University with a degree in criminal justice, is a Bellingham native. Pack says he has worked an array of jobs in Bellingham including as a county corrections officer in Whatcom County, a laborer at the Tilbury Cement Company on Marine Drive and at the George Pacific Paper Mill until they shut down.

Pack says he enjoys talking to people.

"I had a guy shake my hand yesterday for not hitting the print button," Pack says, still smiling in the rain.

IN THE GARDEN

With earth-toned clothes and hand trowel earrings she tilts her head back and laughs, pondering the multitude of things people do to make her job difficult.

"The big one this year is throwing fruit everywhere," Heidi Zeretzke, grounds and nursery service specialist at Western says. "I want to make an educational effort to let students know that throwing your banana peels on the lawn or orange peels and stuff is not composting. It's garbage and we have to pick it up."

Zeretzke says gardening is her passion. She is responsible for the fertilizing, mowing, pruning and garbage clean up of the terrain north of Wilson Library and east of High Street.

"I enjoy the interaction with the people," Zeretzke says. "I also enjoy the autonomy of being able to work basically on my own. Every gardener has their own routine in how they approach the work in their area."

Besides working as a grounds keeper for 7 years, Zeretzke, who graduated from Western in 1982 with a degree in graphic design, says her family has been associated with the university starting in the early 20th century.

"Five generations of my family have gone to school here," Zeretzke says. "Starting with my great grandfather who went here in 1917."

Next time you are walking through north campus remember the face behind the neatly pruned shrub or freshly cut lawn. And pick up that banana peel! K
WHAT’S THE PLAN?

Men’s access to the morning after pill is limited on Western’s campus

Story by Liv Henry  |  Photo illustrations by Lillian Furlong
Next Choice package photo illustration by Carey Rose

A Western student, identified only as Dan, posed a question to Western’s Student Health Center’s online “Ask the Doc” feature. Dan asks, “As a male student at WWU is it possible for me to obtain a Plan B pill through the Student Health Center for my girlfriend who is not a student here?”

“The Doc’s” reply is brief: “At this point we are not selling Plan B to male students.”

In the 21 years the health center has supplied emergency contraception, it has sold it exclusively to women. Not only does it not provide emergency contraception to men, but women must make an appointment with a clinician before the medication is dispensed to them.

The decision to buy emergency contraception is often a hidden one. The role of male buyers is broadcast even less, given that emergency contraception is a drug for women. Yet this little-known demographic’s inclusion or exclusion from purchase, especially at a university, is significant. It reveals the hidden norms of sexual decision-making.

The rationale for the health center’s policy is three-pronged. Staff want to interact with the woman to educate her about the drug and other contraceptive options. Clinicians also want to identify possible contraindications to the drug — pre-existing medical conditions that would make a treatment inadvisable. Finally, the policy aims to prevent non-patients, particularly men, from using the drug to violate women.

THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION

Providing women with sexual health information is an express goal of the health center’s policy. While the value of education is undisputed, the disagreement lies in the requirement of educating women as a justification for excluding men.

Dr. Emily Gibson, medical director at the Student Health Center, says that before dispensing the drug, clinicians give women information on pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, offer testing for both and recommend more reliable forms of contraception. “In other words, we use the request for [emergency contraception] as an opportunity for the education of our patients,” she writes in an email.

Although men could benefit from such education, Gibson argues that some of the information might not be relevant to them. A man also might not be aware of his partner’s medical history; useful information could fall on ignorant ears.

“The male partner is not the patient taking the medication — not experiencing the potential risks and side effects — so we need to be communicating directly with the patient both as an educational intervention and as treating professionals responsible for their care,” Gibson writes.

“I think that the more available [emergency contraception] is to the general public, the better...”

LAUREN JONES

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One of those risks is contraindication, or a reason not to take a drug. Plan B One-Step is only contraindicated in one case; the World Health Organization, the Food and Drug Administration and the drug’s manufacturer list pregnancy as the only contraindication. This is not because pregnancy at the time of use will harm the woman or the fetus, but because the drug will not be effective to prevent a pregnancy that already exists.

The health center sells emergency contraception at half the price of community retail pharmacies. By offering the drug at a discount, Gibson says she hopes to make their program affordable for students who would not have visited a clinic otherwise.

EDUCATION AS A BARRIER TO ACCESS

The process of scheduling and attending a consultation has caused some women’s health advocates to lobby for greater access to emergency contraception by both women and men.

Mark Buster, a 24-year-old Bellevue contractor, went to Planned Parenthood alone to buy emergency contraception in 2005. He was turned away: Planned Parenthood began selling to men in 2006. His partner was busy that day, and Buster said they lost time trying to coordinate her schedule with his availability to drive.

Consultations take time, and time is precious when supplying a drug that acts most effectively when taken as soon as possible after intercourse. Lauren Jones wouldn’t describe the health center’s clinic visit as an obstacle — she calls it a hoop. Jones is the coordinator of VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood, an on-campus educational mission of Planned Parenthood.

“I think that the more available [emergency contraception] is to the general public, the better, because I think the hoops that are in place to keep people from getting it really don’t serve much of a purpose,” Jones says.

Planned Parenthood sells emergency contraception to men and women at the same price as the health center, but without the mandatory clinic visit. Jones argues that if that hoop were discarded and emergency contraception at the health center were available to men, it would increase women’s access to the time-sensitive drug.

The health center is a clinic with a formulary, a list of medications it can legally dispense. It is not required to sell or even stock emergency contraception.

Of the six four-year, public universities in Washington, only two student health centers have formularies. Of those, Western is the only center that sells emergency contraception exclusively to women. At Central Washington University in Ellensburg,
the Student Medical and Counseling Clinic sells emergency contraception to both men and women. However, the buyer must attend a brief clinic visit. CWU nurse Celia Johnson says if a man wants to purchase the drug, the clinician gathers as much information about his female partner as possible. All patients leave with an educational handout. “The way our practitioners look at it, the bad effects of an unplanned pregnancy are worse than anything emergency contraception could do,” Johnson says.

ABUSE

In August 2010, Adam Drake tried to buy emergency contraception at a Walgreens pharmacy in Houston. The pharmacist refused to sell to Drake unless his female partner was present. A manager told Drake she was concerned over news reports of “men dropping emergency contraception into women’s drinks,” according to documents from the American Civil Liberties Union.

Walgreens’ illegal denial of purchase to Drake and at least two other men in Texas and Mississippi became the target of an ACLU campaign. Under pressure, the pharmacy chain promised to abide by the law. However, the Houston store manager’s concern, substantiated or not, is a powerful argument against men’s access. Gibson says even the small chance of such a violation must be avoided.

“The [concern] is that we have had the occasional report back from women when we’re talking with them during their routine exams that they have been asked or coerced into taking morning-after therapy in the possession of a male partner,” Gibson says from her lamp-lit office. “We’re not comfortable with men having access to the hormones who might potentially use it for that purpose.”

Very little data exists on incidents of abuse of emergency contraception. Even so, the accusation of men dosing women without consent is a refrain of Concerned Women for America, a group that describes itself as the country’s largest women’s policy group, lobbying to incorporate biblical principles into law. The group’s president, Wendy Wright, says she is frustrated that the lack of documented abuse keeps the drug’s dangers hidden.

“That’s what’s so insidious about this. Once the drug is over-the-counter, there’s no way to quantify what’s going on,” Wright says. “A woman may want to be pregnant. He’ll slip it to her and she’ll never know. The side effects are the kinds that a woman can pass as the flu or her period coming.”

Gibson offers a local example: a Western student reported to staff that, after a night of drinking, she woke up next to a man offering her the drug. She either didn’t remember the intercourse or didn’t know that contraception was not used.

“I think it’s unusual, it’s uncommon, but it’s still a great potential that I don’t think we should be aiding and abetting by selling Plan B to men,” Gibson says.

““That’s what’s so insidious about this. Once the drug is over-the-counter, there’s no way to quantify what’s going on.””

WENDY WRIGHT
Devlin O'Donnell, coordinator of Crime and Sexual Assault Support Services, says faulting a drug for a sex crime is displacing blame from the perpetrator. “I think that regardless of the drug—I don't think that makes someone all of the sudden say, ‘Oh, if I have this, now I can sexually assaultsomeone because of this!’” O'Donnell says. “I think someone would sexually assault anyways, regardless of if Plan B was there.”

A CALCULATION OF RISK

At the heart of the debate is the question of whether policy should cater to the potential risk or the majority pattern of use. For each typical man seeking to buy emergency contraception, there is a woman waiting at home, at work or in a car. In this secretive process, men can only act as interveners, whether on behalf of women's safety or otherwise. Western's Student Health Center chooses to exclude male intervention from its emergency contraceptive services, and though the reasons for and against the policy are clear, the right course of action remains hidden.

FDA and Plan B

In 2003, the FDA held hearings on whether to make Plan B available over-the-counter, accessible to both men and women without a prescription.

North Carolina-based OB-GYN David Grimes called a doctor’s visit to obtain emergency contraception “a gratuitous obstacle.”

“If we allow these obstacles to stand, if access remains limited, we will be indirectly causing unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, and needless human suffering,” Grimes said.

Dr. Susan Crockett also testified in 2003. “I disagree that no barrier use is a good thing,” Crockett says “and as an OB-GYN I'm going to go down kicking and screaming before I allow somebody to break that relationship between myself and my patients because I value the education component so much in that relationship I have with my patients.”

Crockett was one of four votes that opposed making Plan B over-the-counter at the FDA hearings in 2003. Twenty-three other panelists and consultants voted in favor and in 2006 Plan B was made over-the-counter at pharmacies for men and women over the age of 18. The age was lowered to 17 in 2009. The FDA mandate only applies to retail pharmacies.
During the twentieth century, medical advancements discovered that stress (especially chronic stress) was a hidden factor in the onset and susceptibility of psychological and physical illness. It can also cause the progression of an illness and can hinder one's recovery. Research has shown that 75 to 95 percent of doctor appointments are due to stress-related disorders.

- Irregular amount of sweating or blushing, rashes, hives, eczema, Psoriasis and acne can get worse.
- Decrease in immune's defensive system, increased risk for cancer.
- Women: pregnancy complications, increased risk of vaginal infections.
- Men: impotence, premature ejaculation, increased need to go to the bathroom.

Frequent chest pain or heart pain, increased risk of heart attack, heart pain, blood clots, Atherosclerosis, increase in blood pressure, increase in restin
g.

decrease in memory or the ability to learn new information, depression, anxiety or panic attacks, increase or decrease in appetite

insomnia, nightmares, confusion

Lip tremors, canker sores, grinding teeth.

asthma exacerbation, breathing difficulties

Irritable bowel disease, ulcers, increase risk for diabetes, feeling of nausea, constipation or diarrhea

Putting oneself in isolation, substance abuse, crying spells, suicidal thoughts, mood swings and development of nervous habits.

postural changes, hypertension

hair loss, headaches
These truffles are not made of chocolate. They share the same deep brown allure, but these truffles, knotted with warts, come in gnarled, uneven golf-ball-sized shapes and grow underground. However unappealing they may look, these sought-after mushrooms, known as black truffles, are buried in mystery and are lavishly expensive — second only to saffron as the priciest food by weight.

"I think of truffles as being hidden in every sense of the word. They’re secretive. People’s harvesting of them is secretive. You know, their sale of them — it’s all black market," Charles Lefevre, proud owner of New World Truffles in Bend, Ore., says. "Plus, they’re hidden in the ground."

As wild, subterranean fungi that grow beneath the ground near hazelnut and oak tree roots, truffles are renowned for their seasonal use in French and Italian haute cuisine and have historically come from those places — but that is all starting to change. Black truffles are gaining ground with farmers in the Pacific Northwest because of their steep profit potential. The average black truffle weighs approximately 50 grams, or one-eighth of a pound, and is worth $112.

"We have a similar latitude and climate to France, so truffle farming can be accomplished here, despite a lot of misinformation," says Kelly Bolles, owner of Bolles Farm, Monroe’s sole truffle farm. "We planted our first successful batch of truffle-producing oak trees this year."

The process of cultivating and harvesting black truffles, however, is as unique as the mushroom itself. Unlike morels or chanterelles, which can be picked and eaten at any point in their development, truffles need to ripen before they are worth eating. The fungi grow in the ground surrounding oak and hazelnut trees that have been specially inoculated — a method of vaccinating tree seedlings that Lefevre specializes in. He has the trees delivered to farmers all over the country, including Bolles, to whom he sold more than 100 in February.

Upkeep for the trees requires increasing the soil’s pH by coating the surrounding soil annually with agricultural lime — a soil additive made from limestone. Hoping for mild weather is also a necessity. Temperatures colder than 10 degrees can kill tree roots.

Initial baby crops of truffles can be expected in
three years' time, Bolles says, while full production of his two-acre farm could take between five and 10 years — a long wait for the 58-year-old.

"It is a hell of a decision to plant something that may or may not grow well for at least three years. But it beats out the work of planting strawberries and raspberries like the rest of our farm. This has a lot of potential," says Bolles, who is gradually transitioning into cultivating more truffles and fewer berries.

Baby crops are exactly like usual truffle-producing years except fewer are produced and the truffles themselves are slightly smaller. Bolles expects to yield about 50 pounds per acre by the winter of 2014, his first expected truffle harvest. At the current market value — $900 per pound, according to Lefevre — he could make about $90,000.

Lefevre estimates 25 serious truffle farmers operate in Washington and Oregon. Ten years ago, there were none.

The most crucial — and bizarrely romantic — step of truffle growing is locating the ripe ones and digging them out of the ground. In Europe, pigs are trained and used for their keen sense of smell; in America, man's best friend gets the job. "Training the dog to find the ripe truffles is the crux of the process," says Lefevre, who occasionally runs a truffle-dog-training seminar. "The high concept of it is, you have to make finding truffles the most fun thing in the dog's life. He needs to feed off the handler's excitement."

Lefevre says the reliance on canines adds to the fungi's charisma and, maybe more importantly, hides the truffle industry from agricultural conglomerates. "It will prevent truffle farming from becoming industrialized, unlike any other crop where big industrial agricultural farmers get into it and crush the market," he says. "It will be difficult for that to happen with truffles for the simple reason that it requires a trained dog and a skilled handler. That type of labor pool just doesn't exist."

Aside from their rarity, truffles are popular for a variety of reasons in the culinary world.

Aaron Aberamson, sous chef at Willows Inn Restaurant on Lummi Island thinks of truffles as the ultimate decadence. "The flavor of a black truffle is completely unique. It is a bit nutty and is completely intoxicating," he says. "They are very expensive and very rare and that excites diners." Aberamson says truffles can be used in a variety of ways. Currently, at his restaurant, they are served sliced on top of a puree of hazelnut and squash.

Lefevre looks to a biological reason for humans' truffle attraction. "It's also well-known that they produce animal pheromones and influence our behavior," he says. "Similar ingredients are found in perfumes." Lefevre says the mystique of truffles' veiled aphrodisiac powers can be traced back to the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. "The legend is that
truffles were banned by the Pope a long time ago for their ability to enflame human passion. And there’s actually truth to it,” he says, chuckling.

The fickleness of truffles and their history also applies to how they are sold and traded all across globe. Once a farmer has produced a truffle crop and looks to sell them, a plethora of choices arises: whether to sell them in the United States or in Europe, and whether or not to try to avoid taxes and tariffs.

There is a 100 percent tariff on truffles entering the United States from the European Union. They are also heavily taxed in many other countries. Lefèvre says these regulations have created an international black market for the small black mushrooms.

“People all over the world try to avoid taxes and tariffs when selling their truffles,” he says, “and the prices coming from Europe suggest many people are getting around the tariff.” The prices American chefs pay for a European-grown truffle is, on average, about the same as they go for in Europe, Lefèvre says. Therefore, it is unlikely the tariff is in play; otherwise, prices would rise.

The vast but volatile prices people pay for truffles are warranted by the nurturing required to get them to a diner’s plate. A lot of effort goes into the growing, foraging, selling and cooking of black truffles.

Lefèvre says it depends on your outlook whether the effort to produce and find them matches the gastronomic payoff.

“I’d have to say no, probably not,” Lefèvre laughs with an apparent hint of sarcasm. “But they have an incredible magic. There’s a profound connection created between the aroma and memory.”

That connection, to an increasing group of people including Lefèvre, can be more powerful than the fungi’s chocolate counterpart.

**TOP AND RIGHT:** Bolle’s farm in Monroe has started to grow 400 oak and hazelnut trees on their farm in hopes of harvesting truffles. The young trees are eight inches tall and will take three years to start producing truffles.
How camouflage helps soldiers stay hidden to stay alive

A soldier peers out at the dusty hillside vista before them. Nothing moves. The wind is still. Suddenly, a single figure, then another, dash furtively across the plain. They were camouflaged. Humans and animals alike rely on camouflage technology and patterns to stay alive and blend into their surroundings, say veterans of the Iraq War. More than anything, camouflage makes detecting the shape and outline of an object challenging for the enemy — but not impossible.

Camouflage came into popularity in the 1900s when countries big and small ditched ostentatious uniforms for darker, drabber colors that helped them blend into their surroundings, according to Army. In 2007, Quentin Hill, coordinator of Western’s Veterans Outreach Center, served in Iraq. There he wore the Army Combat Uniform, the latest one troops receive. The A.C.U is made up of shades of tan, gray and light green, which mix in a digital pixel pattern akin to a small photo enlarged too far. The A.C.U. blends well into the dusty, dirty streets where urban warfare takes place.

Hill says he couldn’t do that in his old uniform, the Battle Dress Uniform. It was used by the Army from the 1960s-90s. The darkly colored uniforms were a poor fit for their war zone, he says. “It was like being a clown with a red nose against a white wall,” Hill says. “It was an easy target.”

All members of the armed forces rely on camouflage tech and patterns to stay alive, but, it only works when it blends well. Until the release of the A.C.U, all troops, regardless of their location, wore the B.D.U. “Anytime you’re more visible to the enemy puts you at risk,” says Jason Geiger, a junior at Western and an Iraq War veteran. “There is no one-size-fits all for camouflage.” Now troops can use the old or new uniforms for the best blend.

Geiger says troop protection is a two part issue: cover and concealment. Cover is anything a soldier can hide behind to stop or slow a bullet; a rock, car or a well-packed mound of dirt will do, Geiger says. Then there is concealment: the uniform, face paint and detritus. Even camouflaged, cover is the primary defense, Geiger says. “If bullets are flying, concealment can let you get close the distance to the enemy — but cover is what stops rounds.”

Any protection helps, Geiger notes. The uniforms soldiers rely on today help them blend into sandy streets amid stifling conditions. For the men and women fighting in those streets, their concerns are not new: locate and defeat the enemy while remaining hidden. It’s a challenge, but it’s not impossible.
She woke up to a banging noise. The chair she sat in rocked back and forth as the venetian blinds swung. She soon realized the banging was coming from the antique display cabinet hitting the wall.

It felt like a car accident — everything happening in slow motion and it seemed like she was watching it all happen from afar. Though it only lasted a minute June Sager remembers the 1989 earthquake she experienced in her home, just north of Bellingham.

People can't predict earthquakes but they can prepare for them. They don't know when it will happen, but they know it will. Preventing deaths means taking precautions that will protect people when the inevitable happens.

A fault line is a zone of weakness in a tectonic plate, Jackie Caplan-Auerbach, associate professor of Western's geology department says. If a tectonic plate has stresses, the fault line is the physical of it. It's tricky to know where fault lines are, she says. Tracking where earthquakes occur is one way to discover a fault line, because earthquakes tend to result from the faults.

In Washington, fault lines are particularly difficult to identify because they don't produce many earthquakes, she says. The lines are almost impossible to see because trees and other vegetation hide them. "Sometimes we can't see them, sometimes they are totally hidden," she says. Because of this, scientists have found a way to see through the trees. They rely on laser imaging deflection ranging, commonly known as LIDAR. This allows them to take photos of the topography in the state and digitally deforest the earth — cutting trees out of the images and showing the bare surface of the earth.

LIDAR technology helps scientists identify faults, including the Boulder Creek Fault that is roughly 35 miles northeast of Bellingham. Every time scientists discover new fault lines they have to reevaluate the hazard risk in the area, Caplan-Auerbach says.

During 1976-1990 the estimated hazard risk increased greatly because fault lines were discovered. After earthquakes in Japan continued to devastate the country, they started putting more money into building safer buildings instead of predictions. It's a better use of money, Caplan-Auerbach says. Japan has surpassed the U.S. in funds towards the goal of safer buildings. Caplan-Auerbach says geologists always wish for earthquakes small enough that nobody is hurt, but big enough to remind people of the danger they present. "It's so easy to get passive," she says.

In Bellingham the waterfront is probably most at risk, because the foundation is saturated soil, which will liquefy in an earthquake, Caplan-Auerbach says. Building stability depends on the ground they are standing on, how well it withstands shaking and how they are constructed.

The seemingly mundane everyday objects and structures that our lives are constructed of might actually be hidden perils. Preparing for an earthquake means spotting obvious hazards in our homes and identifying the dangers hidden in the infrastructure.

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME AND BUSINESS

The most common way a single-family home can be damaged would be to fall off its foundation and can be prevented by bolting homes to the foundation, says Scott Miles, assistant professor of environmental studies at Huxley College. Homeowners can often do this themselves, but on a larger project, such as an apartment building, a contractor is needed.

It's the non-structural hazards that usually threaten people's lives he says. "There's a saying, 'earthquakes don't kill people, buildings kill people,'" he says. It's less common that the building will collapse and crush you than an object inside a building such as a shelf or a false ceiling, he says. "These light fixtures are probably hanging [after an earthquake]" he says looking up at the fluorescent lights and pointing at the ceiling of his office.
“Conduits for the heating system could fall on you,” Miles continued. “If you are the building owner, you need to bring in a contractor and say ‘hey this building was built 40 years ago, and I want these connections redone so they don’t fall on me,’” he says. “For old brick buildings, it’s really important, because those will collapse and [flatten] and bury people.” He says savvy building owners spend the money to make structures safer for an earthquake. For every dollar spent on earthquake mitigation, a building owner saves four to seven dollars in the future, he says.

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY LEVEL

In Washington the mandatory hazard mitigation plans have a section for earthquakes, he says. Western students minoring in emergency planning put together these plans. The jobs these students prepare for can be government jobs, at the federal, state and local level, as well as private consulting firms.

If one of these professionals knows an area that could liquefy during an earthquake, an emergency planner could buy it out to prevent development. An engineer, on the other hand, may choose to modify the foundation by inserting gravel or compacting it.

THE BOTTOM LINE: MAINTAINING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Miles says it’s important to maintain the community’s infrastructure. Keeping roads and bridges well maintained will be more cost-effective than replacing them altogether if an earthquake occurs.

One of the biggest concerns after an earthquake occurs is transportation and the economy, he says. If people are not able to get food and water, or get to work, or deliver goods, it will have a huge effect on the economy. “For me the infrastructure is the biggest concern — the roads, the bridges the electric network, the water network,” he says. “That’s what our livelihoods and our businesses are based on and that’s what’s most vulnerable.”

There was no damage to June Sager’s home when the earthquake occurred, but she will never forget that day. It’s impossible to know exactly when an earthquake will happen, but it’s certain they will. All people can do is prepare for it now.

PREPARING AT HOME

Bolt bookshelves to walls with an L clamp and add a band to the front of bookshelves to keep objects from falling off. Strap computers to desks to keep them from being damaged. Make sure you have food and bottled water in case access to basic necessities is impossible. Get to know the neighbors in surrounding houses. Knowing who lives in what house, and who may have special needs will better help your community.
LIPS ARE SEALED
Bellingham professionals talk about how keeping secrets is just part of the job

Story by Andrew Donaldson
Photo illustration by Carey Rose

A stained-glass figure of Jesus looks down upon a confessional booth situated in the corner of the cathedral. The quiet is sobering and were it not for the lonely echo of approaching footsteps, the sanctum is completely silent. A man kneels in the confessional and crosses himself.

"Forgive me father, for I have sinned."

While a familiar and age-old scene, few think to look behind the curtain at the person who must keep these secrets. In doctors' offices, behind church pulpits, and adjacent to therapists' couches, sit those individuals legally sworn to keep the secrets they are told.

Doctors, lawyers, councilors and clergy are professions with strict rules for breaking confidence — an ethical principal that deems information privileged, or not accessible to a third party — even when they feel morally responsible to tell someone.

Father Scott Connolly, a Catholic priest at the Church of the Assumption in Bellingham, listens patiently to his followers confess their sins every Saturday. He says he never loses sleep over a confession.

"I'm more about what a great gift it is that people have let this burden go and are moving on with their lives, rather than 'Oh my gosh, what a horrible person she is,' or 'I can't believe he said that to me.'"

Connolly says he does not have a problem keeping peoples secrets hidden in his brain, however, he says if someone were to confess to a criminal act it would behoove a priest to talk to the person about turning themselves in. "The Church says that we have to obey the civil laws of the land in which we live. So I would challenge a person to go to the authorities."

ETHICS AND LAW

In order to serve a client, attorneys are guided by their ethical code of confidentiality. Bellingham attorney Doug Shepherd says he has tried to keep his moral code out of his profession for the 33 years he has practiced law.

"My ethics professor told me that if I wanted to be a trial lawyer my morals were not important; my clients' morals are important and societies ethics or morals are important, and if I couldn't leave my morals behind, I needed to find another profession," Shepherd says. "I found out that it's the most important piece of information that I received in law school." Shepherd said he has represented people he knew committed a crime, but explains that not everyone who commits a crime is a criminal.

The law recognizes confidentiality agreements; it is theorized that society benefits from open, raw communication with certain professionals. Someone can admit to criminal activities, even murder, without worrying about being turned in.

A controversial Chicago case in 1982 tested the ethical values of two defense attorneys and sparked a debate over the American Bar Association (ABA) code of ethics. Alton Logan, 54, spent 26 years in prison while two attorneys knew he was innocent, according to the ABA Journal. The two attorneys were representing a man named Andrew Wilson, who admitted to murdering the man Logan was convicted of. The attorneys asked Wilson for permission to disclose his murder confession after he died, which he agreed to. Twenty-six years after Logan's incarceration,
Wilson died, allowing the two attorneys to reveal Logan’s innocence. Their moral belief that an innocent man should not rot in prison did not outweigh their ethical obligations to keep their client’s confidence. Wilson is now a free man.

Shepherd says he agrees with how the attorneys handled the case, keeping morals hidden even when they strongly conflict with the ABA code of ethics. “My morals work for me,” Shepherd says. “They are not to be injected on other human beings who have different morals than me. I am bound by ethics.”

**THERAPEUTIC SHARING**

Therapists are also bound by an ethical code to keep patient information confidential. Cami Ostman, a licensed marriage and family therapist who practices out of Bellingham and Seattle, says she has dealt with clients who have disclosed information about being abused as a child, self-harming, and suicide.

“It definitely can be tough to know that you’re carrying other people’s hurt and sadness and pain,” Ostman says. “But you learn how to manage it.”

Ostman says she has a consult group, composed of other therapists, where she can give the specifics of a client’s situation, but does not reveal the client’s name. “It is widely accepted, ethically, that you have a consult group,” Ostman says. “I’ll go to a consult group and if I don’t get what I need there then I have someone who I have worked with for many years as a supervisor to help me navigate through a situation.”

Therapists can break confidence under the most extreme circumstances. Hiding an onslaught of sensitive information is what therapists agree to when they choose the profession. Ostman says the gift of helping a patient outweighs the stress of keeping their secrets hidden.

Clergy, attorneys and therapists all deal with keeping confidence in different ways, they agree that their morals must be kept far from their professional code of ethics. Their congregants, clients, and patients can rest assured their secrets are safely hidden.

“The release of information without consent of the client may only take place under extreme circumstances: the protection of life (suicidality or homicidality), child abuse, and/or abuse of incompetent persons and elder abuse.”

Cami Ostman sits in her office on Thursday, April 29. “What I love about [being a therapist] is sitting with people as they go in their deepest pain and watching them get some relief from it,” Ostman says.
TO CATCH A SHOPLIFTER

Despite the usage of surveillance cameras, retailers continue to struggle with persistent shoplifters

Story by Mackenzie Hudson
Photo illustration by Carey Rose

Taylor touches the selection of jewelry while she searches for an ideal bracelet. She discovers the perfect piece of jewelry and slowly wanders toward the doors of the store with her fists clenched tight and an adrenaline rush motivating her every step to the exit. Taylor, a former shoplifter and Western student, who would prefer not to include her last name, says she has stolen food, headbands, jewelry and other small miscellaneous items from various stores. Even though Taylor realizes most stores have hidden cameras watching her every move, she says she sticks to a few guidelines and instructions all shoplifters should know.

Hidden cameras can benefit companies by helping them catch shoplifters. These cameras within stores’ walls are legal in Washington and stores may use the footage captured on tape in court for evidence. “Our community sees a lot of shoplifting as any community does with retail,” says Officer Mark Young, the public information officer for the Bellingham Police Department. “Stores are good at enforcing shoplifting standards and hidden cameras are a good way to do that.”

A hidden camera can be wired or connected to a DVR or VCR using a cable, and can also be wireless and transmit signals to a receiver that is connected to a recording device. Setup and usage of covert cameras are legal, but laws prohibit the use of the equipment in places where people expect their right to privacy, like bathrooms, bedrooms and dressing rooms. No law in the United States requires signs giving notice of hidden camera surveillance in a public setting.

Jason Rehmert, the store manager at Kohl’s in Bellis Fair mall, says the department store has approximately 16 cameras overlooking the sales floor. “Sometimes there are people sitting and watching the footage as it’s recorded and sometimes not,” he says. Rehmert says the average number of people caught stealing on tape fluctuates, and it usually depends on the time of the year.

Although the hidden cameras are beneficial for the store to catch shoplifters, Maria Mendoza, the associate manager at American Eagle, says employees at the mall are already well aware of who they should be watching carefully as soon as they enter the store. “There’s a group of shoppers at the mall everyone knows and looks out for. Teenage girls are usually a primary concern,” she says. “All employees watch and

"I don’t want to pay $5.50 for a sandwich that takes $2 to make. Fuck you."

TAYLOR SHOPLIFTER
talk with one another. We use code names to stay on the same page and help one another stay alert.”

One name Mendoza says still makes her laugh is “Sweaty Lady.”

“Sweaty Lady” is notorious for trying to put clearance price stickers on new clothes around the store and then accusing employees at American Eagle of charging her too much for the garments. “We have seen it all,” Mendoza laughs.

Taylor says the two biggest reasons she has shoplifted in the past are convenience and overpriced items. In terms of convenience, she says lines are usually too long or she simply doesn’t feel like waiting in line to pay for the low-cost item. “I don’t steal hundreds of dollars worth of stuff and I don’t want to wait in line if all I’m buying is a $1 pen or a $4 calculator,” she says.

“I walk around with an item I want for a while and never just shove it into my purse because that’s too obvious,” Taylor says. “You can always tell where the cameras are, so you have to be sneaky.” Taylor says the best way to dodge being caught is to hide behind places you know employees and cameras cannot see you or by having someone shop with you to serve as a distraction.

Officer Young says shoplifting is usually a misdemeanor charge, but it depends on the value of the item stolen. “A DVD for $18 is going to be less of a punishment than a diamond ring for $5,000,” he says. High-priced items also make Taylor skip out on the bill. “I don’t want to pay $5.50 for a sandwich that takes $2 to make. Fuck you,” she says.

If shoplifters steal a second time from a store after they have been caught, they could potentially be charged with burglary because they have trespassed without authorization, and are not privileged to shop there, Young says. Taylor has successfully tricked the hidden cameras watching her from above and has managed to never be caught or charged with theft.

Taylor freely exits the store with her new bracelet in hand. Although Taylor may leave the store a free woman this time, she may not be as lucky the next. She may fall victim to the legendary “eyes in the sky.”

Source: the National Shoplifting Prevention Association
LIVING IN THE SHADOWS

Migrant workers farm for family and survival

Story by Paige Collins
Photos by Lillian Furlong

Sunrise signals the beginning of what will be a 14-hour day on the job. Thousands of plump, ripe cherries are ready and waiting to be picked. Washington weather leaves uncertainty as to whether it will rain or shine, but either way it is time for work.

Day after grueling day, migrant parents work to support their family members who live in both the United States and their native countries. Some have obtained legal documentation of citizenship; others spend their days hiding from the government and working to survive.

“They live in the shadows,” says Bonifacio Sanchez, Western senior and son of a migrant family from southern Mexico. “They are working hard and not being paid enough. They do the toughest jobs here in America just to keep the system going.”

About 11.6 million people traveled between Mexico and the United States in 2010, making up the largest immigrant corridor in the world, according to the Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 published by the World Bank. The data depicts only recorded migrations, however. Many are living in the United States illegally and are not counted in the census or other surveys, Sanchez says. Maria Timmons Flores, assistant professor of bilingual education in Woodring College, estimates 12 million people in the United States are undocumented.

“There’s such an anti-immigration status in this country,” she says. “But at the same time, this country totally relies on immigrant labor. We’ve always subjected people to really challenging life circumstances to feed us.”
A DAY AT WORK

Two summers ago, Western junior Maria Guzman worked picking cherries with her mother. She says she had to experience firsthand the long days and harsh conditions in which her migrant worker parents earn their living. "I was 20 years old and still didn’t know what my mom really did," she says.

The cherry pickers she worked with have no lunchroom. They eat their non-refrigerated meals outside while sitting on concrete, no matter the weather. Three benches are available for more than 100 workers. "Picking fruit is not a day in the park for some," Guzman says. "It’s survival."

Migrant workers work in the cherry fields of the Wenatchee Valley from June to August. After the cherry season, Guzman’s mother packs pears in a warehouse until January. During the winter she is out of work. Meanwhile, her father has a year-round job maintaining a pear orchard, allowing the family to have some stability, Guzman says.

While more stable, the pear orchard work is tough and can be harmful to her father’s health. Part of his job is to spray pesticides on the trees. During spray season, he is exposed to so many chemicals that his face and eyes swell up even though he wears a mask. "He’s essentially swimming in pesticides," she says.

Timmons Flores says many migrant worker families have a mixed immigration status, in that some members may be citizens and others may be illegal. Because of this status, the entire family is unable to access many social services and medical support services for fear of a member’s immigration status being revealed. “There is a lot of fear in the community,” she says. “They really have to trust someone to tell their story.”

A HIDDEN SUPPORT SYSTEM

Many migrant worker families endure these conditions to support not only their family members in the United States, but also to send money to their native countries to help their parents or extended family — a process known as remittance. In 2009, recorded remittances from the United States reached $48 billion, according to the World Bank Factbook.

These workers are generally paid minimum wage or paid by the amount they pick in the fields, Guzman says. Her family has always lived from paycheck to paycheck because there just isn’t enough for long-
term saving. They are from a small town in the state of Zacatecas, Mexico. In order to reach her grandparents’ home, one must take a dirt road with so many bumps and curves that a 3-mile trip takes 30 minutes.

Guzman’s grandmother washes dishes in a manufactured pit with well water. Her family in the United States recently bought her a washing machine so she no longer has to use a washboard. Now, her grandparents need monetary support for their living and her grandmother’s diabetes medicine. Her parents send about $100 each month.

But to Guzman, supporting distant family is not a burden. Instead, it is an honor, she says. “To us, I feel like it’s not even a question,” Guzman says. “It’s a must. We are one family until the end.”

Guzman reflected on her childhood growing up with two parents working long hours at seasonal jobs. At 10 years old, her oldest sister would take care of the younger three siblings until their parents got home because childcare wasn’t an option. “We all were always looking out for each other,” Guzman says. “It was like nothing, but it was a big hidden responsibility.”

The tendency to put family first is not specific to Guzman’s family; it is something critical to the makeup of a Latino migrant family. For Sanchez, family has always come first. In a family with five girls and five boys and two migrant worker parents, money is tight and teamwork is what makes everything possible.

Sanchez’s mother works seasonally picking strawberries, blueberries and raspberries. His father has a year-round job as a janitor and in harvest season takes the night shift so he can pick berries during the day. The younger children, who are still living at home, work when they are not in school.

When Sanchez worked as a teen, most of his paycheck would go to his dad to help support the family. “For me it wasn’t right to keep it to myself because I knew my dad needed it,” Sanchez said. “That’s how we support each other.”

Even with the teamwork, the price of living in Skagit Valley and supporting 10 children does not leave much money to spare. Yet, the family saves between $100 and $300 every other month to send to relatives in Mexico. They also collect goods that are cheaper in the United States and take them when they go to visit.

**THIS IS LIFE**

Migrant workers begin their travels searching for a better life for themselves and their families at home. In Mexico, Sanchez says members of the indigenous community where he is from do not have rights. He says speaking out against the government can lead to serious consequences. “The best way to survive is to come to America and go through the cycle of sending money home,” he says.

Making it to America and finding a job does not result in luxury, however. With language barriers and lack of education, it is hard for migrant workers to move forward and be successful. “Once you get here, it’s still hard to get to that next step,” Sanchez says. “To buy a house, to buy a new car, to live the American Dream.”

For migrant workers in Washington and the rest of the country, the instability of seasonal work, with its harsh conditions and long hours, is just the way life is. “I have the privilege to go a different route,” Guzman says. “But for my parents, this is life and it’s going to be. It’s not just a summer job as it was for me.”

This is just another day in the life of a migrant worker: living and working in the shadows. Fourteen hours have passed. The cherries have been picked and the sun is setting. Tired bodies yearn for home and family comfort. Tomorrow it will begin again: for survival and for family.
TIPS FROM A PRO

Four-year-old Daphne Little is as professional as one can get at the game of Hide and Seek. Daphne thinks the best place to hide is a closet because there are a lot of clothes to hide under — if the person hider is quiet, they might just look like a pile of laundry. And play fair! “I like being found,” she says, because it gives other players a chance to hide.

PLAYING ON CAMPUS

There are many great hiding places on Western’s campus, says Western sophomore Alex Dehn. The avid hide and seek player likes to hide in the Sehome Arboretum. “You can connect with nature, while also hiding in it,” he says of the forest bordering Western’s campus. “All you can see is trees up there.” It’s also a great hiding place because no one can track down a hider without some serious GPS help or a helicopter.

The library also offers some excellent hiding places, says Dehn, who believes the building is like Hogwarts, the fictional school in the Harry Potter book series.

“It’s a labyrinth in there,” he says. “No one knows how to move around up there.” Not only does it add a bit of excitement because the seeker would need to remain quiet, but the twisting hallways and hidden rooms aid the hiders’ ability to disappear between the bookshelves.

HIDE AND DRINK

Adults-only. Use the original game’s rules—with a twist! The seeker must drink after counting before being allowed to seek other players. Each player must drink when found. Fun tip: Try hiding the seeker’s drink; that will make them even more inclined to play the game.

SARDINES

Hide and Seek — but backwards. One person hides while all other players set out to find him/her. If a seeker finds the hider they must join him/her in hiding. This is done until there is only one player left and everyone else is packed into the hiding spot in like sardines.
KLIPSUN

is a Chinuk Wawa word meaning sunset.

Western Washington University
Volume 41, Issue 6