

Stuart's to close down



TARA NELSON/The Western Front

Stuart's regulars James Davis, 33, Jack Lauritsen, 55 and Bob Jones, 53, say they plan not to support the business that will replace it Feb. 25.

By MICHELLE ACOSTA
The Western Front

Bellingham residents will say goodbye to Stuart's Coffee House when it closes Feb. 25.

Stuart's owner Garry Fleming said property owner Fred Scheetz gave him notice Jan. 19 that he had sold the space to an out-of-town buyer. Stuart's, a popular local coffee house in downtown Bellingham, has been around for nearly 10 years and owned by Fleming the past six years. Fleming said the lease ended in August and he has continued on a month-to-month lease with Scheetz since then.

Ebright-Wight Property Management representatives were contacted for more information on Scheetz and Stuart's Coffee House, but refused to comment or give contact numbers for

either Scheetz or the new owner.

Fleming said the new purchaser of Stuart's went through Ebright Wight Property Management and the property owner instead of purchasing the business from him. Fleming said he had no idea Stuart's was closing down until this past Wednesday at a business meeting. He said he offered to start a new lease as well as pay rent in advance, but Scheetz declined.

Fleming said Stuart's is a coffee house that attracts a variety of residents and offers opportunities for artists to perform throughout the week. He said that aside from the coffee, Stuart's also provides entertainment, such as Bellingham bands, jazz, open mic night and poetry readings. He said everything about Stuart's is local, which is what makes it different from other coffee shops.

see COFFEE, page 6

Trustees to vote on green energy

By MOLLY JENSEN
The Western Front

When asked to choose their preferred color of energy, Western students overwhelmingly chose green.

Western's Students for Renewable Energy organized a forum in Miller Hall Monday to discuss implementing the use of renewable energy at Western. Students approved the purchase of renewable energy last spring, but the final decision on the issue is dependent on a Feb. 4 vote by the board of trustees.

The Renewable Energy Initiative passed with a vote of 1,622 to 292 in the April 2004 vote. Students for Renewable Energy proposed the initiative, which involves the purchase of renewable — or “green” — energy on Western's campus for a quarterly fee of no more than \$19 per student.

On Feb. 4, the Associated Students board will propose the green energy fee to the board, which will make a final decision on the issue.

Western senior Nausheen Mohamedali, co-founder of Students for Renewable Energy, said the public forum was an opportunity to update students on the status of the initiative and receive answers to additional questions regarding the purchase of renewable energy.

Puget Sound Energy would purchase green power, electricity that is taken from renewable resources, from the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, a Portland-based nonprofit wholesale provider, Mohamedali said.

Mike Richardson, the manager of Renewable Energy for Puget Sound Energy, said Western's purchase of green energy would send a message to developers that renewable power resources are valuable to the public.

“As our green-power program grows, adding a customer such as Western to the mix sends a message all the way to the top,” Richardson said.

Tim Wynn, Western's director of facilities management, said one of the challenges posed by the transition to using renewable energy is calculating the exact fee amount that corresponds to the amount of energy Western could require.

see ENERGY, page 6

Alumnus writes, stars in own film

By PETER JENSEN
The Western Front

Benji Olson of the Tennessee Titans and Efen Ramirez, best known for his role as Pedro in “Napoleon Dynamite,” will appear in Western graduate Sage Bannick's first feature film, “Just Hustle.”

The film will be screened at 7 p.m. Thursday Whatcom Community College.

After its Bellingham showing, “Just Hustle” will be shown in 33 cities, including New York and San Francisco, as well as in film festivals in Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles and Nashville, Tenn.

The film is being screened in so many markets in hopes that a distributor will purchase it and release it nationally, Bannick said.

He teamed with his longtime friend and partner Ari Bernstein, the film's director, to make the film, which they consider their opportunity to become legitimate filmmakers.

“Their passion for their work makes this much more than a job to them,” Ramirez said. “In fact, these guys basically are ‘just hustlers.’”

Before “Just Hustle,” the two had produced plenty of

surfing documentaries and Cheech and Chong rip-offs, but no “real” films, Bernstein, 29, said.

“We wanted to make something that would mean a little more to us,” Bannick said.

Bernstein said they have been making films together since attending high school together in Hawaii. After graduating from high school in 1994, Bernstein went to Washington State University while Bannick went to the University of Washington for two years and then to Western for two more; he graduated from Western in 1997.

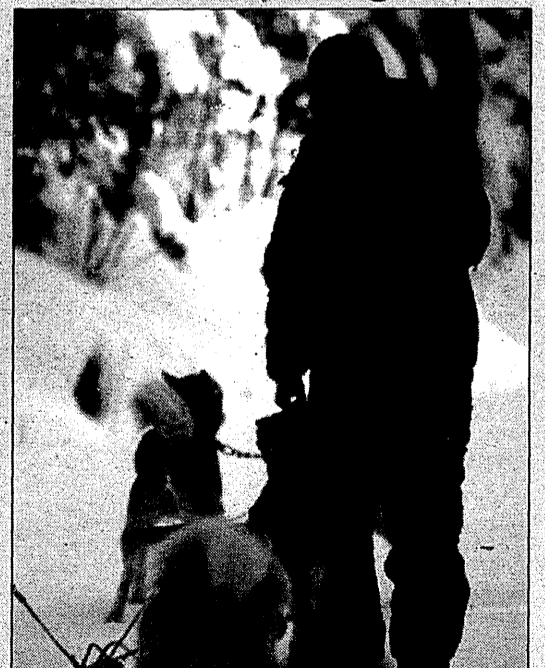
“Western taught me the fundamentals of storytelling and the structuring of a film,” Bannick said. “I also learned to trust my instincts.”

The two met again in Seattle in 1998, where Bannick was attending the University of Washington's advanced directing class, and began making films again. They made a series of narrative shorts and a longer film called “Delusions” — which was destroyed in an apartment fire — but little money, he said.

“There is no money,” Bannick said, “so the biggest reward is working with your pals.”

see MOVIE, page 6

Snow Dogs



CHRIS HUBER/The Western Front

Jim Malin, 43, prepares his dogs for a practice run. For the story, see page 10.



BAJA BUGGIES
Western's Vehicle Research Institute department prepares a car for competition in Arizona.

FEATURES, PAGE 8

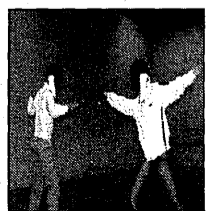
THE A.M. PILL

In depth: Should the morning-after pill be available over the counter?

OPINIONS, PAGE 15

FOILED AGAIN

The Western fencing team prepares for upcoming season.



SPORTS, PAGE 11

COPS BOX

University Police

Jan. 23, 4:06 p.m.: UP responded to a report of a suspicious person at Birnam Wood. The suspect was gone upon arrival.

Jan. 22, 5:46 p.m.: UP responded to a fire alarm in the Fairhaven Academic Building. Officers found burned food in a microwave, which caused the alarm.

Jan. 22, 4:40 p.m.: UP responded to flooding in the second- and third-floor restrooms in Ridgeway Alpha. Officers found two sinks were plugged and left running.

Jan. 22, 12:06 a.m.: UP responded to an 18-year-old male unconscious and vomiting in Ridgeway Beta. UP notified the Student Health Center.

Bellingham Police

Jan. 23, 11:38 p.m.: Bellingham police responded to a vehicle prowler in progress on the 2700 block of West Maplewood Avenue. One suspect was arrested after being identified by a witness.

Jan. 22, 11:52 p.m.: Officers responded to a complaint of a loud party on the 2300 block of Grant Street. The party had broken up before officers arrived.

Jan. 22, 12:28 p.m.: Police responded to a report of a domestic dispute on the 2600 block of Undine Street.

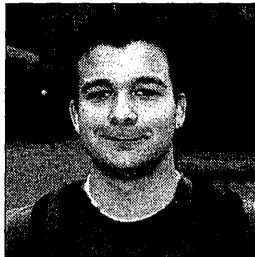
Jan. 22, 6:19 a.m.: Bellingham police responded to the 1800 block of 34th Street after receiving a report of a possible prowler on a man's porch. Officers checked the area and found nothing suspicious.

Compiled by Adam Rudnick

Viking Voices

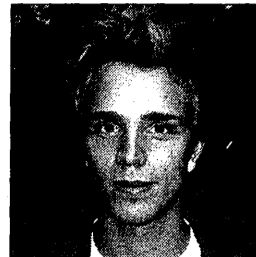
What is the best place in Bellingham to get coffee?

Compiled by Stefani Harrey



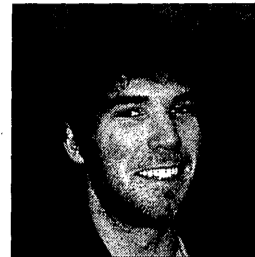
Tony Bocek
Senior, communications

Brewed Awakening — they have the powdered white chocolate, instead of the syrup.



Adam Parker
Junior, business

Stuart's, because they have a good atmosphere and music.



Peter Bonoff
Senior, political science

Tony's because you get to feel cool going to Fairhaven and my friends work there and give me free stuff.

AP Wire

news briefs

STATE NEWS

Tacoma spending millions on wrongful-death case

It has been nearly two years since Tacoma Police Chief David Brame killed his wife and himself. The city of Tacoma has spent more than \$1 million so far to defend itself against a wrongful-death lawsuit in the case. The Tacoma News Tribune reported Sunday that that amount could double before the trial begins.

The two sides are fighting over rules on taking depositions, among other things. King County Superior Court Judge James Cayce delayed the trial until February 2006 because of the disagreement between lawyers.

Accident results in two totaled police cars in Pasco

Two officers were injured when their vehicles collided in Pasco

early Sunday morning.

The Washington State Patrol reported a Franklin County deputy and a Pasco police officer were both driving east on Court Street, responding to a call. The deputy made a U-turn and was hit in the driver's-side door by the other vehicle, according to the report. The two cars were totaled. Both officers were treated and released from hospital care.

NATIONAL NEWS

Bob Dylan nominated for book critics' award

Critics usually don't think too much of the literary efforts of rock stars. But they've nominated Bob Dylan for an award for his autobiography.

His memoir — called "Chronicles: Volume One" — is among the finalists for the National Book Critics Circle prize in the category of biography or

autobiography. His competition includes two acclaimed bestsellers — biographies of Shakespeare and Alexander Hamilton.

Dylan has won praise for his book, in which he writes about such influences as Woody Guthrie and Robert Johnson as well as his years as a young singer-songwriter in New York's Greenwich Village.

San Francisco may charge for grocery bags

San Francisco may become the first city in the nation to charge shoppers for grocery bags.

The city's environmental commission is expected to ask the mayor and board of supervisors Tuesday to consider a 17-cent-per-bag charge on paper and plastic grocery bags. The goal is to reduce plastic-bag pollution.

Officials believe the city spends 5.2 cents per bag annually for street litter pickup and 1.4 cents per bag for extra recycling costs.

But grocers and bag manufacturers argue that many people already reuse their plastic bags. Other opponents call the plan an unfair and regressive tax on shoppers.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Germans link al-Qaida suspects to planned Iraq attack

More details are emerging about two suspected al-Qaida operatives arrested in Germany.

German federal prosecutors suspect one of the men, an Iraqi, allegedly recruited suicide attackers in Europe for al-Qaida. They say he's been with al-Qaida for years and spent a year fighting U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Prosecutors also believe he's been in contact with high-ranking al-Qaida leaders.

The man is being held on suspicion of recruiting the other suspect, a Palestinian, for a suicide attack in Iraq.

*Compiled by Trevor Swedberg
AP Wire courtesy KUGS 89.3-FM*

Correction

In the Jan. 21 Accent story "Dances with bikes," Nolan Dennett's name was misspelled.

The Western Front regrets this error and any other errors.

The Western Front is published twice weekly in fall, winter and spring; once a week in summer session. Address: The Western Front, Western Washington University, CF 251, Bellingham, WA 98225. The Western Front is the official newspaper of Western Washington University, published by the Student Publications Council, and is mainly supported by advertising.

Opinions and stories in the newspaper have no connection with advertising. News content is determined by student editors. Staff reporters are enrolled in a course in the Department of Journalism, but any student enrolled at Western may offer stories to the editors.

Advertising inquiries should be directed to the business office in CF 230, or by phone to (360) 650-3161.

Members of the Western community are entitled to a single free copy of each issue of The Western Front.

WWU Official Announcements – PLEASE POST

Deadline for announcements in this space is noon Friday for the Tuesday edition and noon Wednesday for the Friday edition, except when otherwise noted. Announcements should be limited to 50 words and be typewritten or legibly printed. Announcements may be sent to FAST@wwu.edu -- in the subject line include a one-word topic and clearly note that the item is for Official Announcements. Items also may be sent to "Official Announcements," VLS-9117, faxed to X-4343, or brought to Commissary 113E. DO NOT SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE WESTERN FRONT. Phoned announcements will not be accepted.

MATH PLACEMENT TEST. The Math Placement Test will be given in OM 120 at 3 p.m. Mondays on Jan. 24, 31; Feb 7, 14, 28; Mar 7, 14, and at 9 a.m. Thursdays on Jan. 27; Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24; Mar 3, 10, and 17. Registration is not required. Students must bring picture identification, student number, Social Security number, and a No. 2 pencil. A \$15 fee is payable in exact amount at test time.

Lot 17G WILL BE RESERVED starting at 5 p.m. Jan. 22 and 27 for Viking permit holders. A shuttle will run from lot 12A.

SUMMER QUARTER DEGREE APPLICANTS: All students expecting to graduate at the close of summer quarter must have a degree application on file in the Registrar's Office by Friday, March 11. Applications and instructions are available in OM 230.

THE COMPUTER-BASED MILLER ANALOGIES TEST (MAT) is available by appointment only. Make an appointment in person in OM 120 or by calling X/3080. A \$42 fee is payable at test time. Test takes approximately 1½ hours. Preliminary scores are available immediately; official results are mailed within 15 days.

AN INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FAIR will be held 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 24, in the VU Multipurpose Room. Open to all. Meet with organizations sharing information about study abroad and international travel, work, volunteering, internships, teaching, and TESL opportunities. For more information, see www.careers.wwu.edu or call X/3240.

WEST-E PRAXIS. Washington requires individuals seeking teacher certification and teachers seeking additional endorsements to pass a subject knowledge assessment in the chosen endorsement area beginning Sept. 1. The state has chosen specific Praxis II series tests to meet this requirement. See www.ets.org/praxis/prxwa.html for a description and online registration information. Registration bulletins are also available in MH 216.

REMAINING WEST-E PRAXIS TEST DATES for the academic year are March 5, April 16, and June 11 (June 11 test not available at Western; see the Praxis Web site for location).

WEST-B TEST. Applicants for admission to state-approved educator preparation programs and those from other states applying for a Washington residency teaching certificate must have a minimum passing score on the basic skills assessment test. Residency teaching certificate applicants who have completed an educator preparation program outside Washington and have not passed WEST-B may be granted additional time. See www.west.nesinc.com to register. Test dates: Jan. 22, March 12, May 14, July 9.

PARKING IS AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS in G and C lots and can be distinguished by the reserved sign at lot entrances. Parking in lot 11G directly behind the PAC is reserved for disabled patrons. After-hours parking fees apply to those without permits or Viking Xpress passes.

LEARN ABOUT THE TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES PROGRAM at an information session to be held from 5 to 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 24, in MH 106. For more information, call X/4949.

READMISSION. Students who interrupt studies at Western other than for summer quarter must apply for readmission. Students pursuing a first bachelor's degree are generally assured readmission if they follow application instructions and apply by priority deadline (summer, continuing into fall and fall quarter, April 1; spring quarter, Jan. 15). Post-baccalaureate readmission is more stringent. Applications available in OM 200 or call X/3440.

COUNSELING CENTER WINTER GROUP OFFERINGS include • Relaxation Training, 4 p.m. Thursdays, OM 540, drop in for one or all sessions; • Math Confidence Workshop, choose Thursday, Feb. 3, 3-5 p.m., VU 462, or Tuesday, Feb. 8, noon to 2 p.m., OM 540; • Grief and Loss Group, 3 p.m. Mondays, Jan. 24-Feb. 14, OM 540. Also offered are "Making Peace with Food," "Ride the Emotional Wave," and "Women Take Care." For information or to register, call X/3164 or stop by OM 540.

Employers on campus

For complete and updated information, including locations and deadlines, visit www.career.wwu.edu or stop by OM 280.

- Jan. 18-21, Grayline of Alaska; • Jan. 28, Princess Tours; • Feb. 1-2, Student Conservation Corps; • Feb. 7, Moss-Adams LLP; • Feb. 8, Safeco Corp.; Symetra Financial; • Feb. 9, Deloitte & Touche LLP; • Feb. 10, KPMG LLP; • Feb. 11, Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

County now votes by mail

By KATHRYN BRENIZE
The Western Front

Whatcom County residents will use a new voting system for the next election. The vote-by-mail procedure will provide a secure, cost-effective and convenient form of voting, Whatcom County Auditor Shirley Forslof said.

Elections now will use the vote-by-mail system, which should be functioning this spring. Ballots will be mailed to Whatcom County residents a few weeks prior to the election, using a new optical scan system that uses bubble and complete-the-arrow options in place of the punch-card system, Forslof said.

Because of new federal regulations, poll stations must acquire either touch-screen equipment — which could cost Whatcom County taxpayers \$1.72 million — or the vote-by-mail system, which would cost no additional funds, Forslof said.

The Whatcom County Council unanimously passed the vote-by-mail system this past Tuesday, 7-0. Councilwoman Barbara Brenner said it was a difficult issue to decide on.

"I feel there is a lot of tradition in going to the polls ... especially for parents taking their children," Brenner said.

Council members struggled with the thought of disrupting community tradition, yet the rising cost for poll voting was a definite factor in the decision of this new resolution, County councilman Dan McShane said.

"We were confronted by federal law with very

high expenses that the county would have to pay for," McShane said. "The cost was a big driver for the vote-by-mail system."

Brenner said that during the past general election, 73 percent of Whatcom County residents voted by mail through absentee ballots, and 84 percent voted by absentee ballots in the primary election. With such a high absentee vote, Brenner said the vote-by-mail method was the best option for Whatcom County.

"It's hard to look over the fact that more than \$1.5 million will be saved," Brenner said.

'It's hard to look over the fact that more than \$1.5 million will be saved.'

BARBARA BRENNER
Whatcom County councilwoman

The vote-by-mail system is not only a change for Whatcom County but possibly for others in Washington state.

"This is a developing trend," Whatcom County councilman Ward Nelson said. "It is the least expensive method in compliance with federal requirements, and I think we will see many counties conforming to this same system."

Along with financial modifications, there could be differences in political candidates' campaigns because of the vote-by-mail system, such as earlier candidate promotion and advertising, Nelson said.

"This new system will also change candidates' campaign strategies, since citizens could be voting earlier even though ballots are not due until the day of the election," Nelson said.

During elections, drop-off sites will be available throughout the county with election workers from both parties in observance.

Due to the vote-by-mail system current addresses must be accurate. To notify a change of address call 676-6742.

Wednesday is tsunami day of remembrance

By BLAIR WILSON
The Western Front

After the tsunami in southeast Asia, Western is doing its part in the disaster-relief efforts by having a day of remembrance, planned for Wednesday, one month after the disaster.

Beginning at 10 a.m. and ending at 5 p.m., there will be a "room of remembrance" in Viking Union 565. A ceremony will take place at 12:05 p.m. in the Virginia Wright Plaza by the Performing Arts Center.

Bob Kandiko, science teacher at Horizon Middle School in Ferndale, will speak about his kayaking experiences in Asia during the tsunami. He will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Old Main Theatre.

The room of remembrance will give people a quiet space to reflect on the tsunami and its human impact, said Alanna Ahern, Associated Students vice president for campus and community affairs.

"This gives students an opportunity to leave a remembrance in the form of a written reflection for those lost and affected by the tsunami," Ahern said.

As part of the reflection, 220 candles will be lit, each candle representing 1,000 lives lost, Ahern said.

Bagpipers will start the ceremony, during which Andrew Bodman, provost

and vice president for academic affairs, will lead the audience in a moment of silence and AS President Rachel Zommick will describe the upcoming tsunami remembrance events at Western, Ahern said.

Kandiko, a 20-year kayaking veteran, will present a slideshow on his tsunami experience. Kandiko said he was paddling off the coast of Thailand with

his wife and niece on Dec. 25 when they decided to take a break. Kandiko said he noticed the low tide,

which alarmed him since the tide was supposed to be high. With his scientific background, Kandiko said he came to the conclusion that a tsunami was coming. He said he shouted to his family to turn around and head to deeper water.

Kandiko said he and his family were able to make it to shore as the waves became smaller.

In addition to the events on Wednesday, university clubs and groups are making blue and white ribbons in support of the tsunami victims and victims of local disasters such as flooding. University Dining Services donated half of the cost of producing the ribbons to the AS, Ahern said.

"The ribbons are a campus-wide effort to symbolize the survivors and also the

'The ribbons are a campus-wide effort to symbolize the survivors and also the loss of life.'

ALANNA AHERN
Associated Students vice president for campus and community affairs

see TSUNAMI, page 5

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Media critic discusses downside to reality television

By MARK REIMERS
The Western Front

Jennifer Pozner, feminist media critic, and founder of Women In Media & News, a Brooklyn-based media-analysis group, gave a presentation titled "Decoding Reality TV's Twisted Fairy Tales" this past Thursday in Western's

Performing Arts Center Concert Hall.

Gabrielle Roesche, Western's Associated Student Productions social issues coordinator, said she thought the presentation and discussion session afterward were helpful to students.

"It's hard to fill a place like this, but we had about 100 people,"

Roesche said.

Pozner also conducted a workshop in the Fairhaven Auditorium this past Friday titled "Getting your Message Heard: Media Training for Students and Activists."

Pozner's Thursday presentation covered many of the well-known reality-TV shows that have become popular in recent years, including

"Joe Millionaire," "Average Joe" and "American Idol." She said that while many people think it is harmless entertainment, they should not take it lightly.

"I'm here to tell you that it is much more important and much more dangerous than fluff," Pozner said.

She said reality-TV shows are part of a much more dangerous movement against women's rights and present a twisted image of women in America.

"This kind of backlash against women's rights is not new," she said, "but this is the newest way it is being manifested in our culture."

Pozner said that while she was studying journalism and women's studies at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, she saw inconsistencies between the journalism principles she was learning and mainstream media programming she saw every day.

"I was seeing a whole lot of mistreatment of women, media, mainstream print and broadcast outlets alike," Pozner said.

Pozner said she decided then that being a media watchdog was more important than a career in journalism. In 2002, she founded Women In Media & News to advocate media reform.

Pozner said erroneous images about men and women are reinforced by reality and dating

shows. Women, she said, often are portrayed as dumb, desperate or conniving "gold-diggers" who only want men for their wealth. Men, on the other hand, are portrayed as disconnected and with no decency.

Pozner said the reasons for these trends are because media corporations and advertisers don't think anything else will be popular with the American public.

Pozner said the poor media content of the last five or six years is largely because of a "tidal wave" of media consolidation. Despite this, she said she is optimistic that many are adopting the mantra: "If you don't like the media, be the media."

"I've seen so many women and progressive people of all ethnicities and all ages and backgrounds really get involved in media organizing, media production and media advocacy," she said.

Western junior Aaron Speer said although he attended the lecture at the last minute, he was glad he did.

"Very fascinating — very interesting," he said. "It was well spent time, I think."

Roesche said she thought students who normally don't attend feminist activities would be interested in this kind of event.

"We just try to bring educational events to widen students' perspectives," Roesche said.



MARK REIMERS/The Western Front

Feminist media critic Jennifer Pozner leads a Jan. 21 activist media training workshop in Fairhaven Auditorium.

Western students to attend United Nations conference

By MELANIE VALM
The Western Front

Five Western students and 11 professors will visit Seattle this weekend for the International Conference on Unity and Diversity in Religion and Culture, a conference Western is co-sponsoring with eight other universities in the region.

The event focuses on psychological and philosophical issues at the core of global conflict. Nine universities in the Pacific Northwest also are organizing the event, including Western and the University of Washington, with Antioch University Seattle

being the official host.

UNESCO is a United Nations agency created to promote dialogue and international cooperation toward the goal of peace and respect for values and cultures. The Chair on Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, Their Specific Cultures and Interreligious Dialogue was created specifically to promote research, study and collaboration between diverse cultures and religions, involving science, art and philosophy, said Skye Burn, an associate member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Chair.

Burn, a graduate of Fairhaven College, is the event coordinator. Burn was responsible

for bringing the nine universities together for the conference, and said it is the first time these universities have cooperated on something together. The conference, eighth in a series presented by the UNESCO Chair, also is the first to take place in the United States and is the first time in which Western has had the opportunity to participate. The previous seven were in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Burn said the aim of the conference is to develop and encourage communication across cultures and to use this interaction to study issues underlying global conflict.

"There is a deficit of wisdom and intelligence in the world today, not a deficit

of information," Burn said.

Burn approached Fairhaven College professor Daniel Larner in the fall to recruit students and faculty to attend the conference.

Larner said he immediately was interested and presented the opportunity to a class he taught with an emphasis in world religion. Three of the five students attending the conference are from that class. While there was no real selection process to determine who could attend the event, Larner said it is formidable to commit to a three-day event at which participants must contribute work and

see CONFERENCE, page 5

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Conference: Many different religions are involved

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

pay some costs involved.

"The chance to talk about issues in a way we don't normally get to talk about in an extraordinary setting and with fascinating people from all over the world is amazing," Lerner said.

He said his thesis paper for the event centers around visions of peace and harmony as reflected in ancient traditions. His research focuses on passages from the Old Testament about the prophet Micah and two books from Homer's "Odyssey."

Western junior Jeremiah Holt is one of the students attending the conference.

Holt said he heard about the conference at the beginning of fall quarter and submitted an abstract for a paper to be presented and discussed at the event. Holt, who is studying international relations and Middle East studies at Fairhaven, said he is looking forward to meeting and conversing with all kinds of people.

Holt said his paper researches the

concepts of charity, revenge and equality as expressed in the Bible, the Torah and the Quran. In his abstract, Holt said he presents many questions for readers.

"I'm not sure of the answers to all these questions, but I just want to raise them," Holt said.

Western senior Kipp Trembley, a general studies major at Western, said he has a personal interest in the notion of unity and diversity in religious groups because he is a pagan practitioner.

"There is a certain fear involved when involved in a fringe movement," he said.

Trembley is a member of the Cedar Grove Druid Fellowship in Bellingham. He said Pagan Druidry is an earth-based faith and the fellowship focuses on services through eco-ministry, or environmental projects.

Trembley said he wrote his paper for the conference on a Druidic perspective of community. As a

Druid facing judgment from many people, Trembley said he has a vested interest in communication. He said he is looking forward to discussing many aspects of religion and culture at the conference.

Also attending the conference is Western senior Alana Dittrich and Western senior Andrew Haynes, and junior Jeffrey Reynolds said he hopes he will be accepted to attend with a late registration.

The UNESCO Chair conference, which will run from Thursday through Sunday, will feature music and ceremonies in addition to group dialogue,

Burn said. Western professor Marie Eaton will be performing a piece with the Juba Marimba band titled "Music Bridging Cultures." Instead of having typical lectures in which attendees present their papers and research, they will meet in smaller groups to encourage more personal dialogue about the studies.

'The chance to talk about issues ... in an extraordinary setting and with fascinating people from all over the world is amazing.'

DANIEL LARNER
Fairhaven College professor

Tsunami: Donations will be taken on Vendors Row and Red Square

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

loss of life," Ahern said.

The AS asked University clubs and groups to help make the ribbons in the attempt to reach a goal of 12,000 ribbons. The Residence Hall Association has made approximately 2,000 ribbons already, said Melinda Assink, national communication coordinator for the group.

"We are making ribbons to help remind people of the terrible tragedy and remind people to be grateful that we are in a position to help those in need," Assink said.

Beginning this week, donations

will be accepted for the ribbons on Vendors Row and in Red Square, Ahern said. No minimum donation is required, but donations of more than \$75 must be brought to the University Cashier's Office in Old Main 245. Seventy-five percent of the donations will be given to the American Red Cross for tsunami victims and the rest to the Mount Baker chapter of the American Red Cross, Ahern said.

All events on Wednesday are open to the public and are free of charge. Volunteers are needed for the day of remembrance — if interested, contact Sean Baird, AS fund-raiser director, at 650-7349.

The Western Front Online

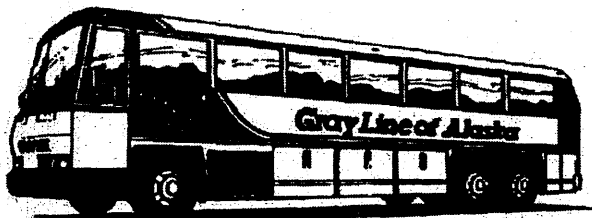
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Movie: 1997 Western graduate looks to NFL player to help fund movie project, promote at film festival

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Just Hustle," Bannick and Bernstein's longest film, is the story of a young detective named Johnny Mac, played by Bannick, who is hired by a waitress to investigate someone who has been stalking her. As Mac investigates further, he learns that the stalker is involved in a college gambling ring that is paying a college football player to make his team lose the National Championship game in exchange for the money, Bannick said.

To fund the film, Bannick turned to Olson, the starting left guard for the Titans and an old friend of Bannick's from their days in the University of Washington's theater school. Bannick needed \$15,000 to edit the film, which Olson was happy to supply, Bannick said.

"He talked to his financial advisor," Bannick said, "and he was told that it was the worst investment he could make, and that there was no way he could make his money back. But we're pals, so he did it anyway."

Olson may have had an ulterior motive, however. In exchange for the money, Olson was chosen to play the part of the college football player who agrees to throw the



Courtesy of Sage Bannick stars in "Just Hustle."

Western graduate Sage Bannick National Championship, he said. Olson acted in college and intends to become an actor after finishing his football career, he said.

He intends to help Bannick and Bernstein promote the film when it is shown in the Nashville Film Festival, Bernstein said.

The total cost of the movie exceeded \$100,000, most of which was borrowed, Bannick said. Much of the money went to advertise the film, he said.

"Just Hustle" was filmed in downtown Los Angeles in 2004, where Bannick and Bernstein lived while attending graduate school at the University of Southern

California. Because of a small budget, they were forced to film the movie during 40 consecutive sunsets, which gave them such good lighting they were able to film without artificial lighting.

"We shot the film just straight guerilla style," Bernstein said.

The film is not without its innovation. Bernstein filmed the detective aspect of the film in black and white, and the romantic storyline that develops between Mac and the waitress in color.

This is reminiscent of the French New Wave style of filming that "Just Hustle" is modeled after, he said.

Coffee: Closing of coffeeshop causes residents to look elsewhere

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"This is a coffee house where our coffee drinks and food comes from Bellingham," Fleming said. "I had my chances of going with Seattle coffee, but I wanted to stick with local producers — and that's what I'm most proud of."

Western sophomore Mallory Pilcher has been a barista at Stuart's for almost five months. She said she is more angry than sad to see this happen. She said that she will have to look for another job once Stuart's closes.

"Stuart's is a huge part of downtown Bellingham, and it will be so bizarre when it isn't Stuart's anymore," Pilcher said. "It has an artful atmosphere and definitely won't be the same."

Whatcom student James Davis, 33, a regular customer for six years, said Stuart's is a vital hub in Bellingham. Davis said that aside from being a friendly coffee house, its location away from local bars makes Stuart's an ideal place.

"I've met so many people at Stuart's who I'm good friends with now, and the suddenness of all this really sucks," Davis said.

Davis said Stuart's is like Bellingham's downtown living room. He hopes the new owner has intentions of keeping the new space as a coffee house similar to Stuart's.

Morley Perthou, 21, moved to Bellingham from Seattle and, despite coming to Stuart's for only six months, said he finds it more relaxing and laid back than coffee shops in downtown Seattle. Perthou, who goes to Stuart's at least once a day, said he will miss Tuesday jazz the most.

"Coffee shops in Seattle rarely have free live music, and that's what I liked so much about this place," Perthou said.

Fleming said he bought Stuart's from the previous owner for about \$19,000, and since the new owner didn't purchase the business, he will only need to pay the lease, leaving it up to him to open a new business.

Fleming, who is a father of three kids and husband to Maria Koplowitz, a stay-at-home mom, said Stuart's Coffee House kept his family financially stable and he will have to find another job to support his family.

"This is going to be hard," Fleming said. "But my family and I are trying to think positive."

Energy: Student based energy initiative receives positive feedback from board of trustees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Wynn said Western could use any leftover fees in additional efforts to promote renewable energy by spreading information about its use, but the initiative specifically states that the fee will go toward the purchase of renewable energy.

"This really is a student-based initiative, and we don't want to take it in a direction the students don't want to go," Wynn said.

Mohamedali and Wynn both said the initiative has received positive feedback from the board of trustees.

"We have reason to believe they will approve it, but they have asked poignant questions to make sure student funds are being allocated for a good cause," Wynn said.

If the initiative is approved, the administration will negotiate a contract with Puget Sound

Energy, Mohamedali said.

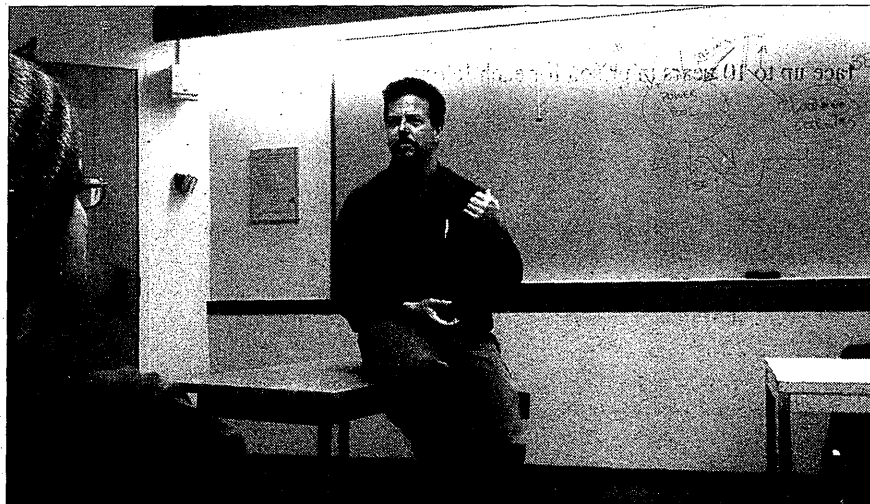
Western's Utilities Manager Thomas Thorp said Western probably will agree to a yearly contract with Puget Sound Energy.

"We want to decide some way to purchase all of the power students decided to tax themselves for," Thorp said.

Richardson said he talked to representatives of The Evergreen State College's campaign for renewable energy, which was inspired by Western's conversion to green energy.

Western junior Evan Malczyk, a member of Students for Renewable Energy, said he thinks the club should provide students with resources about renewable energy so they better understand the extra fee.

"I think it's really important that we make this information tangible to keep this issue alive on Western's campus," Malczyk said.



MOLLY JENSEN/The Western Front Tom Starrs, of the Bonneville Energy Foundation, explains renewable energy at a public forum Monday.

The Western Front Online

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FEATURES

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Strange days

Restaurant sells pizza with a bite

A restaurant in Rome was fined almost \$4,000 for selling a pizza with a human tooth baked into the crust.

An unidentified customer bit into the tooth in December 2000. He paid the bill and refused a complimentary dinner to patch things up. Five years later, he is taking legal action.

The pizzeria's defense lawyer, Massimiliano Manzo, said the charges were ludicrous.

"How is the owner of the pizzeria going to force employees to go to the dentist every day or strap a lid over their mouths?" he said.

The owner of the tooth was never identified and lawyers refused to discuss how it got into the pizza to begin with.

Former judge pumps up in court, receives three felony charges

A former state judge in Sapulpa, Okla., was charged with three felony counts of indecent exposure for allegedly using a sex aid called a penis pump in court.

Former Judge Donald Thompson, 58, pleaded not guilty; if convicted, he could face up to 10 years in prison for each felony count.

A court reporter who worked for Thompson and other witnesses said they saw Thompson use the pump in court last year.

Thompson stepped down in August and the state attorney general acted to remove him from the bench.

A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for March 22.

Real-life Shakespearean tragedy occurs in Italy

Italian media reported Saturday that a man in Padua, Italy, killed himself because his wife had gone into a coma — but she woke

up just hours after he died.

The 70-year-old man sat by his wife's bedside for nearly four months after she went into a heart-attack induced coma. He had given up hope and gassed himself in his garage.

His wife woke up hours later and asked for him, only to discover he had killed himself. Padua is just 40 miles from Verona, where Romeo killed himself when he thought Juliet had died.

Santa brings cocaine to France

French customs officers have seized a set of Christmas Santa Claus decorations made of cocaine.

The smiling Santa Clauses, complete with long white beards and red coats, were found in a van crossing the border from Spain into France on Jan. 13, France's Journal du Dimanche reported Sunday.

The Santas, which contained more than 11 pounds of cocaine, are thought to have been made in Venezuela, French customs officers said.

Officers said they had previously intercepted shirt buttons, coffee beans and toys made of cocaine. They even found one person with a plaster leg cast made of cocaine.

Furry pets become school demonstration

A 16-year-old Ledgemont High School student in Thompson, Ohio, skinned and cooked a guinea pig and a rabbit Jan. 19 as a demonstration in his living-skills class.

He may face animal cruelty charges, a Geauga County Humane Society officer Sarah Westman said.

The students were asked to prepare a meal of their choice for the class that day, principal Beto Gage said. The incident disturbed some students and their parents, who complained to the Thompson Township Police Department and the Geauga Humane Society.

Record-setting baby tips Brazilian scales

A baby born Jan. 18 in Brazil weighed in at 16 pounds, 11 ounces and was the largest baby ever born at Albert Sabin Maternity Hospital in Salvador, which is 900 miles northeast of São Paulo.

Doctors said the mother, Francisca dos Santos Ramos, was diabetic, which can cause the delivery of larger babies.

Santos Ramos is only 5 feet 4 inches and of average weight. The mother and baby are doing well, doctors said.

Man removes manhood in home surgery

A 50-year-old Reno man was hospitalized after he castrated himself to lower his libido.

The man, whose name was not released, called 911 at about 1:30 a.m. Monday because he could not stop the bleeding from his self-castration operation, police said.

Reno police and medics responded to the man's home and took him to the hospital.

Police said hospital officials confirmed that the man had successfully castrated himself.

"The man obviously needs some sort of counseling," Reno police Lt. Ron Donnelly told the Reno Gazette-Journal.

Man locks himself in pizzeria for beer binge

A 32-year-old man in Prague, Czech Republic, locked himself in a pizzeria overnight on Jan. 19 in order to have free access to the beer.

After the restaurant staff left, the man broke into a cooling box containing a keg, disconnected the pipes leading to the tap and put them in his mouth.

Cleaners found the man intoxicated and on the floor the next morning.

He will have to pay for the beer he drank,

and he faces up to a year in prison or a fine of \$350 for the damage caused to the cooling box, police spokesman Vit Cvrcek said.

Florida restaurant employee uses nose to call police

A restaurant employee at Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q in Pensacola, Fla., used his nose to dial 911 after burglars tied him up and left him early Wednesday.

The suspects, who used plastic zip ties to bind the employee, are still at large, said Sheriff's Capt. Joel Mooneyham. They escaped with an undisclosed amount of money.

Batteries don't come with stolen 'penises'

Police searched Friday for a thief who made off with three "male appendages" from a Vancouver, B.C.-area sex-toy store, and think he now may be looking for batteries.

A clerk discovered the man stuffing the fake body parts in his clothes and asked if he was going to need batteries for the objects, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in a news release.

The man calmly said "no" and then panicked and fled, running out of the store with the three objects — minus batteries — according to the police statement.

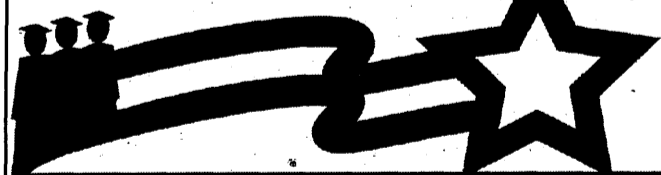
Fake baby gets reporter fired

A Romanian tabloid says it has fired a reporter for making up a story about a couple who named their son Yahoo as a sign of gratitude for meeting over the Internet.

Earlier this month, Bucharest daily Libertatea published a story saying two Romanians had named their baby Yahoo and printed a picture of his birth certificate. The news was widely picked up on the Internet.

Compiled by Amanda Raphael

American Democracy Project



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BUILDING FOR BAJA

BY JENAE NORMAN
The Western Front

With safety goggles on, a buzz of rock music playing over the noise of machinery and metal hand tools clanking, three Western students spend their Saturday afternoon in a place where most other students wouldn't — the classroom.

No professor is present in this classroom, neither are textbooks to read nor assigned homework. For those who want to register, this class is zero credits and has only one requirement — students must live, breathe, eat and sleep here.

It may seem like too much of a requirement for no credits, but for 15 Western students, this classroom is where their passion is. These 15 students constitute Western's Mini Baja Racing Team. They spend nearly 40 extracurricular hours a week in the classroom and Vehicle Research Institute garage designing and building a Mini Baja vehicle to race in the intercollegiate Society of Automotive Engineers Mini Baja 100 competition this June in Green Valley, Ariz., approximately 20 miles south of Tucson.

The team members know that in a short time they will be trading their safety goggles for safety helmets. The hum of the radio will be traded for the rumble of their engine. They'll put down their metal tools and grasp on to the steering wheel, and instead of spending Saturday in class, they will be racing down the track.

"This is a passion," said Western senior Jason Putnam, a team member. "You like playing with stuff. You start with Legos and this is where you go from there."

The Mini Baja car is a single-seat, all-terrain off-road vehicle with a 10-horsepower engine. It looks like a cross between a glorified go-kart and a dune buggy. Western's car, named Viking 39, is in its development stage. The team hopes to have the car completed by the end of spring break.

Western senior Mark Short designed the car's chassis, which is the structure or frame, and its suspension with computer programs the engineering industry uses. Viking 39 was designed after a combination of past cars.

"There are different approaches to car building and design," said Western senior and team member Sean Nelson. "Scrapping a design and starting over is one way, but we like to build on what we've learned in the past and what works. If something's worked, then we use it. If it didn't, then we improve it until it does work."

Nelson said the suspension is something that worked last year, so the team is reinstating it. The team is redesigning ergonomics and quality for Viking 39.

The total cost of the car will be approximately \$7,000, Nelson said. All funding sources for the car must be obtained by efforts from team members.

"I've been really picky, kind of anal-retentive, about quality and fit and how things go together," Nelson said. "I've told people who have finished things to go and redo them instead of saying, 'Oh, that's good enough.'"

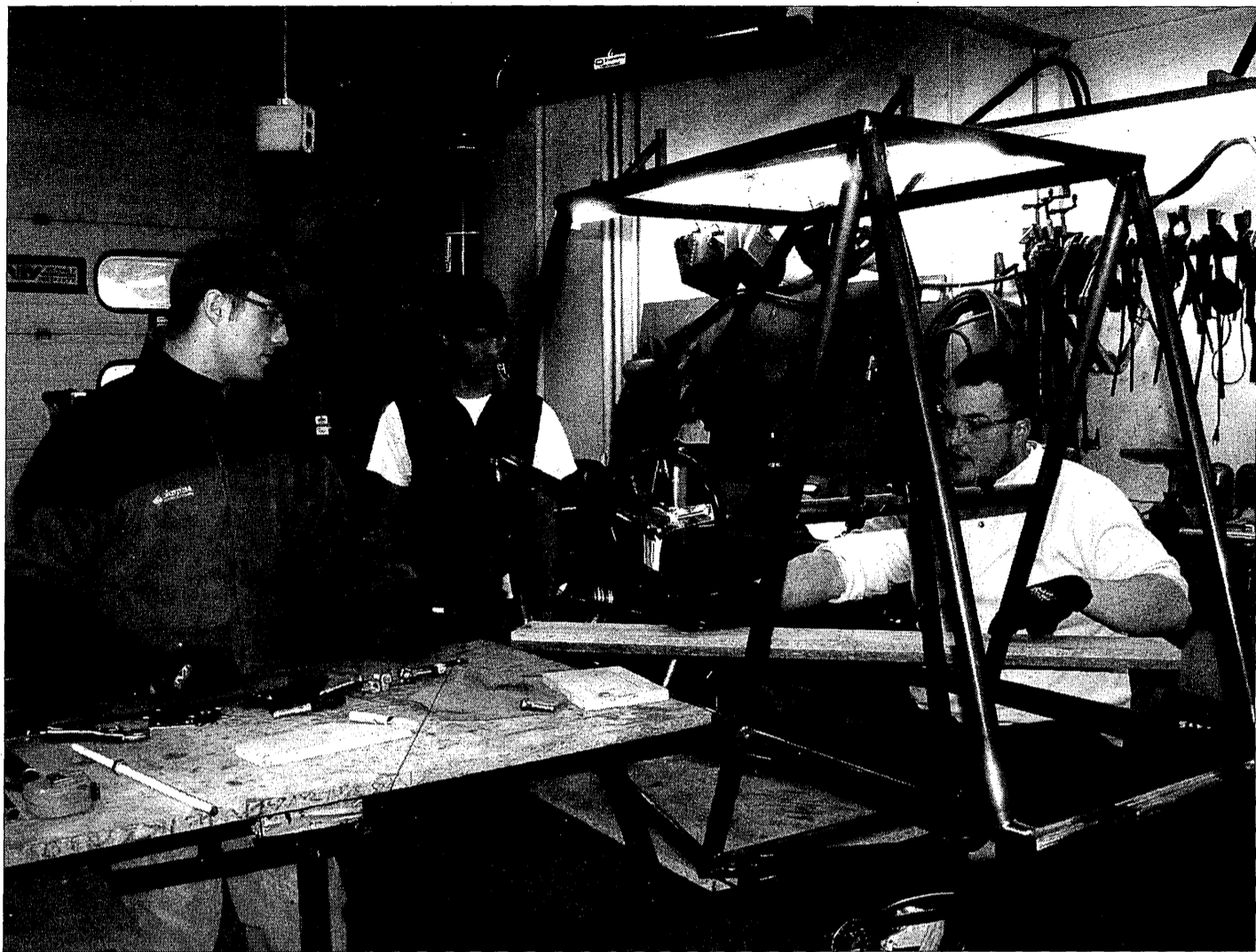
This year, the team has created a jig, or a guide tool, to make sure everything fits together, which hasn't been done in years past.

"It's usually a 'hold it up and weld it' kind of thing," Short said.

Nelson said holding parts up for welding is a "redneck" way to do things.

"But now we're doing it how it would be manufactured in the real world," Nelson said.

Putnam used a 3-D Computer Aided



Western seniors (left to right) Jason Putnam, Cody Hunt and Mark Short are part of Western's SAE Mini Baja Racing Team. They hope to finish in the top 10 of the SAE Mini Baja 100 June 1-4.

Drafting program to do animation and simulation so the team can see on the computer how the car moves and reacts to different terrain.

"We're going to understand what the car's going to do and how everything goes together," Nelson said. "It's easier to do it in a 3-D environment, rather than building something and then realizing it's not going to work."

Western's facilities are advanced. The Vehicle Research Institute is a unique program that provides a multi million-dollar facility to Western students and the team, Nelson said.

"No other team makes all these parts like we do," Nelson said. "No one else has a shop like the Western team does. Other teams have to do this stuff in a buddy's garage or in facilities a fraction of this size."

The team labeled Western senior Cody Hunt as the team's exceptional machinist because of his skill for working with the machines to create parts.

All of the car's parts begin as raw material, such as a block of aluminum.

"We've made engines, shocks, steering wheels, everything but tires," Short said.

The parts are designed and cut after a code is written, which is the machine path where the cutter goes to cut away metal to result in an end part.

"A lot of the stuff we do for the car prepares us for class, and a lot of the stuff we do in class prepares us for what we do to the car," Nelson said.

Past team members also pass down their knowledge to the team, Nelson said.

"There's an absurd amount of time spent here, but you learn a ton just being here," Putnam said.

The team, however, doesn't have any manuals to instruct them on where to start or

how to build a car, Short said.

"When I fit this car together from a big stick of metal tube, I had never fit stuff together. It's a lot of trial and error," Short said. "There is a lot of head scratching that goes on. We'll sit and literally stare at the car until an answer comes to us."

Learning the programs to design the car and making sure the creation matches the design are challenges the team members said they have to work through.

"The whole car is designed in a 3-D space on the computer," Nelson said. "But when you come out here, things change. Things don't fit. You can design things in the computer that don't really work."

The car's chassis has been designed and put together, which allows the team to see the shape of the car.

"The other day we all got excited when the brackets were put on," Short said. "It all kind of went together in a great fury, and now it kind of looks like a car."

The team plans to have the car completed by the end of spring break.

The team then can practice once the car is finished, before they head off to the race.

"The car needs to be driven," Nelson said. "We need to break things on it and know what's going to fail. We've built things to what we think is the best, but we have to go out and see if that's true by testing. Hopefully nothing will break and we won't have to fix anything, but that's never the case."

Part of the race consists of static events in which teams present a design packet and cost reports to explain design decisions and cost decisions to judges. Teams also must create a commercial and a design presentation for the judges to view.

"These are judged by industry professionals, bigwigs, guys that work for Polaris, Honda

Motor Sports, Briggs and Stratton, — those big guys," Nelson said.

According to the 2005 Mini Baja competition rule book, each team is competing to have its design accepted for manufacture by a fictitious firm. Also, the static event contains a rigorous safety inspection, in which cars must meet safety requirements found in the 82-page rule book.

"There's a lot of safety specifications," Hunt said. "Eighty percent of the cars don't make it through the first inspection and you have to take your car out to the parking lot and work on it."

During the second day of the race, teams participate in dynamic events that test individual systems or features of their cars, Hunt said. Dynamic events include a rock crawl, a hill climb and events that test braking, acceleration and maneuverability.

Worth half of all obtainable points is just finishing the endurance race on the last day. The race usually is 30 miles long, but in honor of the 100th anniversary of SAE, the race will be 100 miles, Hunt said.

"Every single year for the past four years that we've gone, we've gotten better," Short said. "We place higher every year and 13th was our highest, so we're very much hoping our car will be in the top 10 this year."

Each team member will have a chance to drive in the races, because the endurance race will be 12 consecutive hours, Short said.

"Getting sponsors, and building the car is a good résumé," Short said. "These cars are sponsored through the community and the industry. It provides contact for us and a potential pool of employees for the sponsors. People donate their time and money, and it's very important to us."

Sponsors this year include the companies Beck/Arnley, Cycle Therapy, Drivelines Services and Collision Specialist, and private donors, Nelson said. Some team members, like Nelson, even donate out of their own pockets.

"It's a personal investment," Short said.

"This is a passion. You like playing with stuff. You start with Legos and this is where you go from there."

JASON PUTNAM
Western senior and Mini Baja
Racing Team member

With a little help from some friends

Western students find time to volunteer in Bellingham

BY TAYLOR WILLIAMS
The Western Front



TAYLOR WILLIAMS/The Western Front

Western freshman Alex Lindbloom digs up blackberry roots in the Outback Farm as part of the LEAD work party which volunteers every Saturday.

Many charitable organizations in Bellingham are in need of volunteers, and Western students are taking up the challenge.

"There are so many organizations (students) can choose from," said Christy Bell, the volunteer program director for the Whatcom Volunteer Center.

Bell, who works with Western student volunteers, said nonprofit organizations are so numerous that anyone's interests can be accommodated.

The opportunities range from working with animals to helping at food banks, Bell said.

Soup's On! a program that feeds those in financial distress or in need of community support, is popular among Western student volunteers, Soup's On! director Victoria Bash said.

"At times, students comprise most of our volunteers," Bash said.

During the past few years, Western students have volunteered at Soup's On! with a stream of help that only lags when school is not in session, Bash said.

Volunteering can give students a more in-depth look at what is happening in their community, she said.

"They get to see a part of life they don't normally get to see, and they help us out (too)," she said.

Western sophomore Sara Dittmer started volunteering for Lighthouse Mission her freshmen year. She said she volunteers with a group from the Shalom Center, a Western center at which various Christian and Jewish groups gather.

At the mission, they prepare meals and serve them to the residents of the mission, the staff, volunteers and anyone who needs a meal.

"We are all equal," Dittmer said.

Dittmer said she prefers to spend a couple evenings out of a month with Lighthouse Mission.

Western senior Kristine Salber said she prefers to volunteer continuously at Lighthouse Mission instead of bouncing around to many different organizations.

"You come and see the same faces and establish relationships with the people who work here," Salber said.

Western junior Shannon Hickey, who prefers to volunteer where she sees some of the same people each week, agreed.

"I think my favorite part is when you are driving around town and you are like, hey, I know him," Hickey said.

Hickey said she has been volunteering at the mission on and off for more than two years.

Closer to campus, Western's Outback Farm, located on the southeast corner of Fairhaven College, is a protected wetland where students can volunteer.

LEAD (Learning, Environment, Action, Discovery) work parties coordinated by Huxley College of the Environment volunteer on the farm, LEAD Coordinator Mark Tomkiewicz said.

At the Outback, students preserve the wetland by uprooting intrusive plants and reintroducing native wetland plants, Tomkiewicz said.

Western sophomore Terra Fine, who is new to Western and Bellingham this quarter, volunteers with LEAD.

"You can find (opportunities) even if you aren't looking," she said.

While the opportunities are in the community, many students encounter difficulties getting involved because of their time commitments.

Making a long term commitment is difficult, Western sophomore Erin Levine said. This is why a one-weekend commitment such as volunteering at the Outback works well.

Taking the extra step to talk to a coordinator or pick up a pamphlet is the hardest part of volunteering, said Western sophomore Emily Freece, a volunteer with LEAD.

Western students also can cultivate plants for personal use at the Outback gardens. These horticulture projects give the Outback a continuous stream of volunteers.

"People who want to garden, come out and get a garden," Tomkiewicz said. "It's not just a Fairhaven thing — everyone is welcome."

SPORTS

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COMPETING WITH CANINE COMPANIONS

By LAUREN ALLAIN
The Western Front

In a suburban town such as Bellingham, some people may be unaware of a sport that is widespread in Alaska, Michigan, Minnesota and Maine — dog-sled racing, commonly referred to as mushing.

As an Alaska native, Western junior Kaci Radcliffe, 20, said she became involved with mushing in the fourth grade. It has been a part of her life ever since, she said.

Radcliffe grew up in Wasilla, Alaska, a town approximately 4 miles northeast of Anchorage, which is the starting point of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The 1,049-mile annual race begins the last week of February or the first week of March, depending on the snow conditions, she said.

The race starts in Anchorage and travels to Nome, Alaska, and takes seven to 10 days to complete.

"It's a huge thing," said Western sophomore Karisa Powers, also an Alaska native. "Everyone goes to Anchorage for the ceremonial start. They bring in truckloads of snow to put on the main roadway, and everyone is decked out in animal fur."

Aside from the glamorous start,



CHRIS HUBER/The Western Front
Pilot and Spitfire play-fight while owner Jim Malin prepares the group for a practice run in Glacier.

mushing is not as easy as it may appear, Radcliffe said.

"It's a pretty badass sport," Radcliffe said. "You have to be pretty tough. You're in negative 20- to negative 30-degree weather and

you go days without any human contact."

In long races such as the Iditarod, mushers rely heavily on their dogs, said Jim Malin, a 43-year-old Bellingham resident and

competitive musher.

"Your life might depend on their abilities," he said. "If you get lost, the dogs will find their way back. I may think I'm right, but nine times out of 10 the dogs are."

No animal cruelty is involved with mushing — a common assumption of the sport, Radcliffe said.

"The dogs love to pull," she said. "They get so crazy and excited when the musher goes to get them. It's really in their blood. It's like a big walk for them."

Race officials ensure that every dog is treated humanely. Each dog must meet numerous veterinary qualifications in order to race, Radcliffe said.

"The Iditarod gives an award to the most humane musher," she said.

If in the rare case a dog dies during a race, the team is automatically removed from the competition. Injured dogs are not allowed to race and must be replaced immediately, Radcliffe said. Most races require all dogs to wear booties to protect their paws from ice forming between their toes.

Long races also have mandatory checkpoints where mushers and dogs rest. Even if mushers are rested, they wait until the dogs are ready to race again, too, Radcliffe said.

"It's typical to have about four see MUSHING, page 13

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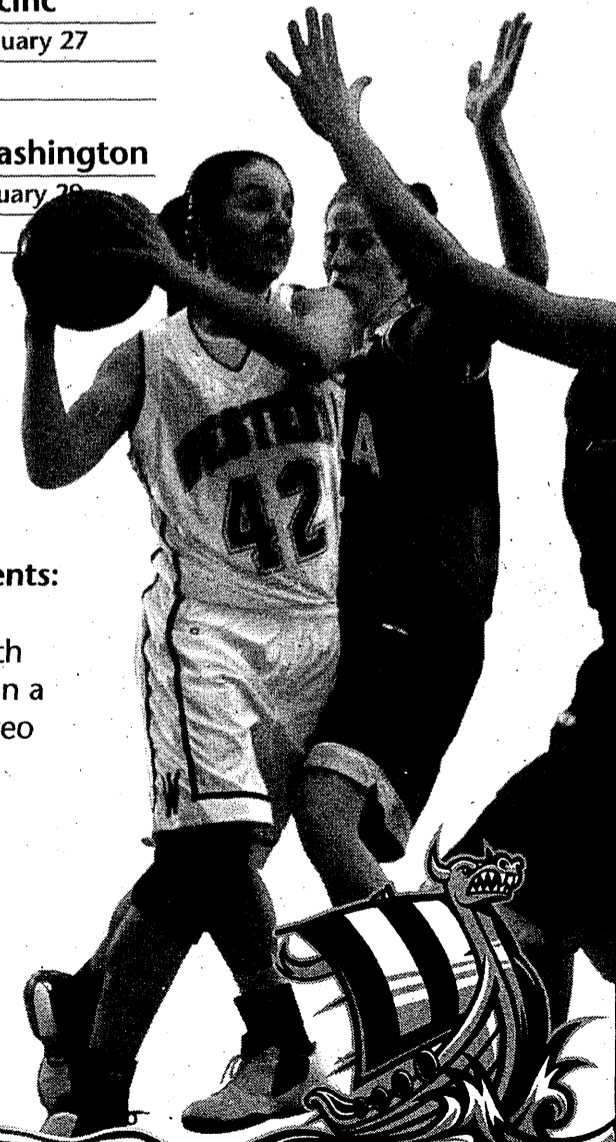
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Western fencing club armors up for competition

BY PETER JENSEN
The Western Front

For as long as he can remember, Western junior Colin Duffy said he has been obsessed with swords, a product of watching too many Three Musketeers movies.

So it seemed natural, he said, when he first picked up a sword six years ago and fought with it in real life as a fencer.

Duffy, the coach and president of Western's Fencing Club, is not the only student with a passion for swords.

After having only eight members last year, the club gained 37 new men and women this year, he said.

"I see this club as an opportunity," he said. "There's a lot of interest here on campus, and we'll try to train new people and establish this club as one of the few collegiate fencing clubs in this state."

While Duffy and the other returning members cannot explain why the turnout was so high, they are not surprised fencing would appeal to so many people.

One of the best aspects of fencing is anyone can enjoy it said Western sophomore and returning member Joe Kennedy.

"A fat, 40-year-old man can fence and still have fun," Kennedy said.

Although the club has grown, the members are largely inexperienced, Duffy said. He said a majority of

members had never fenced before joining; in some cases the fencers are too unseasoned to compete against other schools, he said.

Duffy said he hopes the club will begin competing in tournaments against other schools by the end of the quarter.

Since most of their effort goes toward practicing rather than tournaments, their fan support suffers accordingly, Kennedy said.

"We have zero fan support," Kennedy said. "But fencing is not really a spectator sport. It moves too fast for someone who doesn't know what is going on."

Fencing is foremost a mental sport, said Western freshman Mary Kate Goodman, a member who just started fencing this year.

At the start of a match, two fencers stand facing each other with their plastic-tipped swords — called foils — raised, she said.

The fencers then try to touch the other's torso area with the tip of their swords, which counts as one point.

The first fencer to score five points — or fifteen, depending on the match — wins.

The equipment includes a mask, a 35-inch-long metal foil, a white fencing jacket and a metallic lamé, which is a vest that electronically registers points the fencers score.

"It's like a physical game of chess," Duffy said. "You have to have quick wit in order to analyze



AMANDA WOOLLEY/The Western Front

Fencing club president and Western junior Colin Duffy and junior King-Yau Li practice lunging techniques at a recent practice in Carver gym.

your opponent's moves and stay two steps ahead. Good footwork and blade work are musts, too."

But these things cannot make up for inexperience, he said. It is up to Duffy, with his six years' experience, to teach club members the necessary techniques — and

up to the students to learn them, Goodman said.

"It's easy to get frustrated with yourself if you don't get the techniques at first," Goodman said. "But I think it's good to learn with other beginners. And being a freshman, it's a good chance to

meet people."

Members of the fencing club are finding that the trick to successful fencing is simple, Western sophomore Dan Smolinsky said.

"Fencing is really just about hitting somebody with a sword," he said.

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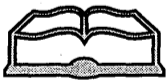
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Vikings defeat Seawolves before a crowd of more than 2,000

By ADAM RUDNICK
The Western Front

Six Western players each scored in double digits as the Vikings held off Alaska Anchorage Saturday in front of more than 2,000 fans. Western, which won the game 102-92, was 5-1 when scoring 100 points or more this year, and the team improved to 13-3 overall, 5-2 in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

Western junior guard Ryan Diggs led the Vikings' high-powered offense with a game-high 27 points on 7-11 shooting. He also connected on 9-10 from the free-throw stripe.

Diggs said he made a conscious effort to drive the ball to the basket in the second half, in which he scored 17 of his points.

"I just felt like I really needed to take it to the rack," Diggs said. "I know if my team wants to be successful, I need to go to the rack. It just opens so much stuff up."

After he was hit in the face on a foul by Anchorage senior guard Marcus Robinson, Diggs' offense and defense led Western in the second half, Western senior forward Craig Roosendaal said.

"When Diggs gets fired up on

defense and everything, when he gets a little bit ticked off, he can do some good things," said Roosendaal, who scored 14 points off the bench. "He came out with a fire and took (the second half) over."

Anchorage trailed 50-39 at halftime but clawed its way to within four points in the middle of the second half on a 3-pointer by Anchorage senior guard Mark Drake, making the score 71-67.

Western then went on a 14-6 run, capped by two free throws from Western junior forward Tyler Amaya, to give the Vikings a 12-point lead, 85-73. Anchorage responded with a 14-7 run and, with 2:30 left in the game, the Seawolves pulled within five points at 92-87.

A 3-point play by Diggs, followed by two free throws from Western junior guard Kyle Jackson, put Western up by eight with one minute remaining. An Amaya two-hand dunk with 40 seconds left confirmed the victory for Western.

Jackson said the Vikings had a difficult time getting out and defending Anchorage from the three-point line in the second half.

"I think a team like Anchorage is tough to guard because they have

several guys who can really shoot it, and if they heat up, it can be tough," Jackson said. "You have to trade threes for twos sometimes."

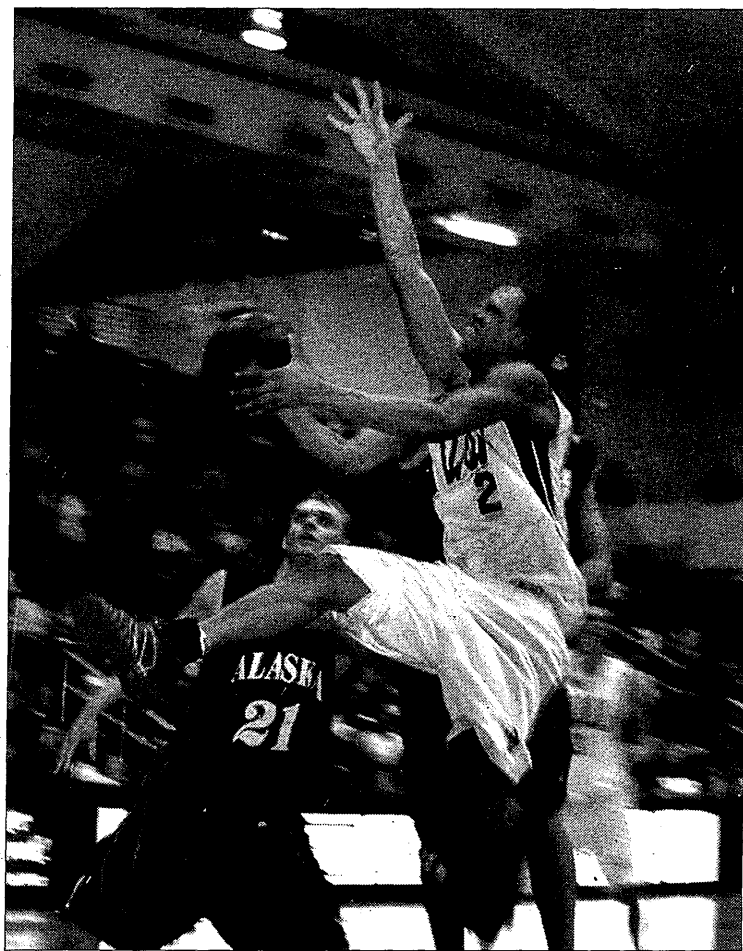
Diggs also said poor perimeter defense hurt Western throughout the game.

"We really tried to take the (3-pointer) away, but when they're hitting, it's kind of hard," Diggs said. "Backdoors, just little miscommunications — we need to try to clean those up this week."

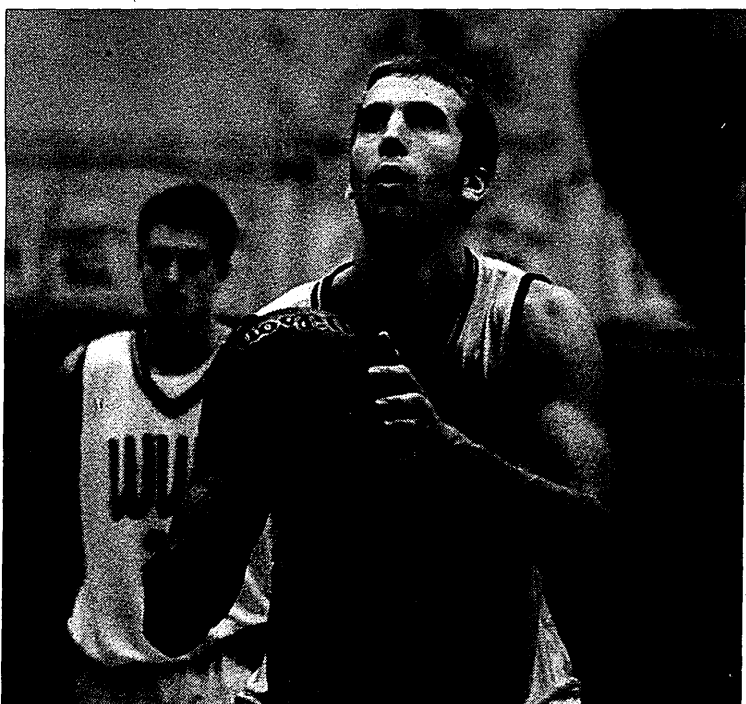
Besides a victory over Alaska Anchorage, Jackson received recognition for his 20 years of coaching at Western from former players and alumni.

"No, it was just fun," Jackson said on whether he was nervous coaching in front of his former players. "It was very special to me and I was very happy that many people would take the time to come and be a part of that. There was a great crowd tonight, and obviously a very entertaining basketball game."

Western will try to continue its winning ways at Humboldt State University (13-5, 3-4 GNAC) Thursday. Humboldt State is coming off a double overtime loss to Central Washington University on Jan. 22.



AMANDA WOOLLEY/The Western Front
Western junior guard Ryan Diggs shoots a layup in Saturday's game against University of Alaska Anchorage in Carver gym. Western won 102-92.



Courtesy of Chris Taylor

Western junior center Tyler MacMullen concentrates as he shoots one of his 23 free throws Saturday night against the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

Game notes

- Western junior guard Grant Dykstra passed the 1,000 point mark Saturday. According to the athletic department, Dykstra is only the 19th player in Western's history to do so.

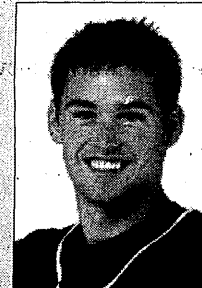
- Six Western players scored in double digits: Diggs, 27 (7-11 shooting, 4-6 3-pointers), MacMullen, 16 (7-13 shooting, 5 rebounds), Dykstra, 15 (8 assists, no turnovers), Roosendaal, 14 (6-10 shooting), Jackson, 14 (4-6 shooting, 6 assists) and Amaya, 13 (14 rebounds).

- Western hit 12 3-pointers.

- Western is 9-2 this year when shooting eight or more 3-pointers.

- Diggs was named Great Northwest Athletic Conference Co-Player of the Week for Jan. 16-22.

- The Western men were ranked No. 4 in the West Region ratings this past week and are No. 2 in the GNAC standings at 5-2.




Courtesy of Western athletic department

Grant Dykstra

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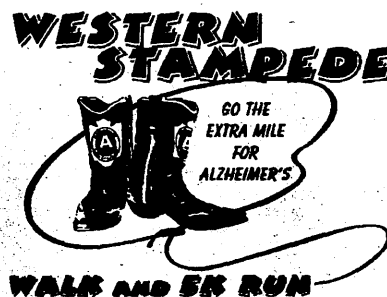
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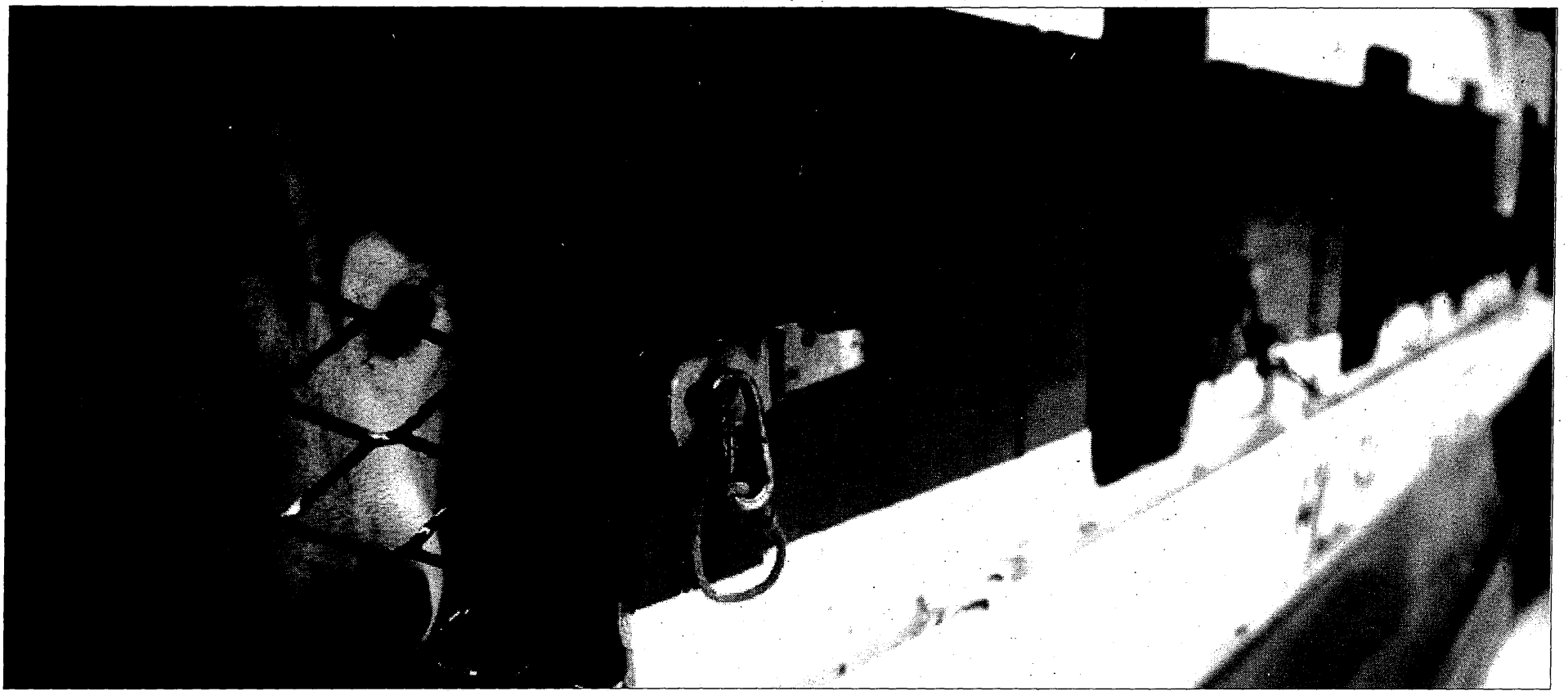
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CHRIS HUBER/The Western Front

One of Jim Malin's sled-dogs, Pilot, waits patiently to be released from its kennel in preparation for a 24-mile practice run in Glacier Jan. 14.

Mushing: A perfect combination of training hard, enjoying outdoors, working with animals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Mushing sleds are built to allow a large area for supplies, such as food for both the musher and the dogs and emergency supplies, Radcliffe said. The musher stands at the back of the sled on runners. The dogs, ranging from only one in a short race to up to 12 on long races, are harnessed in front of the sled in pairs, she said.

"The dogs only pull the musher's full weight when they have to," Radcliffe said. "(Mushers) normally put one foot on the runner and push off with the other."

The dogs are the main athletes, but the musher is an athlete, coach and trainer, Malin said. Mushing is not a sport with the human acting as the master and the dogs simply obeying what the human instructs them to do, he said.

"You can't push a rope," Radcliffe said. "They have to be willing to run for you."

Mushing teams have specified "lead" dogs that are exceptionally good at taking commands, Malin

said. The lead dog is in the front of the pack and handles obstacles, such as snowmobiles and skiers, he said.

"There really is an art to it," Radcliffe said. "You have to know what personality will make a good lead dog. There's a lot of prep and work put into the dogs that a lot of people don't see. Mushers spend all year getting the dogs ready."

Between the end of June through Labor Day weekend, Malin takes his dogs "backpacking."

"They all carry their own packs," Malin said. "They carry supplies — my supplies and their food."

The dogs and musher stay in shape in the summer by training with a cart rather than a sled, Malin said. He said he uses either a 180-pound cart or a 280-pound cart to keep the dogs accustomed to pulling heavy weight.

"It's fun to go mobile by dog team," Malin said.

Mushing did not always have a recreational connotation, Radcliffe said.

"Mushing used to be the only way to get from town to town in

Alaska," she said.

It no longer is used as a common form of transportation but is still a large aspect of some communities, Radcliffe said.

"I call it an obsession," Malin said. "It takes over your life."

The expenses for the sport also take over, he said. Food for the dogs alone is expensive — a racing dog eats between 8,000 and 10,000 calories per day, he said.

"I get my paycheck and I take it to the dogs," Malin said. "It's as if there's a paw print endorsing it — I just hand it over."

Malin is considering a trip to Russia to race in the Kamchadal 2005 International Sled Dog Race, a 220-mile event. It offers some of the most difficult terrain, encircling five mountains, he said.

"It would probably cost \$7,500 to \$8,000 for the whole trip," he said. "But normally I spend about \$4,000 to \$5,000 per year on equipment, including dog food and veterinary expenses."

Malin owns 10 full-grown racing huskies and seven husky puppies that all reside in a kennel on a quarter acre on Malin's property.

Malin will race six of his dogs at the end of January in Conconully, Wash., in the Snow Dog Super Mush, a 50-mile race.

Malin said the enjoyment he gets

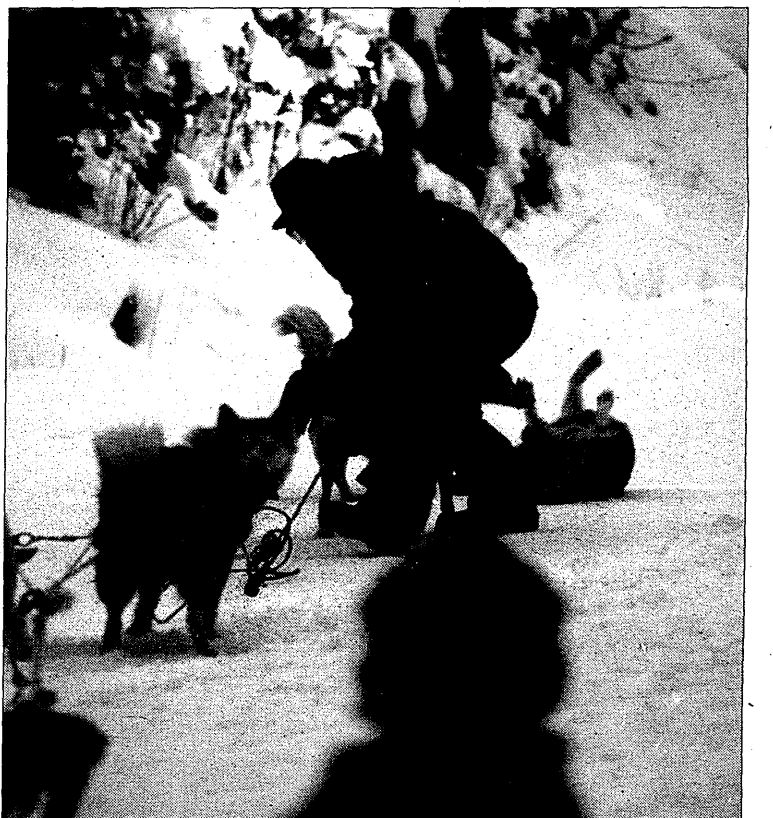
out of the sport is worth the costs involved.

"It's a combination of being outdoors, having a physical life and the enjoyment of being with and working with animals," he said.

Radcliffe no longer is involved

in mushing since she has moved to Bellingham for school, but she suggests anyone who visits Alaska go mushing.

"It's part of the local culture," she said. "It's a celebration of the fact that humans and dog teams can overcome obstacles."



CHRIS HUBER/The Western Front

Jim Malin lines his dogs up for a practice run in Glacier Jan. 14.

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Frontline

No Name-Calling Week is ineffective at best

Children, especially those of middle-school age, can be volatile. With a naive and often callous disregard for the feelings of their schoolmates, many children insult one another with derogatory put-downs and slurs on the playground and in the halls. As anyone who has been the target of such bullying knows, it hurts.

This week, however, thousands of children at hundreds of schools across America, including two schools on Whidbey Island, are banding together to try to stop name-calling.

And when the week is over, they'll have failed miserably.

The National No Name-Calling Week Coalition — brought together by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing — intends to stop name-calling in schools. To do this, the group says it hopes to provide schools with the tools and stimulus necessary to begin discussions about how to eliminate bullying, according to the coalition's Web site.

The backers of this project, unfortunately, are trying to achieve their goals in the wrong manner. They expect to end bullying by lecturing students about how badly such behavior can damage their peers.

But there's another way — it's called discipline. While educators are trying to figure out why children aren't angels, they should be putting a stop to the problem of name-calling with punishment.

Instead of National No Name-Calling Week, the coalition could try sponsoring a National Consequences For Your Actions Week, or even a National Wait Until Your Father Gets Home Week.

By the time they're in junior high school, most children are fully aware that name-calling is a bad thing to do. According to an anti-bullying Web site created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, children pick on others because it makes them feel stronger, smarter or better than the other person. Children also might bully others to draw attention to themselves.

Sure, some children don't know when their words are hurting others. For them, this lesson might actually help.

Anything schools can do to eliminate hurtful behavior among students is a good thing. The idea behind this initiative — to train students to recognize their bad behavior and put a stop to it — is sound. But this program, the way it's set up, is a colossal waste of teaching time, money and resources.

Instead of blowing off standard curriculum to talk about name-calling, schools should focus on disallowing the behavior by adhering to strict disciplinary standards.

That won't stop the problem, of course, but it'll at least slow it, and teachers instead can concentrate on teaching reading, writing and arithmetic.

Frontlines are the opinion of The Western Front editorial board: Matthew Anderson, Lauren Miller, David Wray, Anastasia Tietje, Elana Bean, Amanda Woolley, Caleb Heeringa, Laura McVicker, Aaron Apple, Michael Murray, Krissy Gochmour, Tara Nelson, Nick Schmidt, Kenna Hodgson and Chris Huber.

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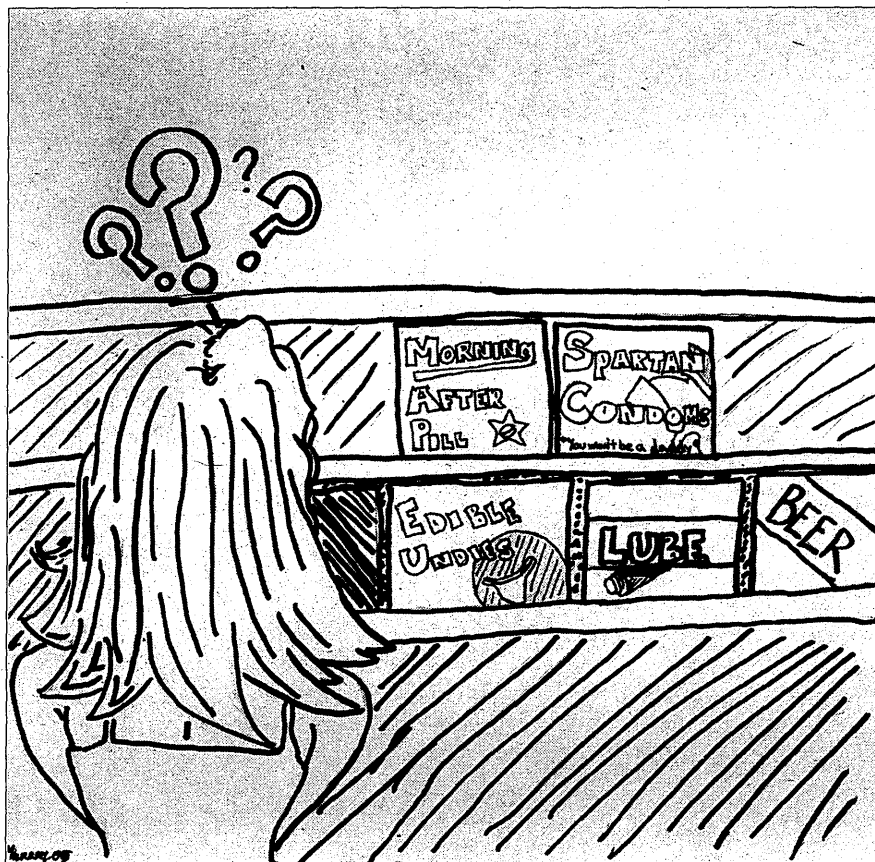
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And we quote:

"Is being an idiot like being high all the time?"

—Comedian Janeane Garofalo



SEE IN DEPTH, PAGE 15

Firing of CBS producer necessary



ANDREW SLEIGHTER

The firing of a CBS News producer and the resignation of three other producers was necessary if CBS wants to restore credibility to its newscasts and refute charges of political bias.

According to a Jan. 18 CBS News article, CBS News launched an internal investigation because of a news story that aired Sept. 8 presenting documents showing President George W. Bush had not reported for duty in the Texas Air National Guard.

The independent panel, led by former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh — an associate of Bush's father — and former Associated Press President Louis Boccardi, released a report on Jan. 5 that found efforts to verify the documents failed.

According to the report, the panel found questionable sources were responsible for a story going on the air that did not meet the standards for professionalism.

The news organization fired Mary Mapes, the producer of the National Guard story, and asked three other producers to resign from their positions, according to the CBS News article.

The documents — supposedly from the president's National Guard record and written on a typewriter in 1972 — were called into question after keystrokes were found that were inconsistent with a 1972 typewriter. The panel found that the letter 'i' was tucked up against the umbrella of the letter 'f,' something commonly produced by word processors but not by a 1972 typewriter.

After a 12-day defense of the story, CBS News conceded that it could not confirm the authenticity of the documents and asked Thornburgh and Boccardi to lead an independent investigation into the story, according to the panel's report.

The firing and resignations at CBS News should have been expected when a media hailstorm surrounded CBS news anchor and managing editor Dan Rather after the documents were exposed.

The panel's report found no evidence suggesting bias, just irresponsible reporting.

The irresponsible reporting the panel described,

see DOCUMENTS, page 16

Rocket fuel not good for humans



MELANIE VALM

Here's one for the conspiracy theorists: The U.S. government is trying to poison millions of the country's children through their drinking water.

It may not be a conspiracy, but some government agencies, such as the Department of Defense, are too cheap and too concerned about big business interests to put forth the effort to make the nation's drinking water supplies safe.

The human body can safely handle up to 0.0007 milligrams per kilogram of body weight daily of perchlorate — a chemical found in rocket fuel — according to a report released Jan. 10 by the National Academy of Sciences.

This is more than 20 times the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended dose of one part per billion (0.0003 milligrams per kilogram of body weight) established in 2002.

Publishing a recommendation 20 times greater than has been previously established is not only unethical but is also unsafe for humans.

According to a Jan. 11 article in The Seattle Times, the EPA found perchlorate in the water supplies of at least 35 states, including Washington, that is contaminating the drinking water for

more than 11 million people in those states. The chemical inhibits the proper function of the thyroid gland, according to the EPA's Web site. The effects are most drastic in children and can result in delayed physical and mental development.

The Bush administration has ordered NAS to review the EPA standard in 2003. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental action organization, the Pentagon tried to recommend a safe standard of 200 parts per billion.

The council said it has obtained documents through a series of Freedom of Information Act requests that show how groups — such as the Pentagon and the Department of Defense — have influenced the study to their benefit, according to its Web site.

With varying numbers being reported by different interest groups, states must determine a safe standard for their water supplies. And if the Department

see FUEL, page 16

In Depth: Should the morning-after pill be available over the counter?

Ban would hurt poor women the most



MOLLY JENSEN

Neglecting to wear a seat belt will not prevent car accident fatalities in car accidents. Likewise, restricting access to birth control will not necessarily prevent abortions.

On May 6, 2004, the Food and Drug Administration denied women access to an over-the-counter emergency contraception — known as Plan B — against the advice of its own medical experts and the nation's obstetricians and gynecologists, according to the Web site of the Center for Reproductive Rights, a non-profit organization.

If the Bush administration is interested in decreasing the number of abortions, it should have encouraged rather than prohibited the use of this form of birth control.

Limiting access to birth control will not lower the number of unwanted pregnancies, but instead likely will result in a health-care disaster — and will hurt women the most.

Emergency contraception lessens the number of unwanted pregnancies. If access to abortion is restricted, many women will still obtain abortions illegally, endangering their health — or even their lives.

The FDA rejected a May 2004 petition by reproductive rights groups that would have made the pill available over the counter partially on the basis that not enough information on how the contraceptive method would affect the sexual behavior of young women is available, according to the Center for Reproductive Rights' Web site.

Emergency contraception has been available for more than 25 years in the United States and has the potential to prevent 1.7 million unintended pregnancies and 800,000 abortions each year, according to the Web site for Planned Parenthood, an organization of reproductive health-care providers. It is most effective if used within 24 hours of unprotected sex when it can prevent ovulation or fertilization, as it is not capable of ending a pregnancy, according to the Planned Parenthood Web site.

Because the FDA has required a prescription to access emergency contraception, it has made it more difficult for women to prevent unintended pregnancies — many of which

will later be ended by abortion.

FDA officials said it wanted more evidence on the way emergency contraception affects the sexual behavior of teenagers before allowing it to be sold over the counter, according to CRR's Web site.

In France, the teen-pregnancy rate is four times lower than that in the United States. This is partially a result of the accessibility of emergency contraception, which is available to adolescents free of charge in pharmacies and schools, according to the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception's Web site.

In addition to preventing unwanted pregnancies and abortions, making emergency contraception more accessible would also make it less costly to obtain.

A study conducted in 2001 by the American Journal of Public Health found that emergency contraceptive pills obtained from a pharmacy rather than from a physician or a clinic resulted in an average \$48 reduction in cost to the patient.

If the FDA continues its policy, it will most likely hit women who occupy lower income brackets would be hit the hardest. In addition, women without health insurance would have to pay for costly doctor's visits out of their

'Those without health insurance would have to pay for costly doctor's visits out of their pockets.'

pockets. Those who oppose the sale of emergency contraception over the counter claim women will abuse its availability and use it as a regular birth-control method.

But anyone who has taken the pill will attest to its uncomfortable side effects, such as nausea and headaches — not to mention the often high cost of the pill.

In fact, three-fourths of a sample of 119 women who obtained emergency contraception at Planned Parenthood of New York City clinics said they were more likely to use methods other than the morning after pill for contraception, according to Planned Parenthood's Web site.

Emergency-contraceptive pills are safe to use without a physician's presence and effective when self-administered. In addition, the condition to be treated is self-diagnosable as part of a woman's right to privacy.

By disregarding the usual criteria and continuing to require a prescription to access emergency contraception, the FDA has displayed archaic reasoning and ignorance concerning the well-being of women.

Women deserve the ability to make timely and effective decisions concerning their own reproductive health, and the FDA needs to act in accordance.

Pill not a replacement for responsibility



LAUREN ALLAIN

The Food and Drug Administration should not allow the emergency contraception pill Plan B to be available over the counter to women of any age, because they could easily become overly reliant on it as a form of birth control.

Relying solely on a pill shows a lack of maturity. Individuals who are sexually active should take proper precautions before engaging in sex instead of waiting until the next morning.

If taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, the pill prohibits fertilization in two ways, said Dr. Emily Gibson, director of the Student Health Center. The pill changes the endometrium, the cell lining of the uterus, where the fertilized egg implants, causing the uterus to become inhospitable as well as changing, preventing or delaying ovulation cycles.

Plan B is available without a prescription in five states — including Washington — according to a Jan. 17 article on CNN's Web site. To obtain a pill in Washington state, a certified pharmacist is required to assess the case. The pharmacist also is required to explain how the pill works and the patient must fill out a medical history form said Lap Nguyen, a pharmacist at Fred Meyer.

Simply filling out a form and consulting with a pharmacist for 10 minutes, however, should not erase the lack of responsibility from the previous night.

If Plan B is made available over the counter, the message could be that women no longer need to be responsible for their body's ability to carry a child. Furthermore, it could encourage risky sexual behavior, said Wendy Wright, senior policy director for Concerned Women of America, a conservative Christian lobby group.

Having the morning-after pill and cough drops near each other in the drug store is likely to put even more pressure on women to be sexually active, because a woman could simply add it to her shopping list.

In addition, it could become an easy way for men to encourage women to have

unprotected sex, because they could just tell her to stop by Rite Aid in the morning.

Pressure for women to have sex already is strong and one only needs to turn on the television during prime time to see the objectification. Allowing women to purchase a convenient pill may only intensify the pressure to be a sex object.

The first attempt to make the pill available over the counter was proposed to the FDA in April 2003, but the FDA rejected it because of a lack of evidence proving it was safe, according to the Jan. 17 CNN article. Now the pill's manufacturer, Barr Laboratories, has re-applied for over-the-counter status, but the FDA insists on maintaining the requirement that the pharmacist must check the patient's age, according to the article.

But even with this requirement, some underage women are still able to obtain the pill. One study surveyed 585 women who used the pill, said Dr. Steven Galson, acting director for the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. Of those 585, 29 were 14 to 16 years old. None was younger than 14.

Supporters of making the pill available over the counter, such as Planned Parenthood, suggest that it would decrease overall abortion rates.

A study by the Journal of the American Medical Association, however, showed no decrease in the number of abortions in states where the pill is available over the counter, according to the Concerned Women of

'(The pill) could become an easy way for men to encourage women into having sex because they could just tell her to stop by Rite Aid in the morning.'

America's Web site.

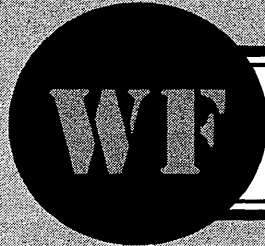
Instead, the study showed an increase in the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases, according to the association's Web site.

Regardless, several other alternatives to abortions exist. The birth-control pill, for example, is approximately 98 percent effective, Gibson said.

In addition, the use of birth control pills combined with the use of a condom make the chances of pregnancy slim to none.

If a condom breaks, if a birth control pill is forgotten or if a woman is raped, then the pill should be acceptable for a woman to use. But allowing it in stores with the same availability as advil is not acceptable.

Plan B should be not available over the counter to women of any age. Getting a prescription for the pill is necessary to ensure the safety of young women and for keeping Americans practicing safe sex.



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Documents: CBS right to fire Mapes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

however, sounds a lot like bias. While this may be possible, Rather and Mapes worked on the story for five years, according to the report.

This is slightly disconcerting considering that after five years, this story aired just before the 2004 presidential election.

Rather and Mapes began working on the National Guard story in 1999, according to the report. After deciding they did not have enough information, they shelved the story until 2004. This means the reporters sat on the story for three years until President Bush was up for possible re-election.

Second, the panel confirmed that Mapes made a phone call to Sen. John Kerry's campaign headquarters to persuade sources there to produce more of the incriminating documents.

The panel found this call entirely improper, but still did not find bias. It is hard to

defend against bias when you are asking Kerry for assistance in a story that would damage the reputation of President Bush.

Finally, the panel's report found that Mapes wanted the story to be right. Obviously, she had her career and reputation to worry about, and nobody would want to work on a story for five years and find out it was a wildly inaccurate Bush-bashing story chase. Nobody at CBS News, however, should sacrifice accuracy to gain a story — no matter how big the story is.

Whether a political agenda was involved or not, the National Guard story has given several rounds of ammunition to conservatives who have long since accused the media of having a liberal bias.

The firing of Mapes and resignation of other producers is a good start, but now CBS must demonstrate that its other employees value accuracy in reporting more than wants of their senior producers.

Fuel: Academy's ruling 20 times higher than EPA's

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

of Defense and the White House have any say, that standard probably will be set pretty high, as their suggestion of a 200 parts per billion standard demonstrates. States instead should follow the lead of Massachusetts, which has a standard of one part per billion, according to the Web site of the Environmental Working Group, an organization that conducts environmental investigations.

According to the group, Washington is one of the top 15 states that has perchlorate contamination in public drinking water systems.

The Food and Drug Administration reports on its Web site that perchlorate also has been recently found in samples of lettuce from Arizona and California and in milk from Washington, among other states. The administration is testing other items such as bottled water, tomatoes, carrots and other vegetables as well, according to the FDA Web site.

According to the National Academy of Sciences report, the damage that perchlorate causes the human body by inhibiting iodide absorption can be compensated sufficiently by the human body. In addition, the report chastises the EPA for using rats as test subjects to determine its ruling.

But although the NAS used human subjects, the

tests the NAS based its report on lasted only 14 days at the shortest and only six months at the longest, according to the academy's Web site. The difference between drinking milk or water containing 20 parts of perchlorate per billion versus one part per billion, however, is drastic.

In addition, it is possible that serious health problems may not become evident until after six months, according to the NAS Web site.

The defense council said the academy made such a radical recommendation because of pressure from the Department of Defense and the White House, according to its Web site.

If EPA standards for perchlorate were set at one part per billion, the Department of Defense would become

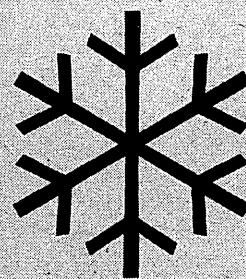
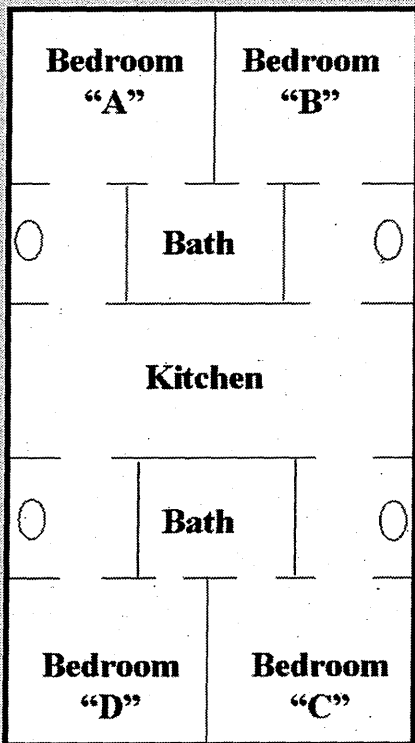
largely responsible for cleaning the nation's contaminated drinking water supplies, as most of the perchlorate comes from contaminated military sites, according to the Environmental Working Group's Web site. Cleaning hundreds of known contamination sites would be expensive. In addition, many more sites still have not been tested.

The EPA is designed to protect public health and should not fold under pressure from government organizations. Instead, it should stick to its own studies and what is best for the people by keeping the perchlorate standard low.

Washington is one of the top 15 states with perchlorate contamination in public drinking water systems.'

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