



STUDENT SHARES EXPERIENCES FROM SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

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WESTERN HOSTS FIRST STRONGEST MAN COMPETITION

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Tuesday, June 2, 2009

THE WESTERN FRONT

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The unprecedented five-peat

Women's crew wins NCAA-record fifth consecutive national title



Western women's crew team, a team with half the members of the previous year, won a NCAA record 11th consecutive national title after securing their fifth straight title Sunday at the 2009 NCAA Rowing Championships in Bellingham, N.J. The team also won national medals No. 2 behind rival Mercyhurst College from Pennsylvania in the women's eight and No. 1 in the women's four. This was the last collegiate competition for the team.

Locals protest California Supreme Court decision to uphold Prop 8

Megan Tackett
THE WESTERN FRONT

Rainbow flags waved at the corner of Magnolia Street and Cornwall Avenue the evening of Tuesday, May 26, as 40 Bellingham gay rights supporters protested the California Supreme Court's decision to uphold Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in California.

Western junior Josh Foley rallied with fellow members of Queers and Allies for Activism and other community supporters Tuesday evening against the courts' 6-1 decision to uphold the proposition that 52 percent of California residents voted in favor of last November.

"The fight isn't over," Foley said. "This is proof that we still need to keep the passion that we had the moment Prop 8 was first introduced."

Demonstrators also protested Referendum 71, a proposal to reverse Washington state's Domestic Partnership Expansion Law, which allows same-sex couples the same rights as married couples, except the title of being married.

In 1996, former President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act, which allows states the right to either refuse or allow same-sex couples to wed. Currently, same-sex marriage is legal in Connecticut, Iowa and Massachusetts and will be legal

see PROP 8 page 3



photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT
Western junior Kunteang Som protests California Supreme Court's decision to uphold Proposition 8, which keeps same sex marriage illegal, Tuesday, May 26 in downtown Bellingham.

DRAC questions authority over charter

Concerns brought up after AS presented plan for committee operations

Nicholas Johnson
Anne Maertens
THE WESTERN FRONT

Imagine a chain hanging from a ceiling. From top to bottom, each link of the chain relies solely on the links above, creating an entire system of vertical dependency. Now, imagine one link is removed from the system causing the links both above and below to ask, "Which of us has the authority to replace the missing link?"

The answer to that question is currently being debated by the Associated Students (AS) Board of Directors, Departmentally Related Activities Committee (DRAC) members and Western's assistant attorney general's office.

Nearly a year ago, Eileen Coughlin, Western's vice president for student affairs and academic support services, terminated Western's University Services Council, which was responsible for recommending and reviewing policy for student programs and support services.

Now, DRAC is left wondering who

has the authority to govern its policy and procedure changes.

In response, the AS board is expected to vote on a motion to adopt its own version of DRAC's charter, a guide to the committee's self-governance and operation, at 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 3.

"I think there has been a lack of communication on both sides."

-AS VP for Business and Operations Virgilio Cintron

DRAC is a committee that prioritizes and budgets its portion of the mandatory services and activities fee, which Western students pay along with their tuition. DRAC's funds are used to pay for departmental programs in four broad areas: music, theater arts, communication and journalism. Specific departmental programs

include Western's debate team, student publications and the dance program.

"It is my understanding that DRAC intends to work together with the [Services and Activities] Fee Committee, the provost, the students, the vice president of student affairs [and academic support services], the president and the Board of Trustees right up the chain of command," DRAC budget coordinator Ted Sealey said.

Since the Services council disbanded nearly a year ago, DRAC has worked with Western's attorney generals, Wendy Bohle and Lisa Wochos, to determine who retains the authority to approve changes to their charter, Sealey said.

DRAC now contends Western Provost Dennis Murphy is the appropriate authority to handle such a job because he oversees all of Western's academic departments, Sealey said.

However, the Associated Students

see DRAC page 4

Cops Box

University Police

May 29

- University Police (UP) arrested a 19-year old man on suspicion of driving while intoxicated. The man was cited and released.
- UP located two men who set off fire alarms and deployed fire extinguishers in Ridgeway Delta at 1:43 a.m. The men were arrested on suspicion of tampering with fire equipment. They were cited and released.

Bellingham Police

May 31

- Officers responded to a complaint of a suspect drinking alcohol in the alley access to a residence at the 1300 block of North State Street. The suspect was issued an infraction for drinking in public.

Cops Box compiled by Jenny Farrington



photo by Katie Greene THE WESTERN FRONT

Western senior Jake Koppenberg looks for the best shot at the NCAA Division II Men's Golf National Championships Friday, May 22, at the Loomis Trail Golf Club in Blaine, Wash. Koppenberg finished the tournament tied for 12th place. For the complete story, visit westernfrontonline.net.

AS President Lowe recaps historic year

Jenny Farrington
THE WESTERN FRONT

Since the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year and with spring quarter nearly completed, the Western Associated Students (AS) Board of Directors has faced a number of important issues presented to students. From the Student Technology Fee increase to budget cuts and tuition increase, not to mention the elimination of the football team, AS President Erik Lowe, a senior, has kept busy facilitating a number of student concerns.

Lowe is double majoring in political science and history. He served as vice president for legislative and governmental Affairs during the 2007-08 academic year, and served as president this year. The Western Front recently sat down with the outgoing president to get his thoughts on the future of Western, his reaction to tuition increase and his plans after graduation.

Q: What were some of the main issues the Associated Students (AS) Board worked on?

A: It was probably one of the biggest years for the AS Board in a long time. It was very high intensity. We had quite a few things we've been working on over the year. We started out with issues regarding Chick-fil-A and the concerns a lot of people had with Chick-fil-A coming onto campus.

We had issues regarding performances and people calling into question who can and cannot perform on campus and why they cannot perform. There was the whole financial crisis. We dealt with the University Foundation taking a huge hit with its accounts, which had a direct effect on some AS scholarships.

There was the budget issues with the state, where we had hiring freezes, preliminary cuts, deeper cuts, even deeper cuts and that just dragged on for months. Obviously, the elimination of the football program, too. We also had issues regarding the Student Technology Fee and trying to get that resolved.

Q: What has the AS Board accomplished over the course of the year, and what have you been the most proud of?

A: No one went crazy, which is always good. I'm really proud of how the board stuck to its guns regarding tuition increases and regarding cuts to higher education. There were other schools and students across the state who were not as willing to stick by trying to keep tuition low and trying to keep the state investing in higher education, but our AS really pushed hard for that. We were trying any way we could to get the funds necessary to ensure that students can still go to school.

Q: What has happened over the course of the year that you have not agreed with?

A: For the university and for the AS, I have been pretty supportive of what's gone on. I think that realistically, the thing that I disagree with the most is how little support there is at the state level for higher education. That was where I would

say most of the tension in the university stemmed from trying to figure out where the little money we would be getting would come from and how this would affect the university.

I was frustrated with the position the state legislature put the university in when it came to all of this.

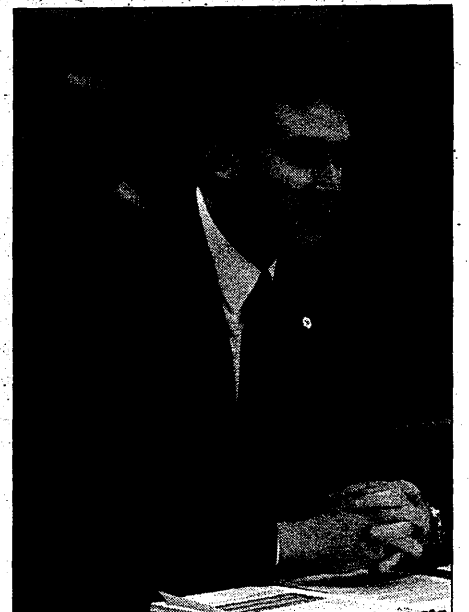


photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT

AS President Erik Lowe at a Board of Trustees meeting on April 2.

Q: What is an ongoing issue that you think still demands continued attention?

A: Well, there is a lot of them, but the biggest one right now is student fees and managing them properly. Having students realize that they have oversight over those fees and the decision in how they operate is really important. When it came to the student tech fee, [we saw that] students are not actively engaged in the process [of] managing these fees and programs, big mistakes can occur.

[These] mistakes probably would have been seen earlier if there were more eyes looking at it, especially student eyes, because students [rather than staff] know best where their money should be going.

see **LOWE** page 9

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PROP 8: Western's LGBTQA club continues to promote and protect rights

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in Vermont and Maine in September. The California Supreme Court will still acknowledge the 18,000 same-sex marriages that were performed before Proposition 8 was approved as legal mar-

riages. However, Foley said since these marriages are being allowed, the conservative reasoning that more same-sex unions could destroy the sanctity of marriage is contradictory.

"Why is this small group of people not a threat but allowing [all gay couples

to wed] is a threat?" Foley said. "It's very oxymoronic."

Western junior Sara Richmond, a fellow gay rights supporter, said she hopes people observing the demonstration will take protestors' efforts to heart and research further into their cause.

"Marriage and the privileges that come with that status should be equal to everyone and anyone," Richmond said.

Western junior Alexis Von Schlieder expressed her frustration of California's decision alongside Foley and other Queers and Allies for Activism members.

"To say that one human is going to have certain rights and another is not just because of their sexual orientation, their skin tone or their gender is [wrong]," Von Schlieder said.

Von Schlieder said the demonstration gave her hope that Washington state will not further limit the rights it provides to the gay community.

"The support we were being shown with honks and people yelling out their windows and screams and waving, I know we're not the only ones that feel this way," Von Schlieder said.

Although Phil Meirel, president of Western's Christian Campus Fellowship, said he does not agree with the homosexual lifestyle, he said he has a neutral stance on same-sex marriage and whether they should be legal.

Meirel said regardless of sexual orientation, all humans should be treated with dignity and respect.

"I think it is sad that there is so much hate and violence against gays in this country," Meirel said. "It makes me sad that someone who hates gays can vote to take away their rights."

To continue to promote equal rights for the gay community, Foley said he plans to demonstrate on campus and off campus to make sure the gay community's voice is heard to local city officials and Federal officials.



photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT

Stephanie Kountouros protests California Supreme Court's decision to uphold Proposition 8, which kept same sex marriage illegal, Tuesday, May 26, in downtown Bellingham. Kountouros said she wants equal rights for same sex marriages.

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DRAC: AS provided evidence of authority over committee's charter

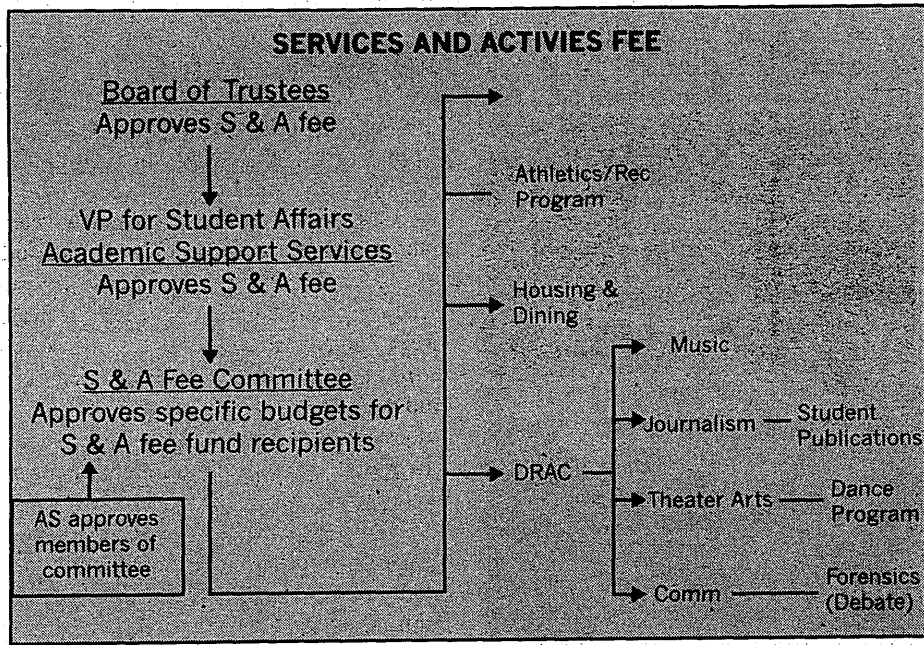


photo illustration by Brandon Kays THE WESTERN FRONT

from 1

Board of Directors does not agree. Virgilio Cintron, AS vice president for business and operations, attended DRAC's May 19 meeting to present his own draft charter for DRAC and offered evidence explaining that the AS has the authority to approve DRAC's charter.

"I like coming to the table with a proposal," Cintron said. "As I explained to [DRAC] when I made the proposal, I am not completely set on this [charter]."

Cintron said he and the rest of the AS board believe a university governance proposal written by former Western President Paul Olscamp in 1978 gives the board the authority to determine DRAC's charter.

In the 1978 proposal, which was published by Western's faculty and staff newsletter called FAST, it explicitly says the University Services Council must report to the AS board.

"It's very clear that the University Services Council reports to the [AS] board and that the board has the ability to overturn decisions made by the University Services Council by a two-thirds majority," Cintron said. "I think that establishes a clear line of authority."

Cintron said any alterations or adjustments DRAC may want to make in regard to their charter would have always been subject to review by the AS board, even now that the University Services Council no longer exists.

AS President Erik Lowe said the board drafted the charter as part of their response to the mismanagement of the Student Technology Fee, which is separate from the services and activities fee which funds DRAC. Western failed to fund the Student Technology Fee for four years causing a total loss of \$830,000.

"We don't want to change the way the money is spent," Lowe said. "We want to promote an open budget process."

Lowe said the AS plans to develop oversight committees for all programs funded by student fees by fall 2009 to improve transparency for Western's student body.

Cintron said the AS wants to improve transparency with the renewable green energy fee, the student recreation fee and remaining services and activities fees, such as intercollegiate athletics.

"We're moving into a model where all these fees come to the [AS] board annually and say, 'This is what we're doing; this

is what the fee is being used for,'" Cintron said. "So at our level: one, we can know, and two, if there are concerns or questions we can ask those questions and represent the students in those aspects."

DRAC chairperson Steven Woods said he supports the idea of increased student participation in the use of student funds and hopes the AS will work with them to improve their charter.

"I dig the fact that they're trying to look out for the students," Woods said. "That's really cool. They want to improve transparency."

DRAC's last council-approved charter from 1993 lists 10 voting members: one AS-appointed student, one administrator appointed by the vice president for student affairs, one student from each of the four specified areas and one faculty or administrative member from one of the four specified areas. The charter also specified the chairperson would be elected by the committee members at the start of each fall quarter.

Although the AS holds one voting position in the 1993 charter, Sealey said he has never known them to show up.

However, Cintron said the AS was never informed of the meeting times or dates.

"I think there has been a lack of communication on both sides," Cintron said.

The initial draft charter Cintron presented at DRAC's May 19 meeting would make the AS vice president for activities DRAC's chairperson, remove the four faculty representatives and add two at-large students from Western's greater student body.

Since the meeting, Cintron said he plans to alter his draft charter to include the four faculty representatives originally on the committee and possibly add another at-large student.

Sealey said the four faculty representatives are important to the committee because they usually operate the budgets for their respective departmental programs, which allows them a greater breadth of knowledge when considering the larger

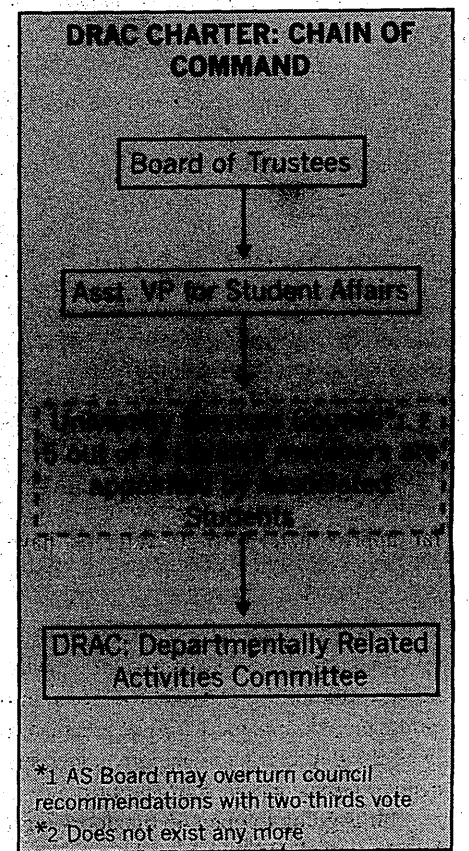
DRAC budget.

Although the AS contends DRAC's 1993 charter is the only valid version, DRAC has made several revisions to its charter, but none of which have been approved by the provost or any other authority, Cintron said.

"Even if you did [report] to the provost, there would still have to be [reporting] to the students on how those fees are being allocated," Cintron said.

Kevin Majkut, director of Viking Union Student Activities, said both DRAC and the AS board want transparency and cooperation, but often government moves too slowly making it difficult to accomplish either.

"It's like there's this straight line, and all of a sudden you hit this fog," Majkut said. "Depending on what glasses you're wearing, you see it in your own certain way."



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Uncle Sam rewards veterans with paid tuition

Post 9/11 GI Bill gives returning soldiers an opportunity to pursue higher education

Megan Jonas
THE WESTERN FRONT

Beginning this fall, eligible student veterans at Western can have their tuition paid for in full by the federal government under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which goes into effect Aug. 1. Nationwide, veterans who use the bill will receive tuition assistance up to the rate of the most expensive in-state undergraduate institution, a basic allowance for housing and a \$1,000 yearly stipend for textbooks and supplies.

Ramiro Espinoza, Human Resources recruiter and Western graduate, said veterans will receive significantly higher financial assistance under the new bill, especially when rent is factored in. He said it modernizes and updates the benefits of the GI Bill so that they are more reasonable in the current higher education environment.

"Now, [getting an education] is a very viable option that is real and financially makes sense," Espinoza said.

Registrar Susanna Yunker said approximately 150-200 veterans currently attend Western. Although there might be more veterans attending Western in the future because of the bill's incentives, there will not be a noticeable increase next fall, she said.

Veterans Affairs coordinator Wendy Gegenhuber said she expects many veterans will take advantage of the bill if they return home in the current economy due to the lack of available jobs. She said so far approximately 15-20 veterans have contacted Veterans Affairs to talk about applying to Western next year.

Western junior and Veteran's Outreach Center coordinator Erik Hardwick said he thinks the state of the economy combined with the increased benefits from the bill will provide the incentive veterans need to pursue a higher education.

"It is going to open up the doors for a lot of people," Hardwick said.

Hardwick, who is in the Army Reserve and served for more than a year in Iraq as a mechanic, said people coming back from being on active duty have had different experiences from the average college student, but they can still gain from a college education.

"They have seen the world in a different light," Hardwick said. "I think for them to be able to come back to school to continue their education and [gain skills needed for careers] is a huge benefit."

According to a survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American with a bachelor's degree made nearly 40 percent more than those who only attained a high school diploma in 2008.

Hardwick said financial issues have been a common problem veterans face as they begin to think about going to school. He said most people in the military are making just enough to put them above the poverty line.

"You don't join the military for the money," he said.

Some people join the military with the idea of qualifying for the GI Bill to pay for an education, Hardwick said.

That is exactly what Espinoza did.

Espinoza said when he was fresh out of high school, he knew he was not financially ready for college. He said the Marine Corps acted as a financial security net for him to make sure he would be able to pay for college.

"One of the most important reasons for me to join the Marine Corps was to get an education," he said. "The GI Bill was a large component of it."

Aside from financial constraints, many people serving in the military face socioeconomic challenges that keep them from enrolling in college, Espinoza said. He said the military is largely comprised of people from a lower socioeconomic background—a hurdle Espinoza faced himself.

He said it is common for people to see

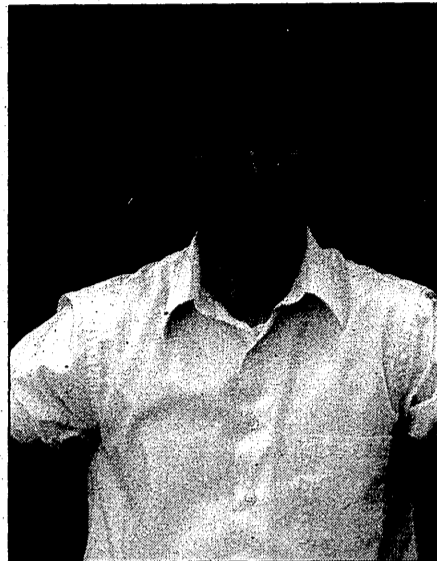


photo by Rebecca Rice THE WESTERN FRONT
Western graduate Ramiro Espinoza joined the Marine Corps out of high school because it helped pay for his education.

that status as a barrier that makes higher education less accessible.

He said it should be the responsibility of universities to provide outreach early enough to service men and women from all backgrounds so education can be made a reality for them.

"These are habitually not the type of demographics that are entering college in the first place," Espinoza said. "So there is more work to be done than just the financial. I cannot emphasize that enough."

Hardwick said the GI Bill will be the push some veterans need in order to realize they can get a higher education—whether that means going to a four-year school, community college or somewhere else.

"I think a lot of the people in the military have a great potential to achieve more than some of the past generations because of these new incentives like this GI Bill," Hardwick said.

Espinoza said he thinks people coming home and using the GI Bill might choose to go to community college and then transfer to a university. He said peo-

ple who have been deployed and away from family may want to go to community college to be near home.

About half of Western's student veterans are transfer students, Gegenhuber said.

Matt Corey, Student Veteran's Association president, said as more veterans seek an education through the new GI Bill, it makes sense that some would end up at Western. However, Corey said he does not think anyone will decide to come to Western specifically for the services offered to veterans.

Although Western is currently known for other things rather than for being a particularly veteran-friendly school, he said this could change as things like the Veteran Safe Zone project take off. The project, which had its first event in May, aims to show outward support for veterans by asking supporters to place stickers in different areas on campus to indicate where safe and supportive areas for veterans are.

Espinoza said it can be a tough transition to go from being in the military to being a student again. He said going into the Marine Corps was easier for him than starting at Western after being away from school for so long. He had not written academic papers for five years and was the same age as graduate students.

For Hardwick, who was deployed after he started at Western, it was difficult to come back and see all the friends he had made graduate before him.

"It can be kind of frustrating because you may at first kind of feel like you are behind," Hardwick said. "But at the same time you know that you went out and did something that none of these other people are going to get the chance to do."

Espinoza said veterans tend to make great students because they understand the value of a college education.

"You do have a very clear appreciation for education because, for some especially, you have gone through a lot of experiences to be there," Espinoza said.

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Madsen inspired to fund second scholarship

Brian Conner
THE WESTERN FRONT

Using money from his personal finances, Western Board of Trustees member Dennis Madsen will provide a second high school senior with a four-year scholarship to Western's Woodring College of Education.

"This is a Madsen family gift, not a Dennis gift," Madsen said. "It comes from one family to a bigger family—the Western family—which is a part of my life."

Madsen funded the first Inspired for Teaching Excellence scholarship in 2007 and provided Western sophomore Andy Michel with a four-year scholarship, which is worth about \$23,000 and includes paid tuition and fees. At a reception in Miller Hall Friday, Madsen was recognized for adding a second scholarship opportunity for Woodring.

The scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior who has been accepted to Western, said Stephanie Salzman, dean of Woodring College. The applications are reviewed once they have gone through Western's admissions office and are judged primarily on the commitments and achievements of the candidate, not strictly a grade point average, she said. The selected recipient for the 2009 scholarship will be announced within the next two weeks and about 50 applications have been submitted to date, she said.

"The scholarship comes at an important time when teaching positions are being cut," Salzman said. "This is also a time when teachers need to hear how im-

portant they are."

Madsen, the former chief executive officer of Recreational Equipment, Inc., said he is happy to help Western by offering scholarships. He said connecting Western to the Seattle business community could help expand funding for the university and accomplish his goals of expanding scholarship opportunities. He said he hopes others in the business community will reach out to high school students and continue to build on the idea of offering Woodring scholarships to attract inspired students.

"This is something I'm choosing to do with some of the money I've earned from REI," Madsen said. "I believe teaching is the future for children. You can help one K-12 student, or you can help a teacher who can help 30 students."

Madsen said he created the Inspired for Teaching Excellence scholarships because of the great job Western did to prepare his daughter to be a math teacher. He said visiting Western and watching his daughter become a teacher inspired him to help the Woodring program.

"It was a wonderful place for my daughter," Madsen said. "I've come to appreciate the special attention given by this institution."

Madsen said the scholarship is an important gift to give an involved, dedicated high school student who wants to become a teacher.

"We can all think back to our days in high school or grade school, where a teacher made a difference and awakened our curiosity," Madsen said. "We've all had a teacher who reached out and went



photo courtesy Carole Morris

Western Board of Trustees member Dennis Madsen and 2007 Inspired Teaching Excellence scholarship recipient Andrew Michel pose for a photo at a reception in Miller Hall Friday.

above and beyond."

The scholarship is awarded to a student who volunteers and is a leader in his or her community. Madsen said Western is a unique university because students are involved in volunteering and Western's curriculum helps the Bellingham community through volunteering.

Michel said he thinks he won the scholarship for teaching math and English in Kenya. One day, he said he hopes to teach at the high school he attended in Puyallup, Wash. He enrolled in classes at Western in fall 2007 and said winning one of the two scholarships has been great because it provides him with money for

school, and he does not have to work to pay tuition.

Volunteering is a way to determine the passion and interests that reside in an individual, Madsen said. A leader is someone who looks at the connection between actions and words and does what is necessary, he said.

At Friday's reception, Madsen reminded Woodring's staff of the importance of doing what a person enjoys in life. He said when it comes to work, volunteering and life, people have to do what gets them feeling motivated in the morning. He said teachers help spread motivation that connects children to the community.

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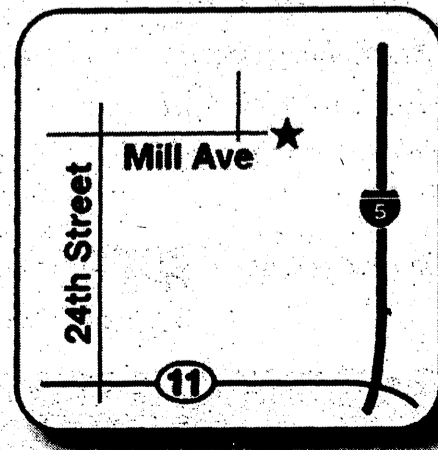
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Dining services provides in-depth nutritional Web menu

Mandi Brady
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western's Dining Services is currently in the process of redesigning its Internet accessible menu to enable students to look up nutritional content of food from their computer before eating a meal in the dining hall.

Currently, the only nutritional information on the Web site menu is whether a dish is vegetarian, vegan or neither. Dining Services hopes to include more information regarding ingredients, calories, fat content and serving size, said Lisa Philbrook, director of business development for Dining Services.

"The nutritional analysis is a step in the positive direction," Western dietitian Jill Kelly said. "I think it will let people

make the choice based on evidence instead of just guessing."

The upgrade on the site was prompted by the ongoing nutrition discussions by students, and the FDA mandates the nutritional analysis of packaged products, Kelly said. Western wanted to take the requirement a step further and provide information for prepared food, she said.

Philbrook said she would be surprised if the same menu page remained up for the beginning of fall quarter, and she thought some progress should be made by fall, but Dining Services are reliant on the Information Technology within the university to make the redesign happen.

"It is a high priority for University Dining Services, but the timeline is not completely in our control," Philbrook said.

The current menu Web page shows what each dining hall is serving for the day and is one of the most popular pages on the University Residence's Web site, Philbrook said. Dining Services was inspired by Harvard University's Web menu, which includes nutritional information and provides a meal planning option where students can choose their meal items and see the total nutritional intake, Philbrook said.

"[The new page] will be an evolution of the page we have now or a replacement of it," Philbrook said.

Philbrook said the site will continue to evolve after the initial new design is previewed. By fall quarter, there may just be basic nutrition facts on certain foods, but Philbrook said the goal is to eventually have a meal planning option comparable to Harvard's Web menu.

Philbrook said Dining Services obtained software more than three years ago called "Food Processor," which makes nutritional analysis of menu items possible. Dining Services have asked Western's department of Administrative Computing

dining halls representing different entrees and their nutritional content for foods offered that academic quarter. The binders will be in the dining halls so students have access to a tangible version of the nutritional analysis.

"The technology is the side story, not the main story. The main story is giving the customers the information they want."

- Lisa Philbrook, director of business development

to set up something through the network so Kelly and chef managers can use and access the software. After the nutritional analysis is finished, Philbrook said it will be published on the Web site for students to view.

Currently, Philbrook said students can find nutrition information on Sodexo's Web site, and Dining Services provides the link to it on their current menu. However, the page is not user friendly and provides every recipe Sodexo offers, many of which Dining Services does not use, she said.

In the dining halls, she said students can also find nutrition cards set up next to certain entrees for anyone curious about the nutritional content. Information such as calorie content, serving size and fat content are provided, but there is no detailed list of ingredients, Philbrook said.

"The technology is the side story, not the main story," Philbrook said. "The main story is giving the customers the information they want."

In addition to the updated nutritional information on the menu page, Kelly said a binder will be provided in each of the

Western freshman Max Morin, who works at the Ridgeway dining hall said he is not a healthy eater, but sometimes wonders about the nutritional information in some of his food. Morin said if he wanted to know the nutritional information of the food in the dining halls, he would check out the signs by the food.

Morin said if there was an online element, he would probably view it because so much of what students do is online.

Seeing the nutritional value of the food they are eating could possibly affect the way students eat and make them re-think it, Morin said.

Western junior Haley Hildebrandt said she thinks some students will find the information useful. She said she does not think she would use the Web site because she usually eats salads and would not need to know the information.

However, Kelly said she thinks students could benefit from the easy access of knowledge.

"They will use this as much as they use anything that is packaged and has a nutritional label on it," Kelly said. "It's up to the students."

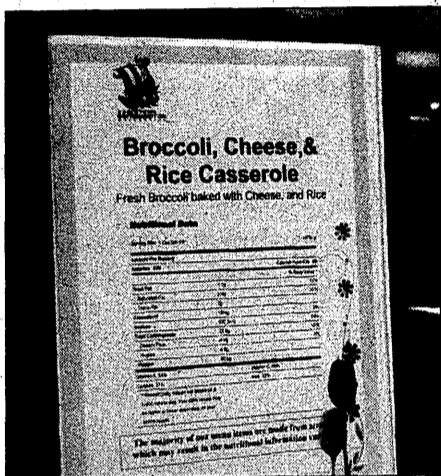


photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT
Nutritional signs currently are displayed in each dining hall for every dish. Western's Dining Services is currently trying to make more detailed nutritional information available online.

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College Quest gives students sneak peak of college

Tiana Day
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western will be offering its College Quest program to high school sophomores, juniors and seniors this summer, from July 12-17, as a part of its regular summer youth programs.

Debbie Gibbons, manager of youth programs for Extended Education and Summer Programs, said the program normally offers only two classes with room for 15 to 18 students per class. But this year she said they are offering four classes, and the total number of spots has increased to roughly 50.

College Quest is a week-long program that aims to introduce and better prepare students academically and socially for college life. It will introduce a new class focusing on renewable energy where students gain hands-on experience engaging in labs such as creating their own biodiesel.

College Quest allows students to partake in the college experience by completing an intensive college course within one of several concentrations of study taught by a Western professor.

This summer, students will select from four courses: Criminal Law & Justice; Renewable Energy: A Materials Science Perspective; Climate Quest: Environmental Studies & the Art of Filmmaking; and Animation Programming. The program costs \$780, except for students who enroll in the environmental studies class, which runs July 12-19, for \$880.

In addition to attending class, students must work on homework, stay in the residence halls, are encouraged to make new friends and explore Western's surrounding areas.

Western senior Tyler McFarland said he first heard about College Quest from his mother who saw an article about it in The Kitsap Sun. He said he attended the program the summer before his senior year of high school. McFarland said the program was important because it

helped him learn to work with different people.

David Patrick, director of the Advanced Materials Science and Engineering Center and chemistry professor at Western, will be teaching the new science class this summer called Renewable Energy: A Material Science Perspective.

Patrick said students will spend some time in the lab making biodiesel building solar cells and testing them. He said students will go on several field trips, though locations are still being determined. He said outings probably will include a biodiesel plant, regular refinery, a solar energy company and different companies involved with energy production.

"[College Quest students are] just a little step ahead because they're familiar with the campus ... They know what's expected when you take a college course."

- Debbie Gibbons, manager of youth programs for extended education

"I think it's good Western does [College Quest]," Patrick said. "This is a way the community can connect to Western, and it's a good way to get the next generation interested in science."

McFarland, who participated in the environmental studies and filmmaking class, said being at Western during College Quest helped him appreciate the natural surroundings. He said he enjoyed Western's scenery so much that he applied to the school.

"[College Quest] showed me Western was a place I wanted to be," he said. "Not because of the programs or degrees but because of the activities. It's very outdoor oriented, and I love being outdoors."

Gibbons said College Quest first began in 2000 when

a group of students approached her about designing a new, more rigorous program than the summer youth program that was currently in place at Western. The students regularly attended the university's summer youth program and had reached the age limit for the curriculum.

Gibbons said she felt she could put a program together for them, so she got some professors together and came up with College Quest.

She said College Quest first started under the name Institute for Summer Scholars. In 2002, she said the name changed to College Quest.

Julie Helling, a Fairhaven associate professor who teaches the criminal law and justice course, said she had to develop a curriculum that was appropriate for college standards but still accessible to high school students.

Her students learn about the legal system and how to read a court case. They also learn what an opening statement, closing argument, direct examination and cross examination are and how to perform them. The course culminates in a mock trial at the Whatcom County Courthouse all day Friday, July 17. Volunteers from the community sit in as mock jurors.

"Even though it's scary for a lot of students, they are so proud of themselves when they finish that mock trial," Helling said.

Helling said she has had students in her class whose parents made them go, but the students ended up enjoying it.

"They've really liked it, and I think the parents have enjoyed that their students are able to spend a week on a college campus and see what it's about," she said. "It makes college seem much more possible for students."

Gibbons said many of the students who attended the program, such as McFarland, ended up applying to Western. She said students generally feel more prepared to go to college after attending College Quest.

"They're just a little step ahead because they're familiar with the campus and have worked with a faculty member," Gibbons said. "They know what's expected when you take a college course."

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Q&A: Lowe talks football, higher education and Shepard's first year

from 2

So that's what we're trying to do for next year, establish a system where all of the mandatory student fees are more transparent and have more reportage to the AS board so students know where their money is being spent.

Q: What was your reaction when the football program was eliminated?

A: Well, I knew about it before the general public knew about it. It was upsetting because I grew up playing football, and it's by far my favorite sport. But at the same time I could certainly understand why it happened. I was supportive of the decision; I didn't really see an alternative.

We have seen that it really was the best decision because there are other schools across the state that have had to take other actions that would not have succeeded here.

For example, Central Washington University has an athletic fee for all students which they had to increase significantly this year because of the financial situation of their athletic program to cover those costs. Whereas the athletic program here at Western is now strong enough to maintain the quality of the other athletic programs, and we did not have to resort to putting something to a student vote that I know would not be approved.

Q: What is your opinion on the budget cuts made across the state, and how do you see this impacting higher education?

A: I think that the state is killing higher

education. Proportionally as a state, we are taking the highest cuts to higher education in the country. I spent the vast majority of the year researching and trying to become as much of an expert as possible on higher education policy and how it's funded across the country as well as internationally, and this is just going to kill our ability to be competitive. Our universities are not getting funded to the point that they need to be. It's going to take a lot longer for students to graduate. It's going to be much more competitive to get into the various schools, and it really doesn't set the state up to recover well from this economic downturn.

We have relied much too heavily on bringing in college graduates from outside of the state for these high paying jobs, rather than educating our own work force so they can take those jobs on themselves. You can't do that forever, and it's really going to hurt us in the long run. I don't know if we will ever be able to recover.

This next year is going to be the first year in our school's history that students are going to be paying the majority of the cost of education. For me, that is by far the biggest step you can take in terms of privatization. There is a reason we have a public education system in this country, and the state legislature is undermining that reason. They are getting rid of access, getting rid of quality and the result is that we are going to be the ones to suffer for it.

Q: Overall, how do you think Western's first year with Bruce Shepard went?

A: I think it went well. I've certainly gotten to know Bruce a lot better than the

average student has, and I have been impressed with how he has dealt with certain situations. He has had the hardest possible year you ever could have when it comes to being president at a university for your first year.

I think he has been able to deal with a lot of it quite well: the budget crisis, the financial hit that the foundation has taken, the problems that were within athletics and the issues with the student tech fees, which happened before he was even here. We have had our own disagreements and I have certainly had some very interesting exchanges with him, but overall I think he has done a very good job of handling the cards he was dealt.

It is really easy to be in charge when

everything is going well. It's much harder to be in charge when none of the cards are in your favor, so I think that Bruce has done the best he can to position us to recover from everything that has gone on.

Q: What are you moving on to next?

A: I am trying to find a job. I am planning on going to graduate school, but I just didn't have time to take the LSAT and GRE this fall because I was doing everything else. So now I'm in the same boat as a lot of students just trying to find a job.

It used to be the fact that if you were AS president, it really helped you to get the experience and get the contacts necessary to get a great job right out of college.

With the current economic situation, despite the fact that I do have a lot of connections with people and I do have the experience, it's hard for me too. After this interview, I am going to be turning in applications. I'm in the same boat as a lot of students right now.

Q: What will you miss most about Western?

A: I have certainly fallen in love with Western over the last four years. Western was my back up school. I didn't get into my first choice, and I was planning on transferring after a quarter or two or after my first year.

Once I was actually on campus, I fell in love with Western. I love everything about Western. I love the students, I love the location, I love the academic quality. There are going to be a lot of things about this school that I am going to miss.

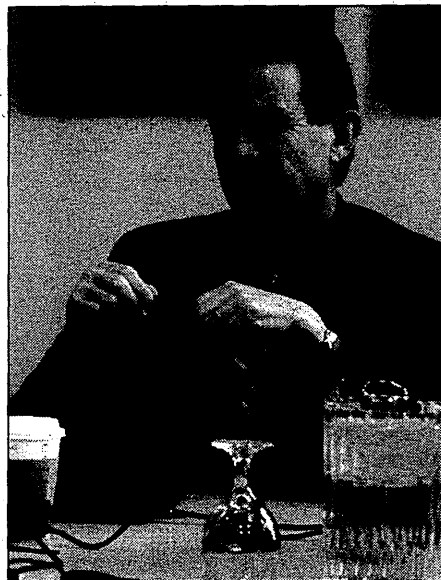


photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT
Western President Bruce Shepard at a Board of Trustees meeting April 2.

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GOING THE DIS

Fairhaven student Enrique Lopez shares experiences from retracing the footsteps of his ancestors while paying respects

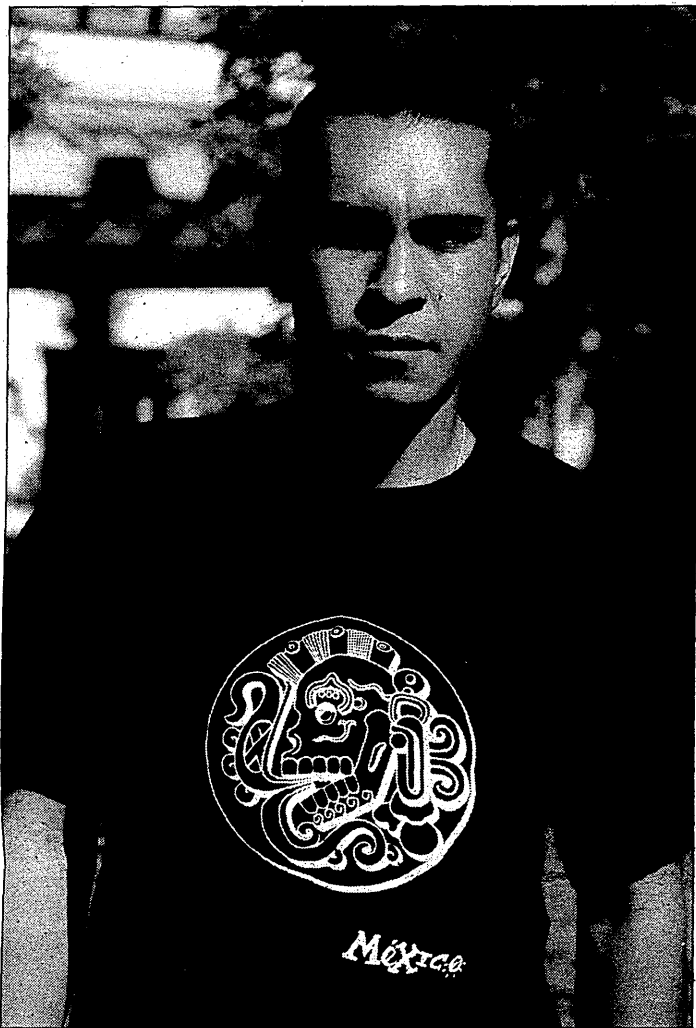


photo by Becca Rice THE WESTERN FRONT

Enrique Lopez, also known by his Aztec name, Ollin, was part of a team that ran from Alaska to Panama. Each runner traveled 10 miles at a time, and was picked up in a van when their leg of the journey was finished. The team traveled through Bellingham on their way through the U.S., and Lopez ran the leg of the race that went through Western's campus.

Selah Prather
THE WESTERN FRONT

It was May 1, 2008. Exhausted but inspired, Western junior Enrique Lopez used every ounce of energy he had left to complete the final stretch of the Peace and Dignity Journey, a run that began in Alaska, ended in Panama and covered more than 5,023 miles.

Lopez, along with 15 other participants, ran from Eklutna, Alaska, to the Panama Canal in a seven-month run called the Peace and Dignity Journey. Lopez said the run occurs every four years with a different prayer-based theme each year. Some past themes included a prayer for elders (1992), children (1996), family (2000) and women (2004) in honor of sacred sites and indigenous communities throughout the world, he said.

On May 21, Lopez gave a presentation about his experience at the Fairhaven Auditorium using a culmination of photos, video, thoughts and observations.

"The audience got to see a lot of sacred sites and hear traditional songs from different indigenous regions," Lopez said. "It was good to show people actual pictures instead of just telling them about the journey."

Lopez said one of the main reasons he joined the Peace and Dignity Journey was to retrace the footsteps of his ancestors and to

show honor and respect for the earth and the people in it.

"There's so much war going on nowadays; so much racism and discrimination. Our minds are moving into a chaotic way of doing things," Lopez said. "By doing the spiritual run, one remembers our old values, our traditional values that keep us together as family: don't become greedy. Always respect one another, regardless of color."

Lopez said every runner who participated in the Peace and Dignity Journey was required to sign a written statement vowing to abstain from alcohol, drugs and all sexual activity for the duration of the journey. Lopez said all of the runners successfully upheld their promises.

However, Lopez said the journey was about more than just being able to control one's mind and body, it was also a kind of spiritual healing for the runner, the earth and humanity.

To aid in the spiritual healing process, the runners were given sacred wooden staffs crafted by indigenous communities from around the world. Lopez said each morning the runners would choose a staff to run with, and the staff would cleanse and heal the areas they were carried through.

"It was funny because you might think that you would choose a staff, but it's the staff that chooses you, spiritually," Lopez said. "Sometimes you just hear the staffs calling you, 'pick me, run with me.' So you pick it up and run."

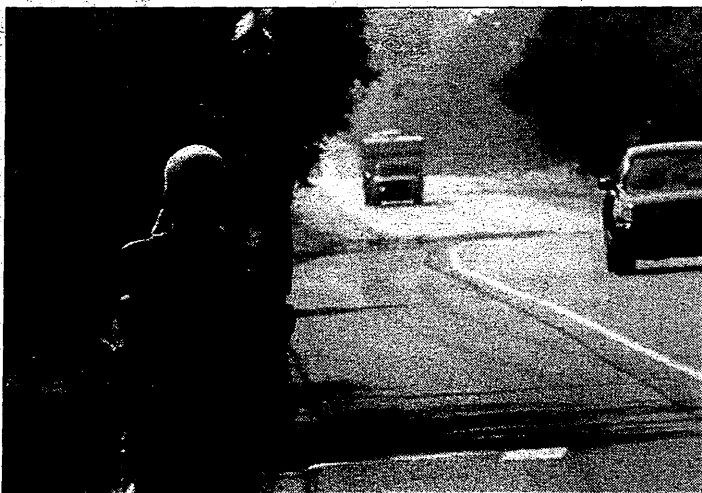


photo courtesy of Enrique Lopez

Western Junior Enrique Lopez carries a sacred staff through California on his way to Panama during the 2008 Peace and Dignity Journey.

THE SACRED STAFFS

Sacred wooden staffs were an integral part of the run. Various indigenous communities from around the world donated staffs. For example, Lopez said the indigenous people from Acteal, Chiapas, Mexico donated a staff that represented the 45 indigenous people who were slaughtered by the Mexican government on Dec. 22, 1997, during the Acteal Massacre.

"They told us never to forget that massacre," Lopez said. "Their staff will be returned after the 2012 Peace and Dignity run."

According to the Peace Action Web site, the Acteal Massacre occurred in an attempt by the Mexican government to remove the land rights of the native people in order to comply with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Lopez said the staffs represented indigenous ancestors and communities throughout North, South and Central America and carried the blessings and hopes of those communities.

"The staffs are our grandfathers and our ancestors, so we treat them with great honor and respect," Lopez said.

Lopez said if the runners entered a community that suffered spiritually or struggled with alcohol and drugs, a specific staff was used to heal and cleanse that particular community.

"If there's an area that is really being hurt through mining or logging, the staffs heal it in a spiritual way," Lopez said. "That's what the staff does. We were just supporting them and taking care of them."

HISTORY BEHIND THE JO

Lopez said the Peace and Dignity Journey was inspired by an ancient Mayan prophecy that predicted the preservation of indigenous people metaphorically by uniting the eagle and the condor.

"The condor is a sacred bird to the indigenous people in [South America], and the eagle is a symbol of the U.S. here," Lopez said. "It was predicted that the people from Central America would unite the people of the eagle and the condor."

Lopez said the idea for the Peace and Dignity Journey was created during a 1992 gathering of indigenous people in celebration of 500 years of indigenous people. Lopez said they remembered the prophecy of the condor and decided to create the Peace and Dignity Journey which took place the same year.

"[The gathering] was during the same time we were celebrating Christopher Columbus," Lopez said.

During the first Peace and Dignity Journey, Lopez and his team ran from the north from Argentina to Teotihuacan, some of the largest pyramids ever built.

GROWING UP

Lopez was born in the Purhépecha nation in Michoacán, Mexico, and moved to the U.S. with his family when he was 10 years old.

"We moved because of the economic recession," Lopez said. "It was hard for my parents."

Lopez grew up in Mount Vernon, Washington, where he is receiving an education in Bellingham where he is receiving an education in studies at Fairhaven College with an emphasis in social services.

Lopez said he is interested in mentoring young people about nature and the culturally unifying aspects of the land. He volunteers at Tonalli, a youth center that provides culturally relevant activities such as art and community gardening to Latino/a youth.

Although Lopez was absent from Western during the run, he was still able to earn two credit hours through an Independent Studies course with three Fairhaven professors.

Fairhaven assistant professor John Tuxill advised Lopez on his program for Lopez.

"I would love to see more undergraduate learning happens outside of the classroom, and that happens to be."

Tuxill said Lopez was responsible for the research of the places he ran through, as well as the natural history and ecology of the landscape on his journey.



The 2008 Peace and Dignity Journey runners gathered in Panama to honor sacred sights and indigenous people of the world.

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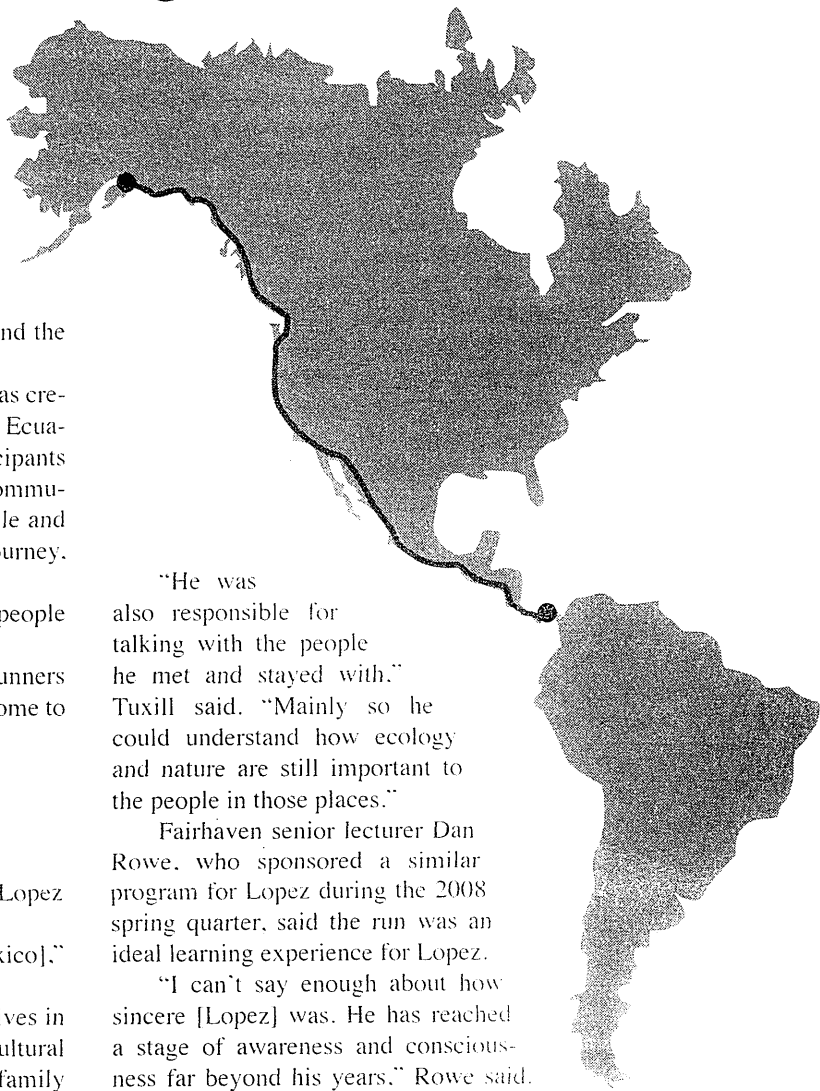
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photo courtesy of Enrique Lopez
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"He was also responsible for talking with the people he met and stayed with," Tuxill said. "Mainly so he could understand how ecology and nature are still important to the people in those places."

Fairhaven senior lecturer Dan Rowe, who sponsored a similar program for Lopez during the 2008 spring quarter, said the run was an ideal learning experience for Lopez.

"I can't say enough about how sincere [Lopez] was. He has reached a stage of awareness and consciousness far beyond his years," Rowe said. "I have no doubt that Enrique will be a leader in the struggle for social justice."

THE RUNNERS

The runners came from various countries including the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Central America. Lopez said most of the runners were indigenous people; however, one participant was a Caucasian woman from New York.

"Anyone can join the Peace and Dignity run, regardless of race or gender," Lopez said.

In order to reach Panama within the allotted seven-month time frame, each runner had to run an average of 7-15 miles per day. Two large vans accompanied the runners on their journey and were used to transport luggage and relay runners between drop off and pick up points.

Lopez said the first runner would tell the driver of the van how far he intended on running that day; then the drivers drove 12 miles ahead and dropped off a second runner and flag designating the end point for the first runner. Lopez said this process was repeated all day until every runner completed his designated miles.

"It was kind of like a relay race," Lopez said.

THE ROUTE

In order to cover as much territory as possible, Lopez said two different groups of runners were formed. The condor runners from South America began their journey in Argentina, and the eagle runners ran from North America. Both groups converged in Panama on Nov. 14 where a four-day closing ceremony took place, he said. Lopez said he felt emotionally overwhelmed as he ran the last few miles of the journey.

"That feeling was great, it was emotional, a happy emotional,"

see JOURNEY page 13

Activist, poet Chrystos shares work at Western

Selah Prather
THE WESTERN FRONT

Self-educated, self-identified urban-Indian poet Chrystos Wilder Reis, an artist and internationally acclaimed writer, spoke at Western on Friday, May 29, in Old Main Theater. Western junior Abraham Rodriguez and Western alumna Antasia Parker opened the evening by reading some of their own poetry about racism and politics. The event was sponsored by Western's Social Issues Resource Center (SIRC).

Western junior and SIRC coordinator Devin Majkut said Chrystos' work is commonly read in activist circles and American Indian poetry studies.

"We were intrigued specifically by some of her pieces addressing cultural appropriation and American Indian identity," Majkut said. "We wanted to bring a different style of creative voice to cam-



photo by Carolyn Copstead THE WESTERN FRONT
Chrystos, a self-identified urban-Native American lesbian poet, speaks Friday, May 29, in Old Main Theater.

pus by offering poetry reading/sharing rather than a more performance based event."

Although eloquent at times, Chrystos' poetry is not for the faint of heart or those who are easily offended. It does not cater to social norms, nor is it always politically correct. Rather, Chrystos' writings flow from the depths of her personal experiences and navigate the murky waters of racism, rape, incest, classism, depression, colonization and being a two-spirited lesbian woman, just to name a few.

In the Native American community, the term two-spirit is often associated with lesbian and gay people. According to the University of Minnesota's Web site, two-spirits frequently "manifest a dynamic balance of both feminine and masculine energies making them inherently sacred people."

Chrystos' poems were selected from an array of her published and non-published works.

"There were many pieces she shared which were very potent and powerful and may have impacted different audi-

ence members in different ways," Majkut said. "We received feedback from many people that the program had challenged their thoughts and opinions, and they were impressed by how uncensored Chrystos is as a poet."

Chrystos was born into a mixed ancestral heritage: Menominee Native American heritage from her father's side of her family and Lithuanian heritage from her mother's. She said she hopes people recognize that, although prevalent, racism, classism, rape, incest and other atrocities are not acceptable.

"We're trained as poor people to pretend we're not poor, as oppressed people to pretend we're not oppressed, as sexually exploited people to pretend that we like it," Chrystos said. "It's like this whole society is a construct of lies."

Chrystos said America is built on the pillar of genocide of Native American people, and most people in the United States pretend like the genocide never happened.

"Everyone just buys things and goes along as if nothing's happening," Chrystos said. "It's scary to me."

According to Voices from the Gaps, an international Web site for women artists and writers of color, Chrystos' writings have been published in numerous anthologies, such as *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981) and *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* (1988). She won the 1994 Audre Lorde International Poetry Competition as well as various other distinctive awards.

Although nine of Chrystos' books were published in the past, she currently has no publisher. Chrystos said the main reason for this is because her poetry is a form of political activism, and she cannot keep her mouth shut.

"You can be a white, queer activist, but have you ever heard of a brown, queer activist? No, you haven't, right?" Chrystos said. "If you're brown, you pretend to be straight. I really used to believe that we had freedom of speech, but we don't have freedom of speech. What I learned is if I am queer, brown, a woman and political, no one wants to deal with me. So I have no publisher."

Currently, Chrystos holds public readings of her poetry whenever possible. Overall she has published more than nine books, including her 1988 book titled *Not Vanishing*, published by a small, independent press called Press Gang Publishers that sold more than 20 thousand copies.

Regardless of her accomplishments, Chrystos said she is still overlooked by the mainstream media.

"I've never been reviewed in The New York Times review books, never been in the Poetry Review," she said.

Although many of her books are out of print in the U.S., Chrystos said her work does well in Germany, and many of her books have been translated into

see CHRYSTOS page 13

Fairhaven student searches the starry night skies for evidence of extraterrestrial life

Tristan Heigler
THE WESTERN FRONT

Have you ever looked up at the night sky and wondered what else might be out there?

For Fairhaven senior Clara Pérez, such a question is more than idle curiosity. Pérez is a Fairhaven student who has designed her own major entitled "Life on Earth and Space: Astronomy, Photography and Writing." Pérez said fear and curiosity were her motivations for designing her major.

She said she was intrigued by what else might be out there in terms of life on other planets. At the same time, she said she was afraid of not knowing more about the possibility of life on other planets.

Pérez practices a specific brand of photography called astrophotography. She uses a Meade 12-inch LX200 telescope that she attaches to her Canon camera with a long, cylindrical adapter. The telescope is placed on a large cart, which is about the size of a hot dog cart and is housed in the Communication Facility. Pérez checks out the contraption from the astronomy department and rolls it into the grass lawn in front of the building to photograph the night sky. She said it takes her roughly five minutes to set it up because she only accesses the basic functions.

Engineering technician lead James Mullen designed the telescope cart for the astronomy department. He said it is powered by a car battery and includes a tracking mechanism, a computer jack and

exterior lights.

Pérez said she has used the telescope to take photos of objects in space such as the moon and the planet Saturn. She said she would like to take pictures of all the nearby nebulae, which are clouds of gas made up primarily of hydrogen leftover from the death of a star. Taking good photos of a nebula requires exposures several hours in length, she said.

Looking through the Meade telescope at the moon on a clear night, Pérez said she sees a yellow-hued sphere pockmarked with old craters, the details sharp enough to be in arm's reach. Pérez said she has not been able to take as many photographs as she would have liked this quarter due to cloudy weather, but with summer coming she said she will be able to get outside with the telescope more.

Pérez said the writing aspect of the major is a tool to process the questions and ideas that come up during the photography. She said she prefers to write fictional short stories because her experiments with poetry did not turn out as well as she wanted. She said her writing helps her get at the deeper meaning of what she is doing by examining the possibility of life in space.

She said she would like to take pictures of different planets as well, but the times she has been able to take photos in the evenings have conflicted with the planets' positions.

Pérez said she still has a lot to learn about astrophotography technique. She said she is looking at different camera pro-



photo by Keith Daigle THE WESTERN FRONT

Fairhaven senior Clara Pérez uses a telescope attached to a camera in order to take photos of the night sky as part of a major she created.

grams and settings to get clearer shots.

Pérez chose Fairhaven because she said she did not get into the major she originally wanted, which was art. She applied to Fairhaven and said she now enjoys the setup of the college. Its smaller class sizes and discussion-based learning are things she said she enjoys.

"It's easier for me to get comfortable," she said. "I feel like I can express myself."

Pérez said she is looking into univer-

sities in Arizona and Hawaii for graduate work, and her ultimate goal is to work for the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Institute, a nonprofit organization that examines the possibility of life on other planets. Pérez said this is done by looking at the composition of planets and the distance of the planets from their suns. Such factors can help determine whether the planets are viable for life, she said. SETI was founded in 1984 and is based in Mountain View, Calif.

Fairhaven associate professor Tanis S'eiltin is Pérez's adviser for designing the major.

"I think it's an excellent degree she's designed. It's diverse. With guidance she'll have a good grounding in astronomy and photography," S'eiltin said. "It's very practical and very creative."

S'eiltin said the Fairhaven interdisciplinary approach encourages students to take control of their own education. She said students creating their majors must select an adviser, have a transitions conference in which their proposal for their major is discussed and take a concentration, where students select a three-person panel to monitor their progress.

S'eiltin said students can select Fairhaven faculty, Western faculty or Bellingham community members for their panels.

Pérez said her panel of advisers consists of S'eiltin, Kristin Larson and Stan Tag, a Fairhaven associate professor, whose focus is on the writing aspect of the major.

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JOURNEY: Sacred journey signifies the uniting of the eagle, condor

from 10

Lopez said. "The runners brought together the staffs from the north and the south and held them up in unity to show our ancestors that we accomplished once again the unity of the eagle and the condor."

The runners stayed awake all day and night singing sacred songs of prayer and dancing for the entirety of the four-day ceremony, he said.

"We brought the prayers from the north and south," Lopez said. "There was a sacred fire that carried the prayers up to the creators and to all of life that exists around us."

However, not all the runners were able to complete the entire journey to Panama because funds and food grew scarce

in the Yakui Territory of Mexico.

Lopez said the Mexican indigenous communities were usually poorer than the communities in the U.S., and the runners often had to buy food for the community and themselves.

"Half the runners had to turn back," Lopez said. "The group leaders decided who would stay and who would go home."

Lopez was part of the group chosen to complete the journey.

PROVISIONS

Because of the length and limited transportation, Lopez was limited on what he could take on his journey.

He pared-down his personal items to one pair of pants, two shirts, a jacket, one sleeping bag, socks and underwear.

"I took two pairs of running shoes," Lopez said. "I wore out the first pair in Vancouver."

Lopez said before the 2008 Peace and Dignity Journey began, a small amount of money was collected for the group from donations and fundraising events.

The money was used to buy gas and food for the runners and sometimes for the communities they visited along the way, he said. However, Lopez said much of the time the indigenous communities provided the runners with food, shelter, medicine and at times, money.

"We were also given words of wisdom, words of hope and of beauty," Lopez said. "We would just communicate; we would just talk to the people and see how they were doing; and they would ask how we were doing. If one of us were sick

they would offer to help us."

LESSONS

Lopez said governments, institutions and schools do not usually recognize the value and history of indigenous people. Rather, they degrade indigenous people and instill doubt and a lack of recognition about who indigenous people are when those traditions are the key to human survival.

"Our true history is usually learned through our families. A lot of time here at school or when we're in the cities we feel lost, like we don't know what to do with ourselves or what we want to do with our lives," Lopez said. "As indigenous people—as Purhépecha people—one thing we are told is to never forget where we come from."

CHRYSTOS: 'It's like this whole society is a construct of lies'

from 11

the German language.

Western adjunct professor Kate Miller, who teaches women's studies and American cultural studies, attended Chrystos' poetry reading on Friday.

Miller said she and Chrystos have been friends for 15 years and worked together in the early 1990s to coordinate a two-spirit, gay and lesbian conference for Native people and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender community.

"I appreciate Western bringing her here," Miller said. "So often women of color are accused of being angry without realizing there's a reason to be angry," Miller said. "I think poetry is a good way to bring

that message to people."

Miller said she also comes from a mixed heritage of Eastern Band Cherokee people and Irish. She said Chrystos' work often addresses the issues of being mixed race, which is an issue many people still deal with, including Native Americans.

"Things are so radicalized still in this country, and there's specific issues around Native Americans being rationalized, a blood quota," Miller said. "Different tribes accept you if your one-quarter here, or one-eighth there, or one-half here. It's a very complicated issue. It has to do with marrying out and diluting your tribe."

But Chrystos said she does not limit her racial or political activism to one particular group or country. In 2003, Chrystos

was part of an International Woman's Peace March where she traveled to Palestine for three weeks. The writings she brought back spoke of the casualties of war, bombed houses, racism and displaced families.

"There have been several profound turning places in my life and that was one of them," Chrystos said. "It was an incredible experience."

Chrystos said she is also concerned for the children of the world who are inheriting an enormous national debt and a toxic environment, which she feels is a huge burden.


"Nowadays, parents are afraid to let their kids go anywhere for 10 minutes because they might get abducted or sold into sexual slavery. We live in a world that is really scary," Chrystos said.

Regardless of her activism, Chrystos said she insists she has given up on trying to save the world. However, she said she does hope that people who hear or read her poetry come away changed in some way.

"You can hope for things you don't believe in," Chrystos said. "That's one of the more subtle contradictions of life. You can hope that people stop making plans for war every time they turn around; you cannot have any confidence that they will based on your own life experiences."

Miller said she appreciates Chrystos for being a voice for people who are voiceless.

"It makes me think of Audrey Lorde's quote," Miller said. "Your silence will not protect you."



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Shepard: Share the wealth

Frontline

Opinions of the Editorial Board

Dear President Bruce Shepard,

Earlier this year, as you were taking in the beauty of Western's campus as your new home, you took the time to shake my hand. You asked the student body to "just call me Bruce," and as part of your platform as Western's newest president you promised approachability and compassion to campus issues.

Due to the budget cuts, you have had to make some crucial decisions about funding and educational needs; decisions anyone would be hard-pressed to make. Now, we feel it is time for you to make a crucial decision about how you fit in.

You have asked students to pay higher tuition prices, professors and university staff are experiencing layoffs and those who will have a job next year will be expected to pick up the slack for the same amount of money. It seems contradictory

that the president of Western will maintain a six-figure salary with a housing allowance and expect so many people to give up so much.

If you truly want to be approachable to the Western community, show your solidarity and compassion by giving back, even a small percentage, to the university.

You can not reasonably expect the Western community to make personal financial sacrifices and not hold the same standard to your own position.

Even next year's Associated Students president Matt Jarrell will be making less than his predecessor due to the budget cuts.

According to the article, "Presidents of Colleges Give Back Some Pay" in the New York Times, Elson S. Floyd, the president of Washington State University, took a voluntary pay cut of \$100,000 for the upcoming school year. Similarly, Amy Gutmann, president of the University of Pennsylvania, and her husband made a

\$100,000 donation to the university to support undergraduate research.

These university presidents set a lofty example of what it means to be a university president. They show that the true duty of a university president is to give back to the campus community in every way possible.

You made a promise to the Western community when you became president to lead by example and support the integrity and compassion that makes Western unique.

Now is the time for an act of solidarity and generosity. Donate a small percentage back to Western to save one job, help out one student or help update a computer lab and show how much you care.

The Editorial Board is comprised of the Editor-in-Chief Jeff Twining, Managing Editor Gabrielle Nomura, Opinion Editor Danielle Koagel and community member-at-large Joel Holland.

Real life lessons from a college graduate



Jaimie Fife
Columnist

It's really happening—the beginning of the end. Not only are you reading my final column, but it's also my last week of classes at Western, which means I'll be 'strutting my stuff' in a blue muumuu in about two weeks.

But before I become a stranger to this place, I want to share nine things I've learned during the past four years. To set the mood, please envision "Bittersweet Symphony," a pre-emo/meaningful 90s track by the Verve, is playing in the background.

1. Textbooks are A-OK: After repeatedly selling my old textbooks for diddly-squat, I finally realized they are worth keeping, especially if I have the urge to reminisce during a midlife crisis. Your textbooks are timeless treasures worth keeping because you can look at them long after you have blanked on the specifics of your courses.

2. Join Some Stuff: College is the premier time to foster life-long connections with other like-minded cool kids. So, don't leave college without joining at least one organization and meeting people in your major. Mingling your lil' fanny off in your spare time makes perfect sense be-

cause life opportunities are often derivatives of 'who you know.'

3. Balance is Key: Number two should be examined with number three in mind. In order to master this school thang, students must achieve both good grades and good times via time budgeting.

4. Professors Are Friends, Not Foes: More often than not, professors are chill people who want you to succeed. Why not check-out the 'office hours scene'? I promise you will 'get it' more and your grades will thank you.

5. It's All Right to Say "No!"—to going out on a school night, to another commitment, to PBR and other devices of crunkeness, to relations with dudes/gal-pals, etc. Basically, in my humble opinion, college is a time to be selfish because we become increasingly more accountable for other people as we mature. So the most imperative goal right now should be taking care of number one, within reason of course (please don't become a sociopath, OK?).

6. Never Stop Questioning: The world needs us—needs us to challenge the status quo so humanity can make positive strides. It's essential that we utilize our acquired critical thinking skills beyond Western's walls. Quoting Socrates, my ancient Greek homeboy, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

7. Go To Class: As a freshman, I was told within the first week "C's get degrees, so don't worry about going to class. Just

study before the test." Strictly speaking, it's true—being average and cramming will probably get you through college. However, such a stance seems immature to me because we are paying to be here, some employers now ask about grades and education is the only thing that can never be taken from you—that you can always count on. Don't sell yourself short—show up to class.

8. Be yourself: The 'Ham is an acceptable place with many open-minded and approachable folks. As a result, most things go, as long as they don't offend people. So feel free to relish in 'doing as you please' since a lot of the jerks from K-12 went to colleges with Greek systems. In fact, for the most part, you only have to worry about elitist alternative-bros and bricks (bro chicks) in these parts.

9. Decide to be Happy Today: Last but not least, if you can't have fun in college—an era many college graduates define as the experience of their lives—good friggin' luck ever being happy. When stress has you buggin' and life in general seems whack-attack, stop and smell the roses because most of it will seem like small potatoes later on. Seems simple enough, but I didn't fully grasp this point until this year. So, in conclusion—do your best and have fun!

Goodbye, Western. It's been real.

Jaimie Fife is a senior double majoring in philosophy and journalism.

Letter to the Editor:

Registration unfair to disadvantaged freshmen

There is something wrong with our registration process.

I understand the importance of giving priority to students who are nearing graduation. We must realize, however, that this most often applies to higher-level courses or the random lower-level GUR.

I have nothing wrong with giving these students precedence. I do, however, have a problem with giving an advantage to students who were fortunate enough to go to high schools that offered Advanced

Placement (AP) classes.

Not all high schools offer AP classes. By making the students who enter college with no credits register last, we magnify the academic inequality that was created by less advantaged high schools.

I realize that there is no right answer, but this does not mean the current system should not be tweaked.

Simon Davis-Cohen
Western junior

Viking Voices

Opinions from around campus

What has been the best part of your spring quarter?

Compiled by: Katelyn Yruretagoyena



Casey Nolan
Sophomore

"Starting a new band."



Nick Freedman
Freshman

"Being on the downtown mountain biking team and going to races."



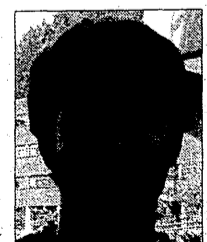
Anna Hashman
Sophomore

"Finishing my GURs."



Cate Carlson
Freshman

"The weather is so much better than it has been all year."



Paul Williamson
Sophomore

"I moved into a new house."

Let your voice be heard!

Send letters to the editor that are no longer than 250 words to

opinion@westernfrontonline.net

Letters to the Editor: (con't.)

Inmate housing plan inadequate for York Neighborhood

Whatcom County has signed an agreement with Pioneer Human Services to implement an offender re-entry program located in Bellingham's York Neighborhood at City Gate Apartments on Holly Street.

Resistance by York Neighborhood residents to this program for persons just released from jail or prison could easily be construed as a "Not In My Backyard" attitude. That this is not the case can be inferred from the presence over the years of group homes and halfway houses within the York Neighborhood.

Our concerns about the offender re-entry program are not based on a lack of compassion for people who might potentially become homeless because of their circumstances.

Our concerns are provoked by a lack of communication from the project proponents with all stakeholders by failing to notify the York Neighborhood residents or the York Neighborhood Association prior to the project being a done deal.

Members of the York Neighborhood Association learned about the offender re-entry program by reading about it in The Bellingham Herald only after the apartment building had been leased by Pioneer Human Services.

We understand that Whatcom County has been working on the project for nearly a year; however, no information was shared with the Bellingham neighborhood associations except for a brief announcement at the Bellingham Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission meeting.

We believe the location is unsuitable in several ways. The facility has studio apartments with no shared kitchens or lounge-community space. Communal areas, provided in houses, would seem more likely to provide successful outcomes.

This area of the city has ongoing problems with many street people, panhandling, drug and alcohol problems.

If clients slated for the City Gate proj-

ect have chemical dependency problems, this location could contribute to those problems and could exacerbate problems in the surrounding neighborhood.

Students renting property in close proximity and their parents should be notified about the re-entry facility prior to signing a lease on their residence.

There is also inadequate onsite facility management proposed for this program.

Currently, only one residential manager is being hired for 40 hours per week. Who will be in charge during the other 128 hours of the week?

Because a single resident manager will be working only eight hours per day, there will be times when there is no resident manager present in the building.

There is one case manager; however, this person will not live on site. The residential manager is paid at entry level and only requires a high school diploma.

We ask the County Council to intervene on behalf of the York Neighborhood residents to help assure a successful implementation of this project and, toward that end, we ask for support of the following:

- Reduce to 15 the number of offender reentry clients in the building, at this time, and implement the program as a pilot project.

- Provide onsite residential management 24/7 by hiring additional staff.

- Upgrade the requirements of the residential manager to an appropriate professional level with education, experience and training for this kind of program.

- Make explicit a commitment to mental health evaluation of potential residents and ongoing onsite program services.

- Consider creating a communal area in the apartment building by converting two of the living spaces.

- Create an opportunity for ongoing communication and reporting by Whatcom County staff and the contractor, Pioneer Human Services, to the York Neighborhood Association and add a representa-

tive from the neighborhood, chosen by the York Neighborhood Association Board, to the local oversight committee in charge of this project.

- Request the City of Bellingham Police Department increase patrols of the area to create a more visible law enforcement presence once the program is initiated and to help alleviate concerns within the neighborhood.

- Require the contractor (or County staff) to mail a notice to residents and property owners within 500 feet of City Gate Apartments to inform them of the planned use of the apartment building, program start date, facility and case management oversight commitments.

The York Neighborhood Board of Directors and residents of the York Neighborhood.

Support the creation of a Department of Peace

The U.S. Navy defines peace as a perpetual state of pre-hostility, merely stating that absence of brutality yields peace.

Representative Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) wrote legislation creating a Department of Peace, in the first step toward positive peace.

On a domestic level, the department will enact policies and assist programs to effectively eliminate domestic and gang violence and various other forms of societal discord.

Internationally, the department will preside as nonviolent advocates and as peaceful diplomatic conflict resolution among nations to the government.

President Barack Obama has called twice now to increase troops in Afghanistan. Each troop costs American tax payers \$750,000 per year of service, whereas a Western student could subsist on about \$20,000 per year.

Our priorities in America must be re-evaluated.

From every corner of earth, from the spiritual and ethical beliefs of many people and from the thunderous booms of leaders

who have preached peace, nonviolence has been recognized as the only way. It is necessary that each person participate in nonviolent action in order to sustain the globe.

Otherwise, it is likely that a modern war could destroy the world as we know it.

Please write to your local representatives urging them to support the Department of Peace.

Iris Maute-Gibson
Western freshman

American farmers deserve fair market compensation

I have recently become aware that the death rate of farmers compared to the general population in America has almost tripled because of suicide.

This figure was accurate six years ago, and the elevated death rate is still relevant today.

While this figure is not necessarily visible within our Bellingham community, on the national scale, it is a concerning figure.

Some farmers have turned to suicide because of the buying power of supermarkets that has left small farms in competition with one another of mass production of cheap food, buying from the lowest bidder.

Because of this, farmers are not always able to produce food at a competitive rate with others, and production costs rise while profit margins fall leaving farmers in a state of loss and debt.

These are American farmers, many of whom receive government subsidies.

Worse yet, those who live in the peripheral countries do not share the same luxury.

In a day and age even with an economy in turmoil, this should not be happening.

Hazel Hessel
Western student

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And the dynasty continues...

Western's women's crew team wins fifth national title with a young, inexperienced team

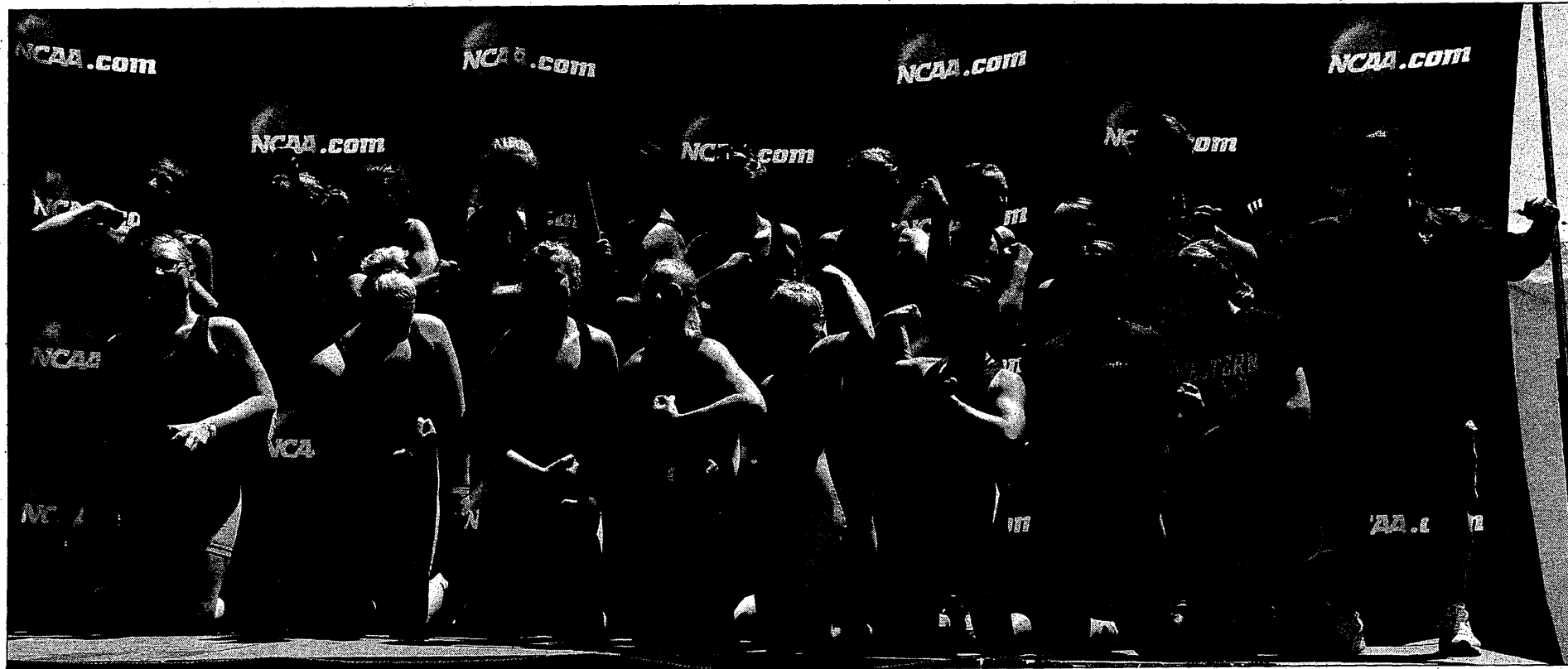


Photo courtesy of Benjamin Solomon

Western's women's crew team celebrates their fifth consecutive national title with head coach John Fuchs, assistant coach Carla Landis and certified athletic trainer Masayoshi Migita. The women competed on May 29-31 on Cooper River in Camden, N.J.

Kevin Minnick
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Western women's crew reasserted their position as queens of the water this weekend, claiming their fifth straight national title at the NCAA Division II rowing championship on Cooper River in Camden, N.J.

The Vikings have now rowed into uncharted waters, as no other team in any division has ever won five straight championships since the first NCAA rowing championships in 1997.

"I think the ball has just begun rolling, and it's going to get better in these next couple years," Western varsity four sophomore Siri Carlson said.

The victory capped off a first-ever undefeated season for the varsity eight crew, who finished first with a time of 6 minutes, 52.6 seconds.

Western's varsity four boat placed third in Friday's qualifying match, but they bounced back to win the last-chance qualifying heat on Saturday to earn a spot

in Sunday's grand final.

The Vikings' varsity four boat placed second behind Nova Southeastern University in Sunday's grand final, but managed to edge out East Coast rival Mercyhurst College by four-tenths of a second with a time of 7:57.34.

Prior to the championship, Western had been ranked No. 2 nationally in the USRowing/Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association NCAA II Poll, behind No. 1 ranked Mercyhurst, who had last won a national title in 2004.

"I think that was our best race ever," Carlson said. "We could not have squeezed out anything else because it is safe to say we were all exhausted after that."

Western senior varsity eight coxswain Kristy Theodorson said maintaining a lower stroke rate is one of the reasons they won the varsity eight race.

Head coach John Fuchs said the Western team practices heavier rows and lower stroke rates in order to build a steady rhythm.

"Rowing at a higher rate can some-

times bite you in the butt," Fuchs said. "There is more of a chance to make mistakes."

Western trailed Mercyhurst in the first 500 meters of the varsity eight heat, but the Vikings built up enough momentum to propel them to take first by more than a boat length in the end.

"We kind of knew going into it that we might be down off the starting line," Theodorson said. "We were prepared to have to claw our way back, like we have done all season."

Sunday's grand final marked the end of the collegiate rowing careers for four of Western's crew members.

"I don't think it has hit me quite yet," Theodorson said. "It may not for awhile. It feels really good. It's going to be a reality shock getting back to Bellingham."

Western senior varsity four member Hilary Gastwirth has been along for four national rowing titles with Western. She said it has been an emotional year since she knew this year was the last.

"Right after we finished the race, I

took my last stroke and just started crying," Gastwirth said. "I was like, 'Oh God!' It really hit me then."

Gastwirth said she will continue living in Bellingham next year, and she hopes to graduate after fall quarter. She said it will be fun to watch the young team next year.

"The girls had a really fast uptake," Gastwirth said. "They came in already being really good athletes, and they adapted well to rowing. If the majority of them come back [next year], then it will be a great few years ahead."

Half of Western's varsity rowers this weekend were freshmen. Fuchs said while they lack experience, they are incredibly fit and fast learners.

Even though Theodorson will no longer row with the Vikings, she said she is excited for the future of the young team because she knows how talented they are.

"They are amazing athletes and tough women," Theodorson said. "I think the team is only going to get better from here. I don't doubt it at all."

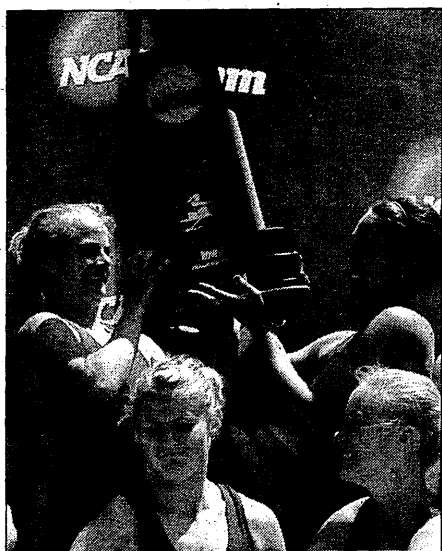


Photo courtesy of Benjamin Solomon

Western basks in their glory after finishing on top at the national championships for their fifth consecutive year.



Photo courtesy of Benjamin Solomon

The No. 2-ranked Viking's varsity four boat beat No. 1-ranked Mercyhurst College by a whole boat length. The Vikings crossed the finish line of the 2,000-meter course with a time of 7:45.45.

Blitz to bring back football fever

Whatcom County's new professional team shows Bellingham their talent at community day event

Andrew Mitchell
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Bellingham Blitz, Whatcom County's new professional football team, took their first real step in tackling the lack of football in Bellingham, since the Western football team was cut last January, when they held the "Blitz Pro Football Community Day" at Civic Stadium Saturday.

The team of 36, which has 15 former Western football players on the current roster, held a free fan appreciation event, including a barbeque and football camp, to make a first impression on the community.

The community day was intended to start the process of getting support from the town and also included a team scrimmage to show the fans in attendance the level of football the Blitz will play in the upcoming season.

"This event was all about giving something to the community to show that we want and need their support," Bellingham Blitz head coach Brian Young said. "We wanted to show that we appreciate any and all fans. While we do not intend to completely replace what Western football was to this town, we want them to know we intend to bring high-caliber football to the area."

The Blitz have the same owner and head coach of the now-defunct semi-pro Whatcom Raiders, who won consecutive Cascade Football League titles, including a national championship in 2008.

While many Western players continue

their football careers with the Blitz, other players come from Division I, II and III colleges, minor league football teams and former NFL players.

The community day began with a free training camp offered to children ages 14 and younger. Blitz players worked with the children in a variety of drills, including carrying the football, agility training and running.

Young said he received positive feedback from parents, who were grateful the players took the time to do something special for the children.

Tom Abbott, team owner and president, said one goal of the community day was to show Bellingham that the team wants to be a part of the community.

"I want to provide a free outlet for these young men to play for," Abbott said. "We're not asking for donations or funding from the community, but this day shows what the team is willing to provide the city and that might make the people more likely to want to come to the games and want to help support the team."

Western junior and former Viking tight end Brandon O'Dore said the team knows many people in Bellingham might have heard of the Blitz, and there is a buzz that the team is an option for high-level football for Bellingham in the future. He said the community day was a good way to show the public that this team will deliver on that promise.

"It's great that we have generated a small following without even playing a game through word of mouth, but people won't believe it until they see it on the

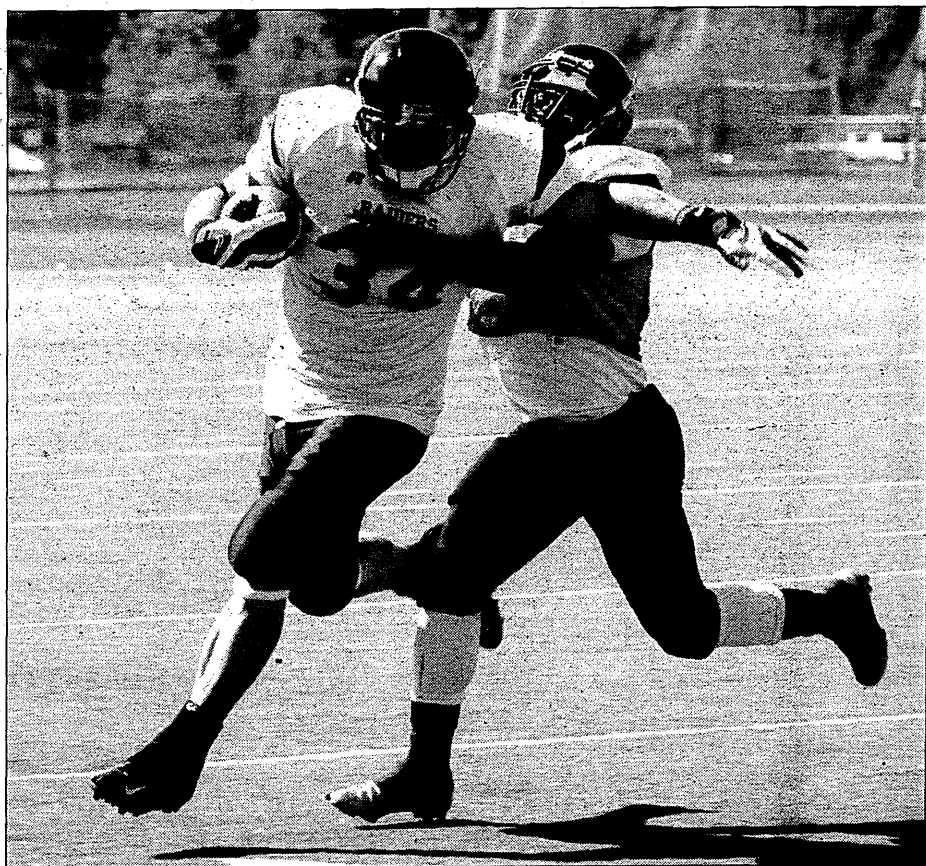


Photo by Katie Greene THE WESTERN FRONT

Western junior Jordan Carey, who is a running back for the Bellingham Blitz, evades a tackle during a scrimmage against the defense Saturday. Carey was a safety for the Vikings before the program was cut in January.

field," O'Dore said. "This was a great first step in connecting us to the community in person to show them we are a talented team, so that people can really begin to get excited about the upcoming season. It was all about spreading the word today."

Later, the Blitz played a scrimmage

between the team's offensive and defensive players to finish the community day. The team tried to schedule an exhibition scrimmage against the North Sound Sting,

see **BLITZ** page 18

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Vikings surge through rough waters at nationals

Lisa Carrouger
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western's sailing team's dedication prepared them for the Women's College Sailing Nationals, which were held May 25-27 in San Francisco, Calif., said Western junior and sailing co-captain Katie Stephens.

The team competed in eight races at nationals and was given 25 minutes for each race, said Western senior and sailing skipper Molly Jackson. The Western sailors had two fleets of boats racing in each race, and the sailors alternated between races, she said.

Western junior and sport club representative Mallory Abston said the team finished 16th place out of 18 on Tuesday. The weather was windy, but despite the conditions, the team raced hard from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Western junior and sailing commodore Calla Ward said Tuesday was difficult because of the current, but by Wednesday's races, the team was getting the hang of it.

"We are switching crews, and we are

giving crews a break," Ward said.

Abston said the team did not compete on Monday, the first day of competition, because they were there to observe the semi-nationals in which they were not scheduled to compete.

"We took advantage of being here and took notes to prepare for Tuesday," Abston said.

Jackson took 4th place out of 18, so the team was excited, Abston said.

Abston said she believes the team reached the nationals this year because of their hard work in practices and support for one another.

"We have empowered each other to work harder," Ward said. "It is nice to see women succeed at this sport and to see women out on the water."

Although the team traveled a long distance to the nationals in San Francisco, this is only one of the many locations the team has traveled to recently, Stephens said. Last year, Stephens said many sailors on the team traveled to Rhode Island for nationals; this year, Jackson said the team traveled to Hawaii to compete, which not only was a chance for the team to race but

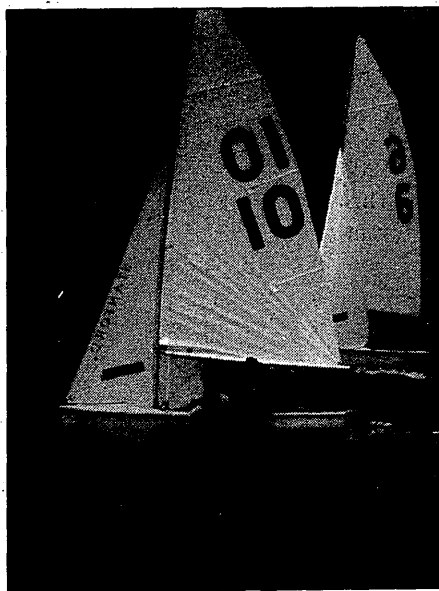


Photo courtesy of Mallory Abston

Western juniors Katie Stephens and Calla Ward sail upwind in boat No. 10 at nationals in San Francisco, Calif.

time for them to bond and vacation.

In order to fund their out-of-state competitions, the team consistently holds

fundraisers. Since the team is a club sport, it receives a given amount from Western, but also works at events, such as Bumbershoot and Seafair, to raise additional money, Stephens said.

In addition to other destinations, Jackson said the team has competed in Seattle, Portland, Eugene, Ore., Victoria, B.C., Boston and Texas.

"We usually go on three long distance competitions a quarter, but it depends on what we qualify for," Jackson said.

Jackson said in order to be a qualified sailor to go to competitions members have to know about different wind shifts and be able to judge on the water, so they can use the rules to their advantage.

"It is not all about the physicality, but it has a lot to do with mentality," Jackson said. "The wind is constantly changing, so there are a lot of tactics."

Abston said she believes working together as a team is what has made the team so successful.

"It is such a unique sport, and it is really fun to be out there. We work hard for something that is really rewarding," Abston said.

BLITZ: Team holds youth camp and scrimmage to promote upcoming season

from 17

a minor league football team out of Oak Harbor, Wash., but the Sting was unable to field enough players from the team to come to Bellingham because it is their offseason, Abbott said.

Young said Blitz players were initially disappointed they could not play against another team because the Blitz wanted to show themselves what they could do against another team and not just against each other.

However, O'Dore said the players still felt the scrimmage was a success because the skill level of the players on the Blitz is the highest in the Bellingham area, which is better for them to play against. He said another benefit of the scrimmage was playing in front of a crowd that filled approximately one-third of the home side stands.

"It was a great stepping stone toward

the season because we got to play in front of a real crowd and feel the type of pressure that goes along with that," O'Dore said. "We've got incredible athletes on this team, so playing against that competition in front of all these people will prepare us for the season."

"Today was the first step to give the fans something to cheer about, and we hope we can help inspire the football spirit in this town again."

- Western junior Jordan Carey
Former Western safety and Blitz running back

O'Dore and former Viking wide receiver Dre Williams caught touchdown passes from Western sophomore and former Viking wide receiver Cody Oakes, who played quarterback during the scrimmage. Western junior and former Viking safety Jordan Carey played running back

and carried the ball for gains of more than 10 yards multiple times during the scrimmage.

"We had some things that went really good during the game, and we realized that there are things we still need to work on," Young said. "We have some time before

semi-pro team out of Sumner, Wash. The team begins their regular season on July 11 in the Professional Northwest Football League, formerly called the Next Level Football League. The Blitz will proceed to play three straight games on the road and will play their first home game at Civic Stadium August 8.

Because the team is new, Carey said it will probably take a couple years for the community to get familiar with the Blitz and give the team a substantial following, but he said he believes that a high-level team will be necessary for fans who feel the town has a football void.

"It wasn't just the players on the Western football team and the students who were affected when the team was cut from the school; the whole community was let down," Carey said. "Today was the first step to give the fans something to cheer about and we hope we can help inspire the football spirit in this town again."

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'Strong' redefined in Western competition

Steven Houck
THE WESTERN FRONT

Athletes poured their blood and sweat into five different events in a quest to find the strongest man at Western. Western hosted its first annual Strongest Man Competition on the turf field on Saturday, May 30, on Western's campus.

The overall winners of the competition were Western freshman powerlifter Casey McDaniel in the lightweight division and Western senior powerlifter Chris Lee in the heavyweight division. The two athletes each received a knight's sword for their accomplishment.

"The events are not your ordinary bench press or squats either," Western sophomore powerlifter Conrad Larson said. "These events truly test your absolute full abilities in power lifting."

Larson said most of the athletes have been working with each other throughout the school year.

"The best part about this event is that we are all friends," Western junior powerlifter Nathan Donohue said. "We are happy for everyone's success."

Not one athlete sat down to rest after competing in their event. Instead, they would all stand up and cheer on the other athletes in their performance.

"We, in a sense, are competing against each other, but we want everyone to do their best," Larson said. "Friendship is the true role in the sport of powerlifting."

The competition was broken down into two weight classes for the athletes: lightweights—individuals under 200 pounds—and heavyweights—individuals over 200 pounds. The first event was called the yoke in which the athletes had to carry a yoke 50 feet in 60 seconds or less.

The lightweight athletes had to carry 540 pound yokes, or two vertical bars, on their backs, whereas the heavyweight athletes had to carry 695 pounds.

"This event kills your core and legs," Western sophomore powerlifter Jake Renouard said. "It's a great event to start a grueling workout."

The second event was the overhead medley, which consisted of four different

stages in which the athletes had to clearly lift an item above their head before they moved on to the next item. The heavy-weight athletes had to lift items ranging from 120 to 275 pounds.

"This was easily the most dangerous event of the five because there is a lot of form and technique to lifting large amounts over your head," Larson said.

The third event was the last-man-standing deadlift. The deadlift is a lift where an individual pulls the barbell from the floor with both hands until his or her body is fully upright.

The lightweight athletes started at 315 pounds, and the heavyweight athletes started at 405. From then on weight was added by 40- or 50-pound increments. If the athletes did not deadlift the weight, they were knocked out of the competition.

Larson said he had a big crowd come cheer him on for the competition, specifically for the deadlift.

"This was truly the coolest experience I could have asked for," Larson said. "It means so much to me that my friends and family came out to support me."

Larson ended up winning the deadlift event, lifting a personal best 565 pounds, crushing his previous Washington state record of 483 pounds. He set his previous state record in Olympia last March.

The fourth event was the tire flip, but this was not an ordinary tire seen on a car. Athletes were flipping either 600-pound tires for the lightweight group or 808 pounds for the heavyweight. The tire flip was a timed event to see how fast the athletes could flip the tires five times.

"Every second counts so you have to really just flip as fast and hard as you can from the start," Donohue said.

The fifth and final event of the competition was the lifting of the atlas stones. Five stones had to be loaded on to a 52-inch platform within 90 seconds. Every athlete who participated in the event had torn up arms and chests from scratches the stones made.

The lightweight athletes had to carry stones ranging from 150 to 265 pounds. The heavyweight athletes lifted stones ranging from 240 to 335 pounds.

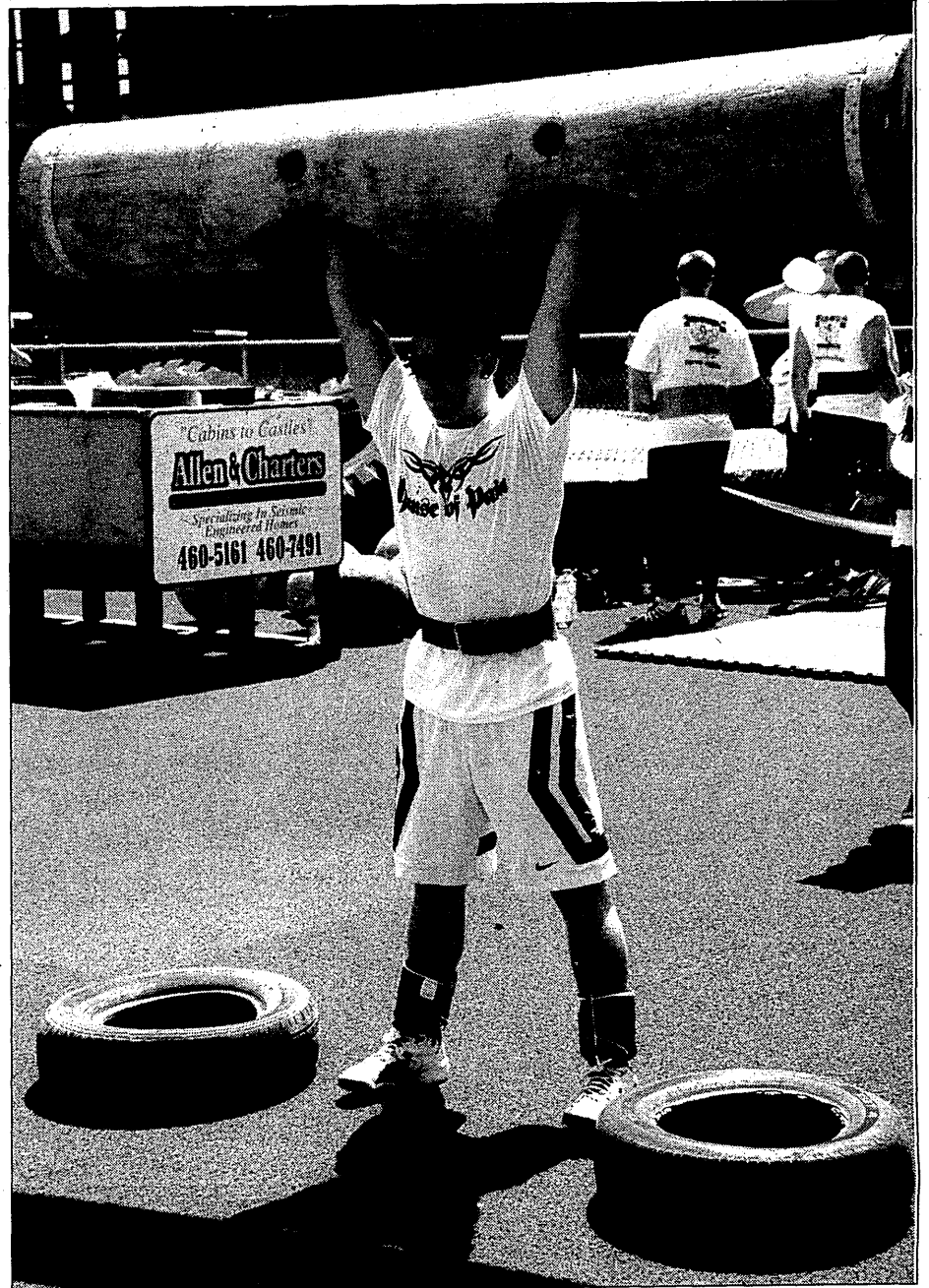


Photo by Katie Greene THE WESTERN FRONT

Western freshman Casey McDaniel competes in the overhead medley in the Strongest Man Competition Saturday. McDaniel won the lightweight division.

"It was a little bloody, but that is what comes with this sport," Renouard said. "It is entertaining for everyone to watch athletes do these kind of powerlifting events."

Renouard said the athletes showed focus and intensity while competing in the events.

Donohue said he is looking forward to next year's competition.

Western plans to compete against Central Washington University and Eastern Washington University in next year's competition, he said.

"This was a huge success, and I am proud of all my teammates," Larson said.

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