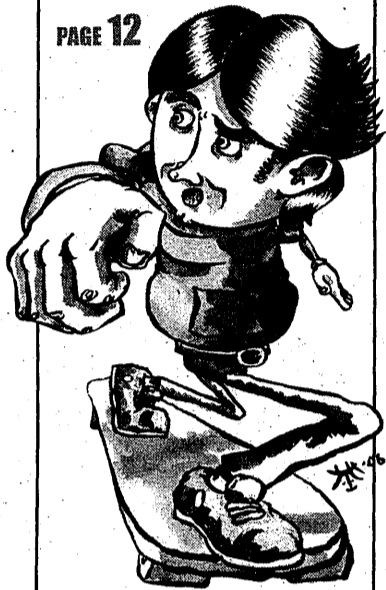


IN THE FRONT

OPINION

Western's skateboard policy outlaws cheap, safe, environmentally friendly travel

PAGE 12



FEATURES

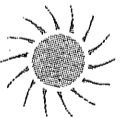
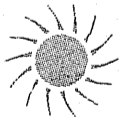
Sober Rovers celebrate one year of rescuing the inebriated

PAGE 8



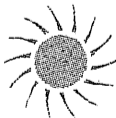
WEATHER

Tuesday
64° / 40°



Wednesday
65° / 43°

Thursday
62° / 42°



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photo by Matt Gagne THE WESTERN FRONT

Shellfish gatherers dig for clams and oysters off the coast of Semiahmoo County Park near the border last May. On Sept. 26 health officials banned gathering shellfish on Whatcom County beaches due to blooms of red tide, an algae that makes shellfish poisonous to humans.

Whatcom County beaches closed to shellfish harvesting

Graig Hill
THE WESTERN FRONT

Health officials have closed all recreational harvesting of shellfish on Whatcom County beaches due to an unsafe level of marine biotoxins.

The biotoxins, which can cause the potentially deadly illness Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP), were found Sept. 26 during routine testing, said Paul Chudek, environmental health supervisor for the Whatcom County Department of Health.

Sometimes called "red tides," algae blooms are a natural phenomenon, Chudek said.

Chudek said recreational shellfish harvesters should call the Washington State

Department of Health Biototoxin Hotline before harvesting shellfish anywhere in Washington state. The closures are not limited to Whatcom County, Chudek said.

"I wouldn't rely on a sign that says it's OK or not to dig," Chudek said. "The best thing that they've done to prevent shellfish poisoning is the hotline."

Chudek said the state-operated hotline has the most up-to-date information about beach conditions.

When humans eat shellfish with large enough concentrations of the toxins, the nervous system is impaired, said Paul Dinnell, a Western marine scientist at Shannon Point Marine Center.

"If you get a good dose, it's best to

get to the hospital so they can put you on a respirator," Dinnell said. "If you eat the shellfish you could die."

Eating shellfish from Whatcom County beaches could cause PSP, the potentially deadly neurological illness. Poisoning symptoms include numbness in the tongue and lips, restricted breathing and could lead to death.

The county regularly collects batches of blue mussels from Birch Bay, Bellingham Bay and Drayton Harbor for testing by the Washington State Department of Health, Chudek said. The department tests for concentrations of toxic microorganisms

see **BEACHES** page 6 ►

Latino Fest gathers diverse communities

Mary Andom
THE WESTERN FRONT

Antonio Esqueda plated a healthy portion of fragrant rice and hearty chicken molè as the deep-voiced guitarró of a mariachi band entertained a diverse crowd at the Whatcom Hispanic Organization's annual cultural celebration at Donovan Park Oct. 1.

The Latino Fest is a community tradition that has brought Esqueda, an academic support coordinator at Western's Student Outreach Center, back

for the past five years. He said Latino Fest is one of the few events outside of campus where he can proudly display his culture.

"There is so much diversity within this event. It is a way for the community to celebrate itself," Esqueda said.

Born in Mexico, Esqueda came to the United States when he was 10. His family settled in the south Seattle community of South Park, which he fondly calls "Little Mexico." Although his cultural ties were rooted

in his homeland, Esqueda felt at home in South Park. This wasn't the case when he came to Western his freshman year.

"It was definitely a culture shock to come from a diverse area to a homogenous community like Bellingham," Esqueda said.

To help ease his adjustment, Esqueda said he reached out to his community as a source of support. He became active in the Ethnic Student Center and

see **FESTIVAL** page 4 ►

"There is so much diversity within this event. It is a way for the community to celebrate itself."
- Antonio Esqueda
Support Coordinator
Western's Student Outreach

>>News Briefs<<

Western professors edit book on immigration

A new reference book edited by Western faculty members James Loucky, Jeanne Armstrong and Larry Estrada addresses a host of topics about modern immigration.

In "Immigration in America Today," the authors offer more than 70 entries that focus on aspects of immigration that are issues found in today's society, ranging from bilingual education to homeland security and stereotypes. In all, 13 Western faculty and students, including the three editors, contributed to the topical entries.

Campus blood drive

The Puget Sound Blood Center will return to Western Oct. 17 through Oct. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Blood donations will be taken in Viking Union room 565 and the mini-mobile in Red Square near the Humanities Building.

Western ranks as one of the largest donor groups in the Puget Sound region, due to a blood drive each quarter.

Donors must be at least 18 years old, 110 pounds, and not have received a tattoo in the last year. The process takes less than an hour. Free juice and cookies are offered following donation. To avoid a line, come the first day or early in the morning.



The crisp air and golden leaves outside of Arntzen Hall signify the onset of autumn. photo by Mark Malijan THE WESTERN FRONT

Western professor and undergraduate study the formation of North America

Western Geology associate professor Bernie Housen and undergraduate Jon Cooper traveled to Southeast Alaska this summer to study the formation of North America.

Housen and Cooper collected samples, measured magnetic directions, made geological maps and looked at dips of bedding layers in the rocks around Kodiak Island. Their goal was to test competing theories about where the rocks were located 60 million years ago.

Western intramural sign-ups

Wednesday is the final day for fall intramural sports sign-ups. Fall intramural sports include soccer (11 on 11, outdoor), flag football, volleyball (6 on 6), basketball (3 on 3) and wiffle ball.

The team fee is \$40 per team, with a \$10 forfeit fee. Sign-up forms are available online.

Student and community member forum

On Oct. 18, the Campus Community Coalition will host a forum entitled Living Together in Bellingham: Student Parties,

Enforcement Practices and Neighborly Relations.

The forum is designed to take a look at the party and noise issues facing students, long-term community members and law enforcement officers, and how they can better co-exist in Bellingham's integrated neighborhoods.

Community members, students and local law enforcement will attend to answer questions and discuss what can be done to resolve neighborly conflicts in the residential neighborhoods around campus.

Compiled by Taylor Scaggs

Cops Box

Western Campus Police:

- » Oct. 3, 6:57 p.m.: Officers responded to a complaint of a natural gas smell in the Administration and Services building.
- » Oct. 4, 12:21 a.m.: Officers arrested two 19-year-olds on suspicion of alcohol possession on south campus.
- » Oct. 4, 1:41 a.m.: Officers responded to a complaint that someone was knocking on doors in Buchanan Towers. The suspect was found and referred to the on-duty resident advisor.
- » Oct. 4, 10:27 p.m.: Officers responded to a report that a man was streaking in the Viking Union.
- » Oct. 5, 7:57 p.m.: Officers responded to reports that a dog was tied to a pole outside Edens North. The Humane Society returned the dog to its owners.

Bellingham Police Department:

- » Oct. 6, 8:31 a.m.: Officers responded to a report of mail theft in the 800 block of Liberty Avenue.
- » Oct. 7, 12:35 p.m.: Officers arrested a 71-year-old man on suspicion of stealing tools from a hardware store. The man was banned for life from the store.
- » Oct. 7, 3:40 p.m.: Police responded to reports of a man threatening others with a meat cleaver on Holly Drive.
- » Oct. 7, 6:42 p.m.: Officers responded to a report of malicious damage done to a woman's front door on Donovan Avenue.

Compiled by Katie Regan

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and recycle
this newspaper**

THE WESTERN FRONT

WesternFrontOnline.com

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The Western Front is published twice weekly in the fall, winter, and spring quarters and once a week in the summer session. The Western Front is the official newspaper of Western Washington University, published by the Student Publications Council and is mainly supported by advertising. Opinions and stories in the newspaper have no connection with advertising. News content is determined by student editors. Staff reporters are enrolled in a course in the department of journalism, but any student enrolled at Western may offer stories to the editors. Advertising inquiries should be directed to the business office in CF 230 or by phone at 650-3161. Members of the Western community are entitled to a single free copy of each issue of The Western Front.

WWU Official Announcements – PLEASE POST

Deadline for announcements in this space is noon Friday for the Tuesday edition and noon Wednesday for the Friday edition, except when otherwise noted. Announcements should be limited to 50 words and be typewritten or legibly printed. Announcements may be sent to FAST@wwu.edu — in the subject line include a one-word topic and clearly note that the item is for Official Announcements. Items also may be sent to "Official Announcements," MS-9117, faxed to X/4343, or brought to Commissary 111. DO NOT SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE WESTERN FRONT. Phoned announcements will not be accepted.

CHECK THE TESTING CENTER WEB SITE for testing schedules at www.ac.wwu.edu/~assess/tc.htm.

THE MATH PLACEMENT TEST (MPT) will be given at 3 p.m. Mondays in OM 120 on Oct. 16, 23, 30; Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27; Dec. 4, 11, and at 9 a.m. Thursdays in OM 120 on Oct. 19, 26, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30; Dec. 1, 8 and 15. Registration is not required. Students must bring photo identification, their student number, Social Security number, and a No. 2 pencil. A \$15 fee is payable in the exact amount at test time. Allow 90 minutes.

FIND OUT ABOUT THE HUMAN SERVICES MAJOR at a 1 p.m. information session on Thursday, Oct. 12, in Miller Hall 210, or call X/7759 for information.

THE MATH PLACEMENT TEST schedule and sample topics may be found at www.ac.wwu.edu/~assess/tc.htm.

AN APPOINTMENT TO TAKE THE MILLER ANALOGIES TEST (MAT) must be made either in person in OM 120 or by calling X/3080. A \$60 fee is payable at test time. The test takes approximately 1.5 hours. Preliminary scores will be available immediately. Official results will be mailed within 15 days.

WEST-B TEST. Anyone applying for admission to state-approved teacher education programs must meet the minimum passing score on the basic skills assessment by the application deadline. Visit www.west.nesinc.com for registration information and a study guide with sample test questions. Test dates for 2006-07 are Nov. 4, Jan. 20, March 10, May 12, and July 14. Registration deadlines are several weeks in advance.

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR THE RECREATION DEGREE PROGRAM is Friday, Nov. 17. Application materials and a pre-scheduled faculty interview must be completed by that date. For more information, stop by the Recreation Program Office in Old Carver 6, call x3782, or go to <http://www.wwu.edu/pehr/Recreation/index.shtml>.

WASHINGTON EDUCATOR SKILLS TEST — ENDORSEMENTS (WEST-E PRAXIS) Washington state requires individuals seeking teacher certification and teachers seeking additional endorsements to pass a subject knowledge assessment in the chosen endorsement area (the Washington Educator Skills Test — Endorsement, or WEST-E). Washington state has chosen specific Praxis II series tests to meet this requirement, now referred to as the WEST-E Praxis. Visit www.ets.org/praxis/prxwa.html for description and online registration information. Registration bulletins are also available in MH 216.

WEST-E (PRAXIS) test dates for 2006-07 are Nov. 18, Jan. 13, March 3, April 28, June 9, and Aug. 4.

On-campus recruiting

For complete, updated information, see www.careers.wwu.edu or stop by Old Main 280.

• Oct. 13: • Clothier Head; • Oct. 16: • Deloitte, Ernst & Young; • Oct. 17: Moss Adams; • Oct. 18: • Clark Nuber, PS; • Oct. 19: • McGladrey; Sweeny Conrad; • Oct. 20: • Grant Thornton; KPMG LLP; • Oct. 23: Varner, Sytsma, Herndon; • Oct. 25: • Consolidated Electrical; Falco Sult; Oct. 26: • Consolidate Electrical; • Oct. 26-27: Jostia.com; • Nov. 1: Pacific Capital Resource Group, Inc.

South campus sees new development

G.S. Raugust
THE WESTERN FRONT

Condos being built south of campus will provide Western students with a new housing option.

Located on 32nd Street between Ferry and Douglas avenues, Cypress Place condominiums offer studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units for prices ranging from \$119,000 to \$220,000 said real-estate broker Doug Foster of The Muljat Group realtors.

The Muljat Group is handling sales of the condos. The building will have 144 units when completed.

"There are a lot of people who wanted to buy in the Southside of Bellingham but couldn't afford it before," Foster said. "Prior to these buildings there was nothing in that price range to buy in southern Bellingham."

Though construction on the condos isn't finished yet, roughly half of the units are already sold, Foster said. Construction on the remaining units should be completed by Western's

winter quarter, he said.

"I think it's a great location for a first-time homebuyer or a Western student because it's close to shopping and on a bus line so it's got convenience," said Frank Muljat, owner-broker of The Muljat Group.

First-time homebuyers, young professionals, professors, and Western students and their families are the primary purchasers of the condos so far, Foster said.

"If you're going to be four years at the university and your parents are helping out with rent, why not invest?" Foster said. He said many students and their families prefer investing in a condo to renting an apartment.

Western junior Patrick Hurst has lived with roommates in the Happy Valley neighborhood, located south of campus, for a couple weeks. Hurst said he didn't think a condominium was the kind of investment his parents would be interested in because they wouldn't own

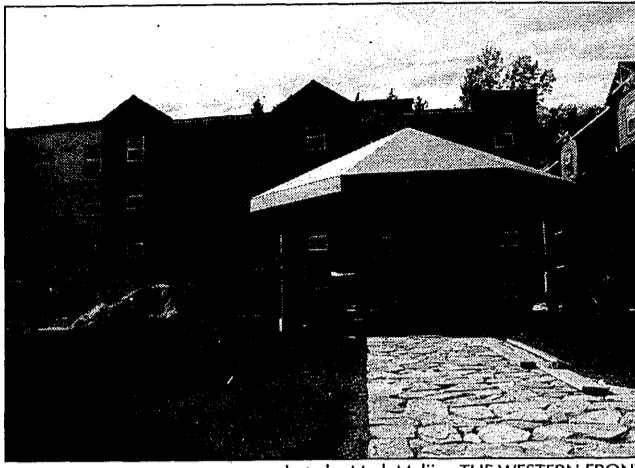


photo by Mark Malijan THE WESTERN FRONT

"There are a lot of people who wanted to buy in the southside of Bellingham but couldn't afford it before," said Doug Foster of The Muljat Group. Cypress Place condos start at \$119,000.

the land on which the condo is built.

"You own what's on the land, but you don't own the land itself so you have to do what the landowners say," Hurst said. "The person who owns the land can do whatever they want."

The Happy Valley neighborhood is the most densely populated area in the city, said John Hymas, Happy Valley Neighborhood Association president.

Student enrollment goes up every year at Western, yet the school hasn't added any on-campus housing so a lot of students end up in the neighborhoods adjacent to campus, Hymas said.

"Since students are such a big portion of the neighborhood, we'd like them to have more of a voice," Hymas said. "I'm not sure what proportion of the neighborhood population is students, but we're trying to get them more involved in the neighborhood association."

Hymas said a benefit of the new condos is that more people in the area will be homeowners, giving them more of a connection to the neighborhood.

"When people own, they are more interested in local politics and they'll take better care of their property," Hymas said.

Algae bloom creates dangerous biotoxins in local shellfish

► BEACHES from 1

called dinoflagellates that are found in the marine algae in shellfish.

"What actually causes the problem is that there are a large number of the dinoflagellates that are circulating in the water column," Chudek said. "Simply a large concentration of the organisms are being siphoned or filtered by the shellfish from the water."

Brian Bingham, a Western environmental science professor, said the algae bloom conditions could have been caused by heavy rains that flushed nutrients into the ocean.

"Just like when you fertilize your lawn, the algae population in the water increases and causes more of the algae to get eaten by the shellfish in higher concentrations," Bingham said.

Chandler Im, a Birch Bay resident, visited the beach at Birch Bay State Park and said he had seen the posted warning signs saying not to harvest shellfish. Im said he had heard about red tides before, but was not a shellfish harvester.

Chudek said new test results should be available Tuesday. During the closure, testing will be done once a week—twice as often as usual—to determine whether the toxin level has changed and when the ban could be lifted, he said. No cases of poisoning had been reported to the county health department as of Oct. 4, Chudek said.

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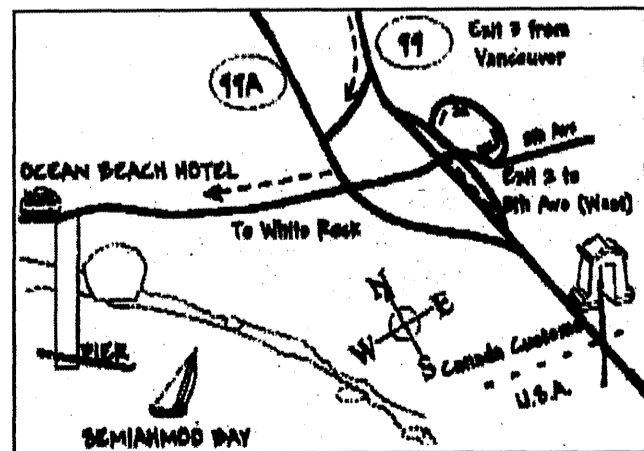
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Festival celebrates Hispanic heritage

► **FESTIVAL** from 1

the Whatcom County Hispanic Organization, a Latino and Hispanic advocacy group.

Each year, the Whatcom Hispanic Organization hosts the Latino Fest to provide twenty \$500 scholarships to applicants seeking higher education in Skagit or Whatcom counties.

Esqueda received a scholarship and decided to give back by volunteering at Latino Fest.

As the county's Latino population rises, the organization has become a fundamental force in aiding Latinos with resources and educational opportunities. The 2000 Census reported an estimated 8,000 Latino residents, one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in Whatcom county.

When Esqueda came to Western in 1997 he remembered only one Catholic Mass held in Spanish. Now, Spanish-language services are filled to capacity in Lynden, Ferndale and Bellingham.

Pedro Perez, founder and president of the Whatcom Hispanic Organization, said many families turn to the organization as a safety net and support system.

When a migrant family in Ferndale was robbed of \$1,000, Whatcom Hispanic Organization members dipped into their own pockets and gathered \$300 to help pay for the children's school supplies.

When a Western student was in a financial bind to pay for books last quarter, members helped pitch in.

"We help people in distress, but we look within ourselves to help out," Perez said. "If something is out of reach we refer them to the appropriate agency, for someone who doesn't know the system or speak the language we serve as advocates."

The organization also provides services such as the Young Reader's program, a six-week literacy program for migrant children and emergency assistance of shelter, food, books to needy families.

Perez said Latino Fest is a way for Latinos in the area to showcase their culture to the community through interaction, food and dance.

"We are proud of our dances and our dress—what better way than to share this with the community," Perez said.

The cultural festival ushers



photo by Mary Andom THE WESTERN FRONT

The Guelaguetza Dance Troupe from Seattle displays vibrant dress while performing the regional Mexican dance, "Pochutla" in the annual Latino Fest at Donovan Park.

in Hispanic Heritage Month, which began Sept. 15 and ends Oct. 15. The month honors the contributions of Hispanic Americans. The independence of five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua—is celebrated on Sept. 15. Mexico celebrates its independence on Sept. 16, Chile on Sept. 18 and Belize on

Sept. 21.

Annabel Joya, a 2005 Western graduate of Mexican and El Salvadoran descent, said she is proud of both of her distinct cultures. Joya doesn't speak Spanish fluently but she maintains strong cultural ties through the rhythmic side steps and hip-swaying of cumbia dance.

Joya said she is a bridge

between her Latino and American world; there are misconceptions that result from a lack of contact between the two.

"Latinos represent a full spectrum and cannot be lumped into one ethnic group," Joya said. "Sometimes people make the assumption all Latinos are Mexicans. Everyone is proud of their country and we should represent it."

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Green power: a year in review

Jon Brandenburg
THE WESTERN FRONT

Matthew Gifford is not an expert on climate change. He doesn't pore over graphs and pie charts. He doesn't lobby the government to change the way Americans consume energy. He thinks windmills look kind of dumb.

Gifford, a senior archeology major, is like any other Western student and though he may not be 100 percent cognizant of the fact, he is doing his part in saving the world, \$10.50 at a time.

On Sept. 21, 2005, Western became the second university in the country to purchase all of its energy from renewable sources. Full-time students pay a quarterly fee of \$10.50 to help ensure Western can wean itself off of energy that creates excessive carbon dioxide emissions. On Sept. 26, the rest of Whatcom County decided to follow suit.

The Whatcom County Council voted 5-1, with Councilman Sam Crawford opposing, to pass legislation written by county council member Laurie Caskey-Schreiber to help combat the growing issue of climate

change by using \$62,000 of county revenue to power county buildings, saving \$15,000 yearly and cutting back on 3,141 tons of carbon emissions. The initiative works toward Caskey-Schreiber's goal of making Whatcom the leader in utilizing green energy.

"For the price of one chicken teriyaki dinner, I guess I get to contribute to making Western run a little greener."

*-Matthew Gifford
Western senior*

"This energy comes from sources that will always be present," Caskey-Schreiber said. "There will always be sun and there will always be wind."

She said the main forms of renewable power in Whatcom County come from solar panels, wind farms, and the utilization of bio-waste by means of decomposing cow excrement in plants called anaerobic digesters.

"All these methods are naturally occurring and help

combat the issue of climate change," Caskey-Schreiber said.

She said because of energy conservation efforts adopted by the Whatcom County Council following the California "brown-outs" in the summer of 2001, the savings made by the county exceeded the amount to purchase 100 percent green energy for county buildings. Caskey-Schreiber said going green would eventually benefit everyone in Whatcom County because renewable resources tend to stay consistent in their cost. She also addressed her goal to one day make the energy available to the common consumer.

"The whole issue of climate change must be addressed on a local level," Caskey-Schreiber said. "We can't expect the federal government to get the ball running. Not now."

Kara Thies, a senior majoring in environmental studies at Western's Huxley College of the Environment said she believes in the looming threat of climate change and that both Western's and the Whatcom County Council's decisions are steps toward a better future.

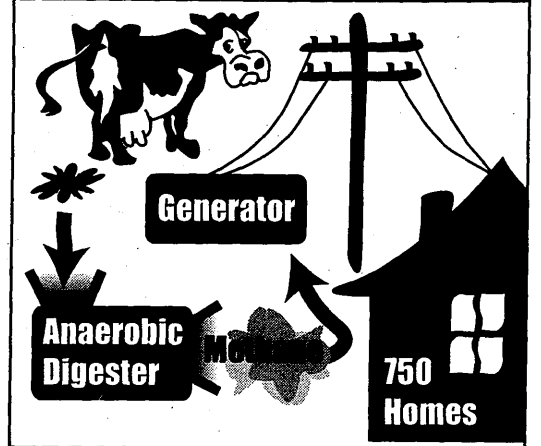
"I agree with the letter of Caskey-Schreiber's resolution, but I have strong disagreements with its spirit," Thies said. "Climate change must be addressed, but I think that it is the job of the university community to get the ball rolling."

Thies supports the \$10.50 fee yet thinks Western should make the effort to not just charge students, but change students' energy-use habits. Only then can anyone hope to rely solely on renewable energy.

"We'll be S.O.L. if we don't make some changes," Thies said. "Sure it's cool to watch TV while surfing the Internet, with all your lights on during the day, but is it really necessary?"

Gifford admitted to his wanton use of electricity and agreed that it would be best to change his attitude now rather than face whatever dire consequences may be in the future. He said it would take

Manure to electricity



designed by Matt Gagne THE WESTERN FRONT

some added initiative on his part.

"We're supposed to be the new generation of big thinkers. We're the ones who are eventually going to be dealing with this problem anyway," Thies said.

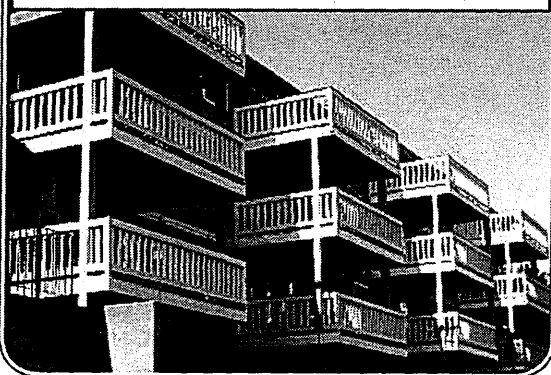
But until Gifford can create any lasting changes in his attitude toward energy use, climate change and carbon emissions, he is more than happy to do his part in paying for renewable energy.

"All in all, I have no beef with the fee," Gifford said. "For the price of one chicken teriyaki dinner, I guess I get to contribute to making Western run a little greener."

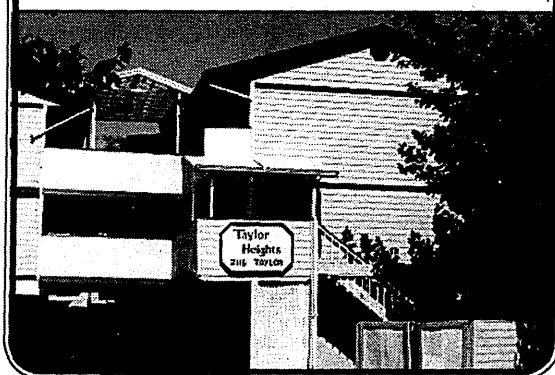
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Former Western professor lived a life of activism

Megan Marquett
THE WESTERN FRONT

A professional hockey player, an educator, an equal opportunity pioneer and advocate—this is not a child's list of dream careers, but the real life of late Professor Emeritus of Adult and Higher Education, John Utendale.

Utendale, who retired from the Woodring College of Education in 2001, died of cancer Aug. 24 at the age of 69.

He left behind a legacy, said Susan Mancuso, the director of Student Administration in Higher Education.

"He has graduates in universities all over the country and they continue to carry on his vision of fostering student learning," Mancuso said.

Utendale came to Western after earning his doctorate in education from Washington State University, professor emeritus Violet Malone said.

His activist commitment against racism stemmed from his own life experiences, Malone said.

"He was told that if he stopped dating his white girlfriend, he could have a good NHL hockey career," she said. "The racism in the request bothered him."

Utendale married his girlfriend, Malone said.

After he graduated, Western hired him to work in the Woodring College of

"He was told that if he stopped dating his white girlfriend, he could have a good NHL hockey career."

- Violet Malone
Professor emeritus

Education and in the athletics department as a representative to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Western's hockey club coach.

Utendale was a pioneer in equal opportunity for students of color in higher education and as the first tenured minority faculty member at Western, Malone said.

As the first director of the Student Personnel Administration graduate program at Western, a program he directed for more than 25 years, Utendale traveled around the United States recruiting minority students to Western, Malone said.

"He would go to Alabama or Georgia—he went to the homes of the students of color," Malone said. "Minority students didn't go beyond Seattle or Eugene—they didn't think they could find satisfaction in the far Northwest. John convinced them to come to our top-notch school."

Utendale opened the door

for many students of color by bringing them into Western's graduate programs and giving them the opportunity for better jobs, Mancuso said.

He mentored the students of color, Malone said. He found them churches to attend and established many of the current diversity programs at Western, she said. He was instrumental in procuring financial support for minority students through the Personnel Program, she said.

Utendale worked quietly behind the scenes to make things happen in the realm of supporting diversity in the faculty, staff and student body at Western, said political science professor Vernon Johnson.

He set the example for faculty on how to relate and work with not only the majority white student population, but with the minority population as well, Johnson said.

Stephanie Salzman, Dean of Woodring College said Utendale's greatest contribution to Western was his exuberant and uncompromising advocacy for all students.

Dr. John Utendale was here to make it better for students to pursue their educations, Johnson said. He was a quiet person, he wasn't out marching in the streets—he was working through the bureaucracy of education and creating change, Johnson said.

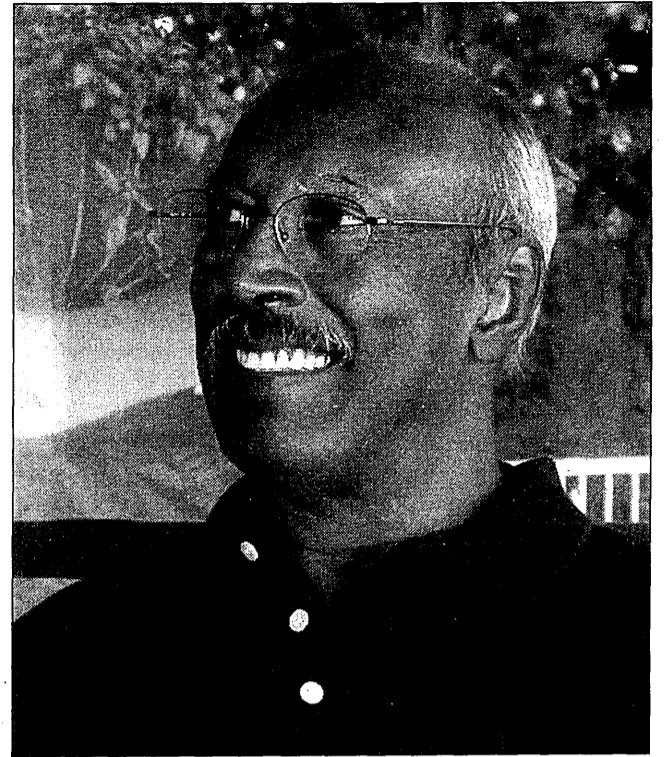


photo courtesy of Robb Utendale

Western's first tenured minority faculty member, John Utendale died of cancer on Aug. 24 at the age of 69.

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GO Boulevard Park

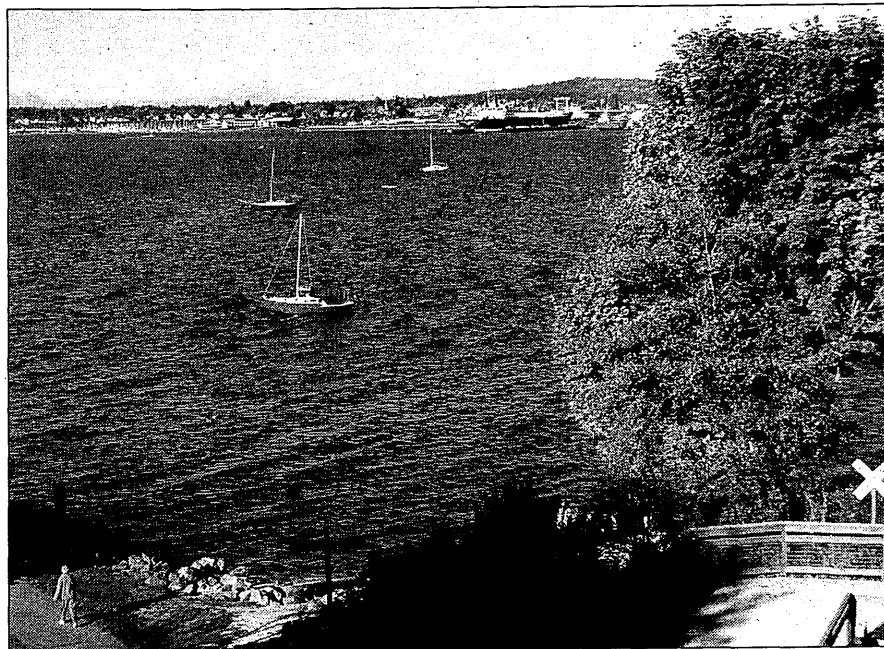
Description: Boulevard Park is a great place to walk, bike, fly a kite, study in the sunshine or just daydream while enjoying an unbeatable view. The park offers a sweeping view of Bellingham Bay and Lummi Island plus plenty of grassy areas for picnicking and Frisbee tossing. The park is an ideal place to watch Bellingham's beautiful sunsets, especially from the bluff above the main park. The bluff is accessible from State Street above the park, or from the lower park by the staircase tower.

The facilities at Boulevard Park include a boardwalk, trails, a children's playground, restrooms, picnic tables, barbecues and a dock. While most of the shoreline is strewn with large rocks, the north end of the park has a small beach area.

Bicyclists can enjoy rides along the South Bay Trail to the park. The south access to the trail is at the corner of 10th Street and Mill Avenue. The trail's east access begins as an alley next to The Hub Community Bicycle Cooperative on North State Street.

Downtown Bellingham is not far from the park. Cross the railroad tracks, go under the staircase and walk north on the trail, which ends on North State Street.

photo and information by Alana Dittrich THE WESTERN FRONT



Driving Directions: Just below South Hill, turn down Bayview Road at the intersection of State Street and 11th Street.

Hours: Dawn to dusk

Parking: Ample parking is usually available along the full length of the park. On special occasions, such as the Independence Day fireworks show, parking extends above the park along State Street.

GETTING OUT

FEEL THE DOOR HANDLE

- If the handle is hot, don't open it.
- Go to a window and call for help.
- If the handle is NOT hot, open cautiously.
- Check for smoke or fire before going out

GET OUT OF THE BUILDING

BEFORE PHONING FOR HELP

- Don't take time to phone before leaving.
- Get out and find a phone.

PULL THE FIRE ALARM ON YOUR WAY OUT

DON'T LOOK FOR OTHER PEOPLE OR GATHER STUFF

- Knock on doors as you leave
- Yell "FIRE" as you leave
- Don't hesitate or stray from your path.

CRAWL LOW TO THE FLOOR

- Thick smoke can make it impossible to see
- Toxic chemicals in smoke can be deadly in minutes

CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND YOU

- Keep the fire from spreading.
- Protect your possessions from fire and smoke damage.

GET SOMEONE'S ATTENTION

- **YELL and SCREAM!**
- Hang a sheet from a window.
- Stay low. There is less smoke and toxic gas close to the floor.
- **WAIT**, never panic or jump.

Fire Safety for Your Life



This is a resident's room in Mathes Hall after the November 1997 fire. NO ONE was injured. EVERYONE got out immediately. Learn what to do. Save your own life!

FIRE

- 1) Notify persons in the area
- 2) Evacuate the building.
- 3) Pull the nearest fire alarm or call 911 from a safe place.
- 4) Use a fire extinguisher, if trained.
- 5) Close doors and windows,
- 6) Assemble in a safe place.
- 7) Meet and inform responders.
- 8) Provide assistance.

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"STOP, DROP AND ROLL"

Fire/Medical Aid/Police 911
University Police 3911
CASAS 650-3700
(Confidential support following sexual assault or other violent crime)
Chemical Emergency 650-3064

PREVENTION - PROTECTION

- Take responsibility for protecting your life.
- Take trash outside.
- Never overload electrical outlets.
- Use power strips plugged directly into outlets.
- Keep space heaters and halogen lamps AWAY from flammables - clothing or paper.
- Put out candles when unattended (NOT allowed in residence halls).
- Put out incense when unattended.
- Extinguish smoking materials.
- NEVER smoke in bed or if tired.

CHECK SMOKE ALARMS

- In off-campus housing, install new batteries every quarter.
- In residence halls, smoke alarms don't need batteries.

PLAN ESCAPE ROUTES

- Know where all exits are located in your building - KNOW 2 EXITS from where you sleep.
- Practice your plan.
- Tell your roommates about your plan.

Sober Rovers scoot



Justin Steyer
THE WESTERN FRONT

Last call has come and gone, and that big decision of how to arrive home safely comes to mind. There is always the option of taking a taxi. However, a person could wait a long time to get home, just to have to find him- or herself a ride back in the morning before the parking enforcer is unleashed.

After eliminating 500 cases of drunk driving, Sober Rovers, a "designated driver for hire service," is celebrating its one-year anniversary Oct. 27 and 28. Customers will receive a flat rate of \$1 for its services, said co-founder Xan Oltman Johnson.

J.R. and Xan Oltman Johnson, both Western alumni, founded the company in 2005.

"It's like a taxi service, but better because you get your car in your driveway," she said.

The Johnsons run the business from their home, where they answer phone calls from customers.

After the customer's name and location are established, a sober driver, known as a rover, is dispatched. The rover arrives on the scene on a small, motorized scooter that easily folds up and fits in a bag that is packed

into the customer's trunk or backseat. The rover then safely drives the customer's car to the specified destination. After the trip is complete, the rover unpacks the scooter from the vehicle and sets off to meet another customer.

"It's a unique service,"

"It's like a taxi service, but better because you get your car in your driveway."

- Oltman Johnson

Oltman Johnson said. "Not everyone gets it right away. We get a lot of calls with just questions,

'Who are you guys?' 'What do you do?'"

Sober Rovers covers the Bellingham area, but drivers will go as far as needed. If the drive requires the rover to travel on highways or interstates there may be an additional \$10 fee for the Johnsons to transport the rover since the scooters are not highway safe.

Most of the calls Sober Rovers receive are from bars and restaurants. However, they will pick customers up from anywhere, including residences, the Johnsons said.

Another factor that comes into question is the time it takes the rovers to arrive.

"Most of the time [the wait] is 5-10 minutes because the drivers are usually picking up or dropping someone off downtown or nearby downtown," Oltman Johnson said. "On weekends

out to save the night

photos by Justin Steyer THE WESTERN FRONT

it's usually less because we have more drivers on call; it just all depends on whether they have a prior call or not."

Calling in advance to set up a reservation is the best way to ensure a ride time, the Johnsons said.

Sober Rovers charges a \$2 pickup fee and \$4 per mile or \$3 per mile if the trip exceeds 10 miles. "Four dollars is usually less than a two-way cab ride," she said. "So we call ourselves a cab-and-a-half. If you didn't have us you would have to take a cab home then you'd have to take it back in the morning."

In comparison, Yellow Cab in Bellingham charges a \$2.50 drop fee, which is the initial amount of money charged for starting the meter, \$2.20 per mile and \$0.42 per minute wait time

receives calls from bar owners, bartenders, local regulars to the service and Western students.

"We get all sorts of people every night," Oltman Johnson said. "It's fun."

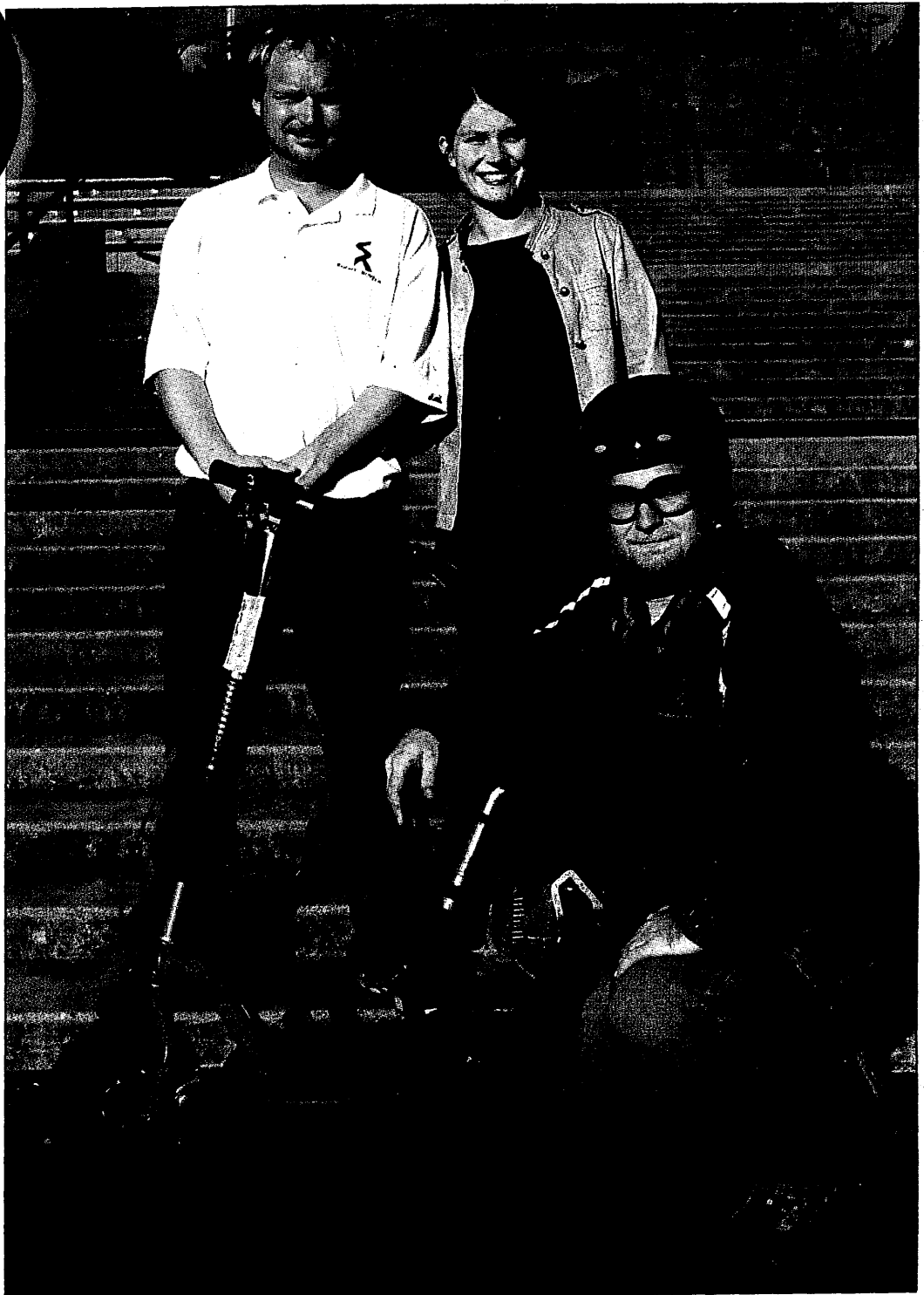
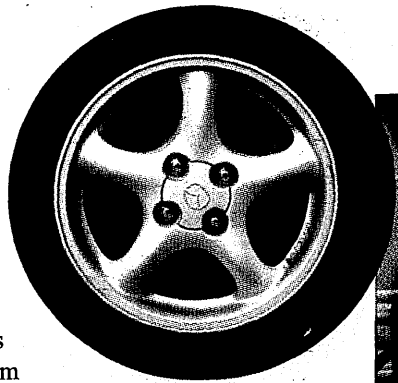
In addition to its standard operations, Sober Rovers also offers what it calls a "catering service." This is designed to accommodate guests at private parties, weddings or other events. The promoter or host pays a flat-fee for the service which reserves the rovers for a 2-3 hour time period, usually for the closing hours of the event.

During this time, rovers are stationed outside of the function and provide the guests with rides home at no cost to them. In addition to benefiting the attendees, Oltman Johnson said it gives the host peace of mind that their guests will make it home safely.

"The most rewarding aspects are getting people home safely, receiving calls from people telling us how thankful they were and having our drivers receive hugs," Oltman Johnson said. "People really get excited about getting their cars home safely and having that option out there."

if required, said Yellow Cab dispatcher Bryon Logg.

There is no specific demographic that takes advantage of this service, according to Oltman Johnson. The company



Co-founders J.R. Johnson and Xan Oltman Johnson pose with one of their two rovers, Western junior Jeff Backman. Johnson received his teaching certificate from Woodring College and Oltman Johnson received a Bachelor of Arts. in environmental education from Huxley College. She plans to return to Western next quarter.

Sober Rovers Contact Information

Hours: Monday - Thursday from 9 p.m. - 3 a.m.
Fridays and Saturdays 9 p.m. - 4 a.m.
Sunday from 2 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Contact: For reservations, information or rides call 360-743-9111 or visit their Web site at www.soberrovers.com.



Viking men dominate invitational



photo by Melissa Blair THE WESTERN FRONT

Members of the Viking cross country team lead a pack of 10 schools at the 33rd annual Western Cross Country Invitational on Oct. 7 at Lake Padden Park, finishing in first place.

Michael Harthorne THE WESTERN FRONT

Sunlight filtered through the trees surrounding Lake Padden Park, illuminating the steam rising off of the sweaty shoulders of tired runners—like smoke working its way to a nightclub ceiling. On the other side of the lake, the Viking men's cross country team was leaving tracks for its competition.

Saturday marked the 33rd

annual Western Cross Country Invitational with 10 schools competing in the men's 10km and women's 6km races around Lake Padden.

The Viking men continued their mastery of the invitational's 10km race, placing first with 32 points and finishing with nine of the top 15 runners. Seattle Pacific University came in second place, 40 points behind the Vikings.

"As far as the teams that were out there, we were just dominant in that situation," head coach Kelven "Pee Wee" Halsell said.

The Viking men have won the invitational two years in a row and five times in the last seven years. They are ranked 16th in the latest United States Cross Country Coaches Association Top 25.

Western sophomore

Anthony Tomsich finished first for the Vikings and sixth overall with a time of 32:40.00.

The Vikings' first place runner from last week, senior Logan Senrud, placed second for the team and ninth overall with a time of 32:55.10.

David Wambui of Simon Fraser University won the invitational's 10km race with a time of 32:10.00.

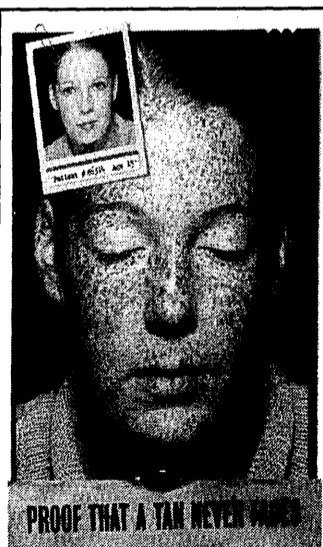
Western senior Sam

Brancheau, who finished 19th overall, inspired the Vikings with a fiery pre-race speech.

"We went to Emerald City, we went to Sundodger," Brancheau said in a booming voice. "Then we're going to conference, and then we're going to regionals."

The invitational is an important meet because it

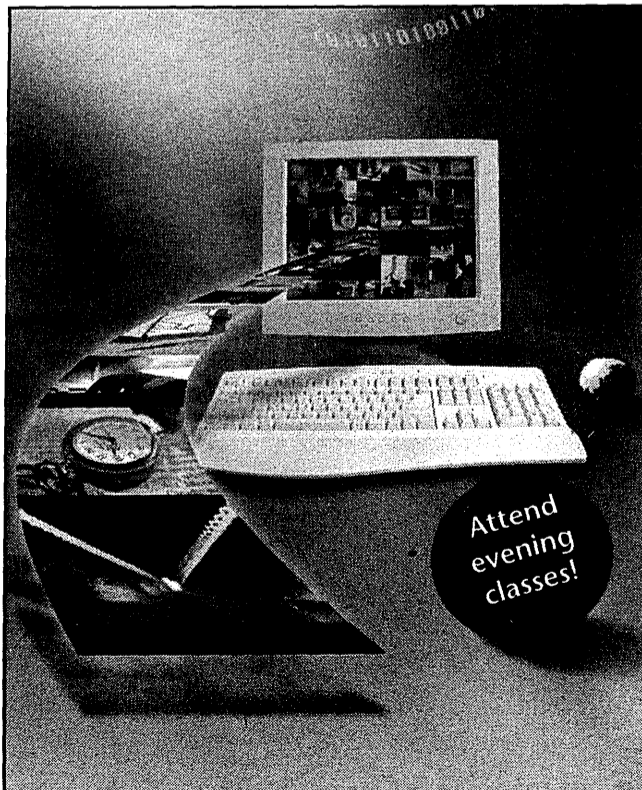
see **Runners** page 11 ►



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FANTASY FOOTBALL

COMMENTARY BY
Andrew Irvine
THE WESTERN FRONT

The San Francisco 49ers fantasy duo of running back Frank Gore and quarterback Alex Smith had another solid week. The downside is they played against the winless Oakland Raiders. Gore and Smith still can't be trusted against teams with a respectable defense.



Green Bay Packers third-string running back Noah Herron had a surprisingly strong game against the St. Louis Rams Sunday. Don't jump on his bandwagon too quickly, though, because running back Ahman Green may return next week and Herron still hasn't proven himself.



The Jacksonville Jaguars are proving that a platoon of two running backs can be beneficial in fantasy football. Both Maurice Jones-Drew and Fred Taylor are getting enough touches to warrant starting spots on your fantasy team.



You shouldn't panic if you have Kansas City Chiefs tight end Tony Gonzalez on your team. Through week five last season, he only had 129 yards and no touchdowns. But, he ended that season with nearly 1,000 receiving yards, so don't give up on him yet.



▶ **Runners from 10**

establishes the top 10 Viking runners—the ones who will reach the conference championships, Brancheau said.

Two of Western's runners that used the invitational to move into the top 10 were Greg Kubitz for the men and Nikki D'Amico for the women, Halsell said.

The Viking women placed fifth in the women's 6km with

131 points, a drop from last year's third place finish.

Simon Fraser University was the top women's team with 36 points. Rose Wetzel of Club Northwest, a non-university team, won the race with a time of 22:07.00.

Western freshman Ashley McDougall placed first for the Vikings and 27th overall with a time of 23:42.00. She has placed first for the Vikings in every race this season.



photo courtesy of Kristine Bragg

Members of the Viking dance team pose during the Viking football team's 16-13 win over the Washburn Ichabods Oct. 9 at Civic Field.

Dances with Vikings

Dance teams in step with Western athletics

Marinda Peugh
THE WESTERN FRONT

A team marches onto a muddy football field wearing shirts and praying their shoes stay on. A fall breeze numbs their legs as they stand motionless with proud, strong smiles waiting for the music to begin. It's halftime at Civic Field and the Viking dance team is about to blow the crowd away.

The dance team officially became recognized as an athletic team last year.

"In the past, it was kind of casual and known as an Associated Students club," said Kristine Bragg, the team's captain last season. "My goal was to leave it more established, and I'm happy to say it's come really far."

This year, the dance team will perform during football and basketball seasons. The football dance team has 25 women and dances in a drill style, co-captain Angela Kiser said.

"The team uses poms and focuses on visual effects," Kiser said.

The team also teaches routines to elementary school girls at the YMCA, and will perform alongside the kids when the Viking football team plays Central Washington University Oct. 21 at Qwest Field in the "Battle in Seattle."

"It's not a fundraiser," co-captain Elizabeth Vincent said. "It's just a charity we like to do for the kids."

The basketball dance team's goal is to model itself after the Seattle SuperSonics' dance team. Last year, the Sonics' dance captain gave the Viking dance team free tickets to a Sonics game, where the Viking dancers met the Sonics dance team and watched their practice.

The football season's dance team has a full roster, but tryouts for the basketball squad will take place Oct. 23-27. The Viking dance team looks for dancers who are advanced, intense and show sportsmanship in their dancing, Vincent said.

"If girls want to become a SeaGal or a Sonics girl, it's a good opportunity to get their foot in the door," Vincent said. "The team is broader than teams in high school, because girls come from teams with different focuses. Some teams did hip-hop, some did drill."

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WWU Volleyball vs. Seattle University
SATURDAY, OCT. 14 - 7 P.M. HAGGEN COURT AT CARVER GYM

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WWU vs. Central Washington
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Underground Coffeehouse	Sat - Thur	until 10p
	Friday	until 12:30a

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For a map of locations and more details, visit the Web at www.dining.wvu.edu

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University Dining Services

Skateboard policy curbs an alternative transportation option

Rigis Vincenti
WESTERN FRONT

Skateboarding should not be a crime.

Unfortunately for students who skateboard on Western's campus, the reality is just the opposite.

Under Washington Administrative Code 516-15-040, skateboarding is strictly prohibited on Western's campus except in areas specifically designated by the vice president for business affairs.

The code also effectively outlaws the use of long boards, which have grown in popularity in recent years.

The law is unfair and should be changed to allow skateboarders the freedom bicyclists are permitted on campus.

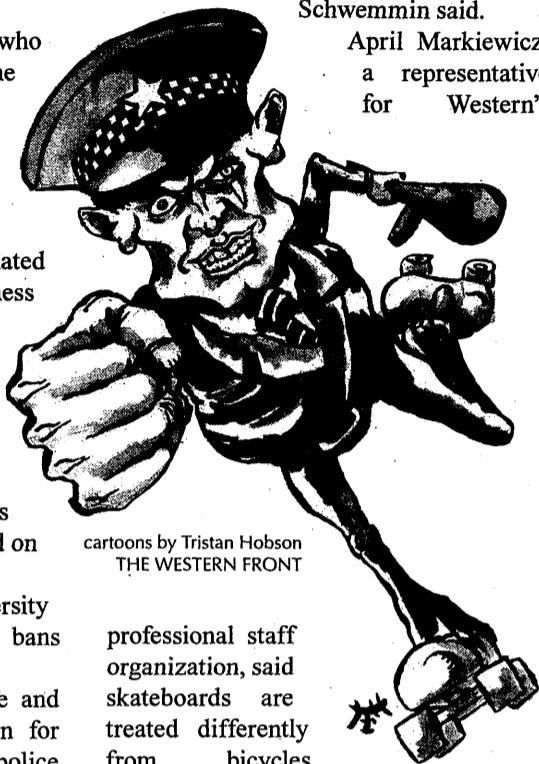
Western is the only major university in Washington state that still bans skateboarding on its campus.

The law not only bans a safe and accessible means of transportation for many students, but also wastes police resources by issuing petty fines to skateboarders.

Cindi Schwemmin, programs supervisor for the University Police, said issuing tickets for skateboarding is a low priority for most police departments and skateboarding citations do not provide the school with a major source of revenue. However, Schwemmin said University Police issued more than 130 warnings and citations to skateboarders from September 2005 to October 2006.

Most of these warnings and citations were issued as a result of complaints from Western faculty and staff, Schwemmin said.

April Markiewicz, a representative for Western's



cartoons by Tristan Hobson
THE WESTERN FRONT

professional staff organization, said skateboards are treated differently from bicycles because skateboarders don't have total control over their boards.

But clearly, bicycles and the cyclists that operate them are not immune to losing control and inflicting injury upon themselves or pedestrians. Yet the law makes a special case for bicycles, which are given a hefty three-piece statute outlining details for their safe use.

The law states that pedestrians always have the right of way, and bicyclists must dismount and walk their

bicycles in designated zones during the fifteen minutes prior to and after each hour on regular class days.

Skateboarders, on the other hand, are left with a half-baked ultimatum banning their vehicle of choice altogether.

Skateboards should be given full freedom as a means of transportation for students on campus. Skateboarders must be held responsible for their own injuries and damages done to school property. Western should look toward other Washington State universities and their laws regarding skateboarding.

The University of Washington, Central Washington University and Washington State University all have sensible laws regarding skateboarding because rather than issue full bans on the sport, these universities have struck a balance between giving freedom to skateboarders and providing safety for pedestrians and campus property.

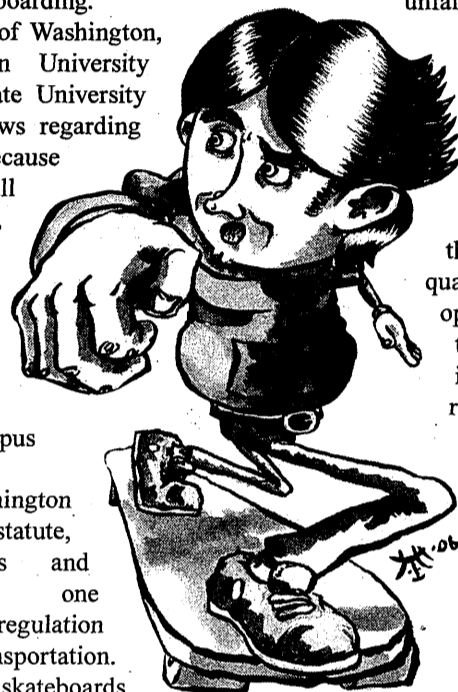
Central Washington offers the fairest statute, regulating bicycles and skateboards into one comprehensive regulation for alternative transportation. Central's law allows skateboards to be used on all outdoor pathways, but states that skateboarders must offer pedestrians the right of way and travel at safe speeds.

Western should follow suit and only issue warnings and citations to skaters if absolutely necessary.

The Institutional Master Plan, a document jointly prepared in 2001 by the City of Bellingham and Western, excludes skateboards in its comprehensive list of improvements for alternative transportation because the law prohibits their use.

Western students need to pressure their elected body to bring forward a proposal to rewrite Western's unfair and outdated statute banning skateboards. The elected Associated Students Board meets with the central health and safety committee three times every quarter, providing ample opportunity to overhaul the law and replace it with more sensible regulations.

A campus community that continually supports initiatives to lessen its environmental impact and promotes the use of "green energy" should embrace students using skateboards as an alternative means of transportation, not punish them for it.



Just say 'no' to standardized tests

Megan Marquett
WESTERN FRONT

U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings' plan to increase accountability in institutions of higher education will only contribute to the Bush administration's poor record in public education.

The plan outlines the need for increased standardized testing by extending President Bush's 2002 No Child Left Behind Act. The expansion of standardized testing is not the way to achieve a more accountable academic system.

Instead, colleges and universities should receive increased federal funding to lower class sizes and reduce the ratio of students to teachers.

Standardized testing and tracking individual students are ineffective. Kris Bulcroft, Western vice provost to Undergraduate Education, said the external push on institutions and educators to document student learning wastes academic time by interfering with the real objective of learning—teachers interacting with students.

Suzanne Krogh, chair of the Western Department of Elementary Education, said accountability monitored through high-stakes testing has an unfavorable affect on how teachers teach.

The WASL has negatively influenced curriculum and teaching techniques in Washington state's public schools, Krogh said.

Standardized testing increases the pressure on universities to accept only students with the highest scores on college

entry exams, Bulcroft said. It encourages universities to choose the richest and the brightest students who have time to devote to preparing for standardized tests, she said.

Spellings' plan ties government funding increases for college and university financial aid to how well students perform on standardized tests.

Western has an undergraduate education system that supports student learning in more than 100 majors. Standardized tests don't take into account the wide range of study available for undergraduate students.

Bulcroft said the plan would create a database that tracks the standardized test scores of students through their entire academic career, which encourages colleges to choose students who test well. Students would have to score high to receive financial aid for colleges and universities, Bulcroft said.

Student learning would be better achieved by increasing financial aid without linking the aid to standardized test scores.

Clara Capron, Western's director of Financial Aid, said 9,100 Western students receive a total of \$88 million in financial aid every year. More students need financial help every year, she said. Determining the allocation of financial aid based on high test scores is not the way to support students who are struggling financially.

Spellings' plan states the need for undergraduates to graduate in four years, for colleges and universities to stop increasing tuition and for the government to provide more financial aid to students. Her concerns with higher education are valid, but her plan

lacks any effective way to implement it. The plan does not include where the money for increased financial aid will come from or how the plan would work.

The plan doesn't consider that colleges and universities are becoming more competitive and more diverse in student body and career paths.

As more jobs require a bachelor's degree, the number of students in college is increasing and the backgrounds of students applying for colleges are becoming more diverse. Class sizes are increasing, which causes educators to become less effective.

Spellings' plan also portrays university and college majors as too strenuous for students to complete in four years, contributing to the increased cost of higher education.

Students can graduate in four years if they choose a major before the end of their sophomore year and do not change majors. Michael Singletary, Western's academic advising coordinator, said the problem is the majority of undergraduates enter college to find a career path and are overwhelmed when confronted with more than 100 majors. Also, some majors, such as elementary and secondary education and engineering are five-year degrees, he said.

The answer to improving higher education and making it accessible to more students isn't standardized tests and increased financial aid based on test scores. The answer is an increase in government funding for undergraduate education without any strings.

WIKING VOICES

Do you agree with Western's skateboarding policy?



Hannah Chertok
FRESHMAN

"I don't really think it's necessary."



Laura Colgan
SENIOR

"I don't ever feel threatened by a skateboarder."



Kyle Borge
SENIOR

"I think it's probably a good idea. I see them around and it looks pretty reckless."

Compiled by Tanya Williams

Letters to Editor

Study abroad possible for all students

I am writing this because I want to provide an example of somebody who, although lacking in funds, managed to study abroad. I get minimal financial support from my parents, but until I became a graduate student, I did not qualify for financial aid. I've worked my fair share of dishwashing and early-morning janitorial jobs just to get by.

As a double language major, I strongly believed in the value of overseas experience, so I saved up for a year beforehand and took out two credit cards, since I didn't qualify for financial aid.

During the summer of 2005, I got my turn. I went to Peru to teach health and take Spanish classes. It was a life-changing, eye-opening experience that has given me a number of advantages academically and in my future career.

Now I work two minimum-wage jobs to pay off the debt from my trip, on top of being a graduate student. I was

only in Peru for a month, not a semester or year like some lucky people, but it was certainly worth my time, and worth the ramen diet I still wrestle with a year later.

I am blessed to have experienced both the "real world" of financial hardship, as well as the "real world" of life in a developing country. That takes real passion, courage and discipline, but it is possible, and it is worth it.

-Jessica Nicholas

Western graduate student

WTA pass worth the price

I would like to address the claims made in the opinion piece by Ms. Regan about the price increase for the Viking Xpress Pass. I would first like to note, that according to the WTA, they have not raised their bus pass price since 1999. Considering inflation and just how much the price of gas has increased, I have to commend the WTA for keeping the price at \$50 for so long.

If you divide the price for one fare,

75 cents, into \$90, for a year pass, you will find that you are essentially pre-purchasing 120 rides. If you rode the bus twice a day, five days a week, for just three months, you would use those 120 rides, meaning, if you did that for nine months, you are actually getting two-thirds of your rides for free!

Further, consider that bus passes for the general public are far more expensive, just one month is \$20. We are lucky that the WTA was willing to work with Western to offer a lower cost.

Finally, her claim that students are "pay[ing] more for less" is completely

unfounded. The WTA added a new GO line to service Alabama Street and the Fairhaven area, in addition to increasing the length of the existing blue GO line, to service areas formerly covered by the shuttle.

I don't think the student pass is something that an occasional traveler should get, but for a regular commuter who doesn't want to use their car, it's still an incredibly cost effective way to get to and from school.

-Alex Mitchell

Western sophomore

Let your voice be heard!

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Send your letters to: E-mail: thewesternfronteditor@yahoo.com

Let's Talk Forum



Living Together in Bellingham:

Student Parties, Enforcement Practices, and Neighborly Relations

Wednesday, October 18th, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

American Museum of Radio and Electricity, 1312 Bay Street

(Go north on Holly Street and turn right on Bay Street)

This forum takes an in-depth look at issues facing students, long-term community members, and law enforcement. Listen, learn, & share how we might better live together in Bellingham:

How do off-campus parties impact students, Bellingham neighborhoods, and law enforcement?

What are local laws and enforcement practices?

What are the perspectives of students living off-campus and their long-term neighbors?

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Welcome to Bellingham's neighborhoods!



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Thursday, October 26th, 7:00 p.m.

Fairhaven Library

Let's Talk Forum

Wednesday, October 18th, 7:00 p.m.

American Museum of Radio and Electricity, 1312 Bay Street

(Go north on Holly Street and turn right on Bay Street)

Not sure what neighborhood you live in?

Download a Bellingham neighborhood map at www.cob.org/documents/gis/maps/cob_nhoodmap.pdf

Looking for off-campus living resources and tips?

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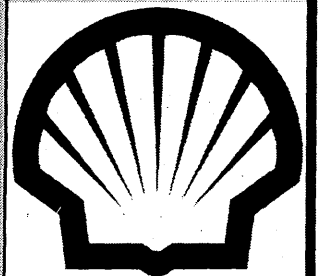
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Words are social currency: be wealthy

When was the last time you said fag, gypped, Jesus Christ or jewed? When was the last time someone laughed in response? When was the last time someone cried upon hearing them? When was the last time you really stopped to think about the meaning behind those words?

We are careless with the words we use. Many words that have moved into the popular vernacular have other meanings some people may associate with their personal identity. By being unaware of, or apathetic about those other meanings, we may inadvertently offend other people.

It is important to recognize the different meanings of the words we toss around lightly and think before using those words.

These slang words are not necessarily words we shouldn't use. We just need to be aware of the meanings that may not be immediately obvious and may offend someone else.

Words are social currency. They have value. We use them to help integrate ourselves into a group, to share an inside joke, to impress others and to qualify ourselves.

Using jargon may be a good way to integrate with

a group, but you should be aware of the side effects of the use of certain words. Ask yourself when you use words to identify yourself with a group whether that is how you want to associate yourself with them? Your effort to be a participant might make you appear shallow or callous to the feelings of others.

Undoubtedly, these words will continue to be used, but perhaps they could be used with more sensitivity toward those who are clipped by the stray bullets of our bad judgment.

Using "in-language" is socially acceptable as long as it is used with due consideration of the potential side effects.

If you think of words as social currency, aim to be wealthy. A financier thinks about his or her money and invests it wisely, paying close attention to how the money is used. But many people carelessly throw money around. Similarly, if a word is overused, it becomes worthless. Overuse and misuse are the sure ways to

devalue and ruin a word, and through the word, a person or a group of people as well as yourself.

When someone places importance on a word or phrase and you misuse it, you are detracting from something they value. For instance, using the phrase Jesus Christ in anger is disrespecting a figure Christians hold dear. When you use the word gay to describe something as undesirable, you devalue a word homosexual people claim as part of their identity.

By using these words to shame whatever you are talking about, you hurt a group of people by degrading a word integral to their identity. Jews, Christians, homosexuals, women, gypsies and white male farmers—there are words to refer to them all. Each time you create a false comparison between a group and something negative, you lose an opportunity to get the maximum return on your investment in a conversation.

The editorial board consists of Editor-in-chief Lance Henderson, Managing Editor Ryan Wynne, Opinion Editor Kristi Pihl and Student-at-large Randall Ragsdale.

frontline

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Stay local—shop at the Co-op, give back to community

Michael Harthorne
WESTERN FRONT

Would organic chemistry or jogging be a better fourth class this quarter? How far away from the Lyndon LaRouche supporters' table must one walk to be left alone? Is it necessary to care about the Facebook.com newsfeed?

These are the kinds of questions most college students devote their time to answering, but they should spend a little more energy thinking about where they buy groceries.

Regional chain stores owned by larger corporations such as Fred Meyer draw in students with low prices and name recognition but it would be beneficial to both students and the community if they shopped at a locally-owned grocery store such as the Bellingham Community Food Co-op.

The Fred Meyer on Lakeway Drive has cheap food, a massive inventory and the convenience of one-stop shopping. It tried to appeal to students with a college night that included a DJ and free food the night before the first day of school, said Western junior and ex-Fred Meyer employee Ross Daniel.

However, The Kroger Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, which owns Fred

Meyer, made \$60.6 billion in 2005. It operates 30 different business chains such as department stores, financial services and food processing, according to The Kroger Co. annual report and proxy statement for 2005.

Money spent at Fred Meyer goes to a corporation that doesn't need it when it could be going somewhere more tangible such as to local farmers and community organizations.

The Co-op launched the Farm Fund in 2001 to support local sustainable agriculture. A recent program put on by the Farm Fund, Food to Bank On!, provides fresh produce to area food banks.

Apart from the Farm Fund, the third Saturday of each month is designated

a Community Shopping Day at the Co-op. Two percent of that day's sales go to a selected non-profit organization such as Veterans for Peace and the North Cascades Institute, an environmental education group, according to the Co-op's Community Shopping Days calendar.

Most of the money stays in the community, which is a benefit over other stores such as Fred Meyer because it improves Bellingham, Co-op employee Matt Chastain said.

It is civically responsible and rewarding to spend money at a store where you know the money is going to do noticeable good instead of disappearing into the pockets of a rich corporation.

The Co-op's prices are a few dollars higher on average than Fred Meyer's and it charges a \$90 membership fee, but it's not as bad as it sounds. The membership fee can be paid in installments as low as \$3 a month and

items can be special-ordered in bulk to save money, Chastain said.

There is, of course, a third option in locally-owned Haggen Food and Pharmacy.

Haggen is convenient and carries more items than the Co-op while remaining a local store, said Haggen spokesperson Becky Scaggs.

Nevertheless, Haggen is expanding away from Bellingham. Haggen Inc. owns TOP Food and Drug and operates 32 stores in Washington and Oregon, Scaggs said.

The Bellingham Community Food Co-op is a superior choice for Western students, who could give a lot back to the community by shopping there.

If money is still an issue, students are presented with the opportunity to petition the Co-op for student-friendly changes at the monthly board of directors meetings.

Spending a few extra dollars on local and organic food is a more enlightened choice than throwing more money at a national chain. Unless eating a 75-cent loaf of bread from a company that finds it logical to perate both the KwikShop and QuickStop convenience stores sounds appetizing.

STORE PRICE COMPARISON			
	FRED MEYER	HAGGEN	CO-OP
BREAD	75¢	\$1.50	\$2.69
MILK	\$1.99	\$1.99	\$3.79
APPLES	98¢	\$1.49	79¢
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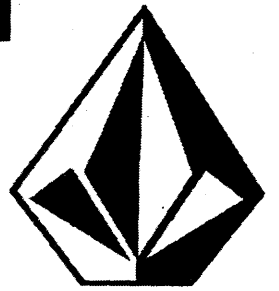
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