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THE WESTERN FRONT

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TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017

DIGNITY MARCH

17-mile march for farmworkers' rights

**John Simmons
Kevin Lake**
THE WESTERN FRONT

Advocates for worker and immigrant rights, two issues often linked in Whatcom County, participated in the fifth annual March for Dignity on Sunday, May 7.

Edgar Franks, one of the march's leaders and a coordinator for Community to Community Development, said the event was to build cohesion between different issue groups.

"We're calling attention to many of the issues that are affecting farm workers. Today we're having a lot of stuff about immigrant rights, about workers' rights," he said. "We're trying to build solidarity with all the groups

see MARCH, page 5



Western Blue Group members joined marchers, including Community to Community Development organizer Edgar Franks (on right), in front of Bellingham City Hall Sunday, May 7. The Dignity March route was 17 miles, according to Familias Unidas por la Justicia's Facebook page. // Photo by Jonathan Pendleton

Not as easy as 123

More than 100 on waitlist for AS Child Dev. Center

Suzanna Leung
THE WESTERN FRONT

A shortage of space in the Associated Students Child Development Center is preventing many students and faculty from successfully enrolling their children for daycare.

With only four rooms at its disposal, the center can only hold up to 59 children. As of March 2017 the waitlist for the Child Development Center was 123 children long.

Desiree Calderon-Smith is approaching her 10th year working at the Child Development Center and hopes that one day the center will be able to expand.

"We're small, and we could be much bigger with our campus resources," Calderon-Smith said. "Could we service more families? Absolutely, if we could actually have more square-footage."

Program Manager Keri Krout said the number one difficulty the center deals with is space.

Western's enrollment statistics showed that 15,332 students were attending as of fall of 2015, but the center has had the same four rooms available to it since it opened in 1971, when there were under 5,000 students attending.

There are no current plans to expand the center, Mary Moeller, AS vice president for business and operations, said.

see SPACE, page 4

AS election turn out around 16.2%

John Simmons
THE WESTERN FRONT

Just over 2,000 students voted in the recent Associated Students elections, which is about 16.2 percent of Western students.

The voter turnout is higher than previous years, said Henry

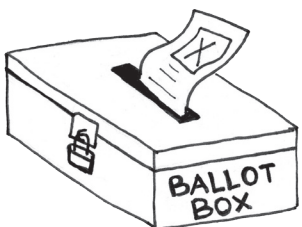


Illustration by Shannon DeLurio

Pollet from Western Votes, a nonpartisan group on campus that aims to increase civic engagement.

"One of the big things that we've been focusing on to increase that number is awareness within residence halls," Pollet said. "[We're] trying to start a culture of voting in AS elections starting in students' freshman [year] and early time at Western."

Last year's election saw 15.5 percent of the students vote. The election before that had 8.2 percent turn-

out, Pollet said.

Some of Western Votes' efforts included advertising in the dining halls and working with the Residence Hall Association and hall councils to spread information, Pollet said.

Some students, like sophomore Brooke Wilson, chose not to vote because they didn't think they would be staying at Western.

"In hindsight, I probably should have voted. I voted for the [national] presidential elections," she said. "It seems kind of silly

that I would disregard the campus-wide elections. Even if whatever turnout happens next year doesn't pertain to me, I still think it's pretty valuable to give input and express my opinions."

Other students did not vote because they did not believe that the AS affects them.

"I don't know how it could possibly affect me, because I don't think students are going to get to make huge decisions," Junior Matt Eiford-Schroeder said. "It doesn't feel particularly relevant."

Eiford-Schroeder only voted for the vice president for governmental affairs position.

However, Wilson believes that each vote in the elections is significant.

"As far as thinking, 'One vote doesn't really count in the whole scheme of things,' I think that's false," she said. "I think it does."

The AS manages a budget of around \$2.9 million and provides student services, supports clubs and plans

see AS, page 5



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Port buys city's proposed low-barrier shelter location

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES

Update on county's proposed jail

Rower Chloe Burns finds her stroke

Antisemitism task force report updates and interviews

Coming this week to Westernfrontonline.com

TURBAN OUTFITTERS



A student has their head wrapped in a turban for Turban Awareness Day, Tuesday, May 2. The event in Red Square was put on by the International Student & Scholar Services and the Sikh Awareness Association to raise awareness on the common misconceptions and stereotypes related to turbans. // Photo by Jonathan Pendleton.

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Cops Box



UPCOMING: LOCAL POLITICS

Day drunk

May 5, 4:16 p.m.

An intoxicated female wandered into a house that was not her own. It was discovered that she actually lives a block away.

Rock on

May 5, 2:00 p.m.

Police received a call about someone throwing rocks out of their apartment window on West Holly Street.

You're grounded

May 2, 10:11 p.m.

Police were notified by parents that their 16-year-old was not following their rules.

New phone, who this?

May 3, 9:48 a.m.

A manager of a store on East Sunset Drive reported a man who used wire cutters to cut a security cord of an Android phone, and proceeded to leave the premises.

Yacht club

May 2, 1:40 p.m.

A 50-year-old and 60-year-old were arrested for breaking into and living in a dry-docked boat for multiple days.

Party's over

May 2, 3:19 a.m.

Police responded to a report of a loud party on Voltaire Court.

Compiled by Erin Mackin

AS Board Meeting

Thursday, May 11
Noon - 1 p.m.

Agenda not yet published.

Whatcom 3 Back in Court

Thursday, May 11
1 - 4 p.m.
Whatcom County Courthouse 4th floor

The Whatcom 3 are facing charges for blocking a highway in protest of President Trump's campaign rally in May 2016.

City Council Town Hall

Monday, May 15
7 - 8:30 p.m.
Encore Room of Mount Baker Theatre
104 N. Commercial Street

Public meeting on housing affordability, with a short presentation and public comment time.

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VU short on available event space

Ricky Rath
THE WESTERN FRONT

A spike of spring events has left the Associated Students and program leaders scrambling for space in the Viking Union.

On April 5, Coordinator of Student Activities Casey Hayden sent a detailed email to all AS program leaders warning that the VU is near full capacity to provide additional space and staffing services for spring events.

Hayden then gave a deadline in the email to all program and club leaders urging them to submit all requests for large spring events.

"This is going to be the busiest [quarter] that I can remember in the last six or seven years I've been here," Hayden said. "One way to judge that is looking at the Multi-Purpose Room and the fact we're hosting a lot of events on Sunday."

Shalom Murphy, VU event services supervisor, said fall and winter events are leaking into spring.

There has been a higher number of complex and detailed events this quarter, Murphy said.

She said VU Event Services depends on student employees, and current employees are

reaching their 19 hours-a-week limit. Murphy said they hired four additional stage-setup crew members, but they are out of work study hours for any more student employees.

The Newman Catholic Campus Ministry is one program affected by the spike of events.

Murphy said the VU Multi-Purpose Room has been so busy that the Newman Catholic Campus Ministry has been moved into a smaller room, VU 566, every week except for one time this quarter.

Certain annual programs have been moved to Sundays instead of the usual Saturdays. One such event was the 7th-Annual Heritage Dinner for the Vietnamese Student Association.

Club steering representative Lung Le said the club had to move their heritage dinner to Sunday because the Saturday they were aiming for was booked.

The Vietnamese Student Association talked to the organization that occupied the space on Saturday to see if there were alternatives, but there was nothing the two groups could work out.

Hosting the heritage dinner on Sunday caused the attendance to be lower than previous

years. Le said there were going to be different regions of the Pacific Northwest Vietnamese Student Association organization coming to the event, but since it was on a Sunday, they could not make it.

"They [outside regions of VSA] couldn't make the trip because it wouldn't be worth it for them to come that night and leave," Le said.

Hayden and Murphy said they will soon be able to evaluate if this has been the busiest quarter in history.

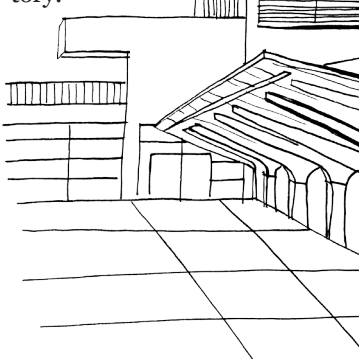


Illustration by Shannon DeLurio

"I haven't even gotten to pull numbers yet because we're just trying to survive getting through the end," Murphy said.

VU Event Services and AS Activities suggests club and program members begin planning future events and to reserve spaces for them now.

Angela Davis comes to Western

Rahwa Hailemariam
THE WESTERN FRONT

Over 1,000 people showed up to hear the renowned civil and political activist Angela Davis speak at the Justice Speaks event organized by Western students.

Davis, a feminist, political activist, civil rights activist, author and professor, gave a talk in the Performing Arts Center on Friday, May 5.

Davis stressed the importance of global activism and the significance of recognizing how issues, such as racism and islamophobia, are interconnected during her talk.

"We cannot imagine effective challenges to racism if we do not think globally," Davis said. "So to speak out against racism is to speak out against islamophobia."

She posed many questions

surrounding all the "-isms" and phobias during her talk.

"Why is it issues of race have inevitably been assumed to be the property of those who have been the targets of racism? Why is it that [people of color] have to always bring up issues of racism?" Davis asked in her talk.

Davis also talked about the significance of feminism and intersectionality.

"What I am trying to suggest is that our analysis has to be a feminist analysis, it has to be an intersectional analysis, not the kind of feminism Hillary Clinton represents," Davis said.

Feminism allows us to approach things in more complicated ways, and allows us to recognize that to understand something is not equivalent to condoning it, Davis said.

Graduate student Giselle Alcantar Soto helped organize the event with the rest of the Justice Speaks committee. Justice Speaks is a part the education and social justice minor, and was established in 2014.

Due to the high demand for the event, Alcantar Soto posted

see *PETITION*, page 4

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NOMINATION CRITERIA

- Integrates diversity concepts and values into academic curriculum, management, and/or operational functions
- Develops methods for increasing and valuing diversity among students, faculty, and/or staff
- Maximizes opportunities to achieve diversity
- Contributes to promoting an understanding and appreciation of differences by contributing to the body of research on diversity or through other endeavors

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Petition to revitalize ethnic studies gathers signatures at Davis talk

continued from page 3

the concerns of her and her colleagues on the Facebook page acknowledging that the series is a primarily student-run effort, the need for online reservation, the availability of “spill room,” and that people of marginalized groups will remain a priority for the event since Justice Speaks is for them.

They prioritized students who hold marginalized identities by reaching out to them through inviting Ethnic Student Center clubs and speaking to president’s council, Alcantar Soto said.

Junior Realia Harris, one of the organizers of the revitalization of ethnic studies and campus right curriculum reform petition, said they wouldn’t have gotten so many signatures for the petition if it wasn’t for the event.

“[The event] was really validating because I felt like a lot of the times on campus, people like me get marginalized from really cool stuff like this,” Harris said. “The fact that they wanted marginalized students in particular to be catered to for this event was really refreshing and kind.”

Harris said a group of faculty and students have been working for a couple of weeks on the idea of bringing the ethnic studies classes as a General University Requirement, along with other demands for

campus climate.

“Both research and testimony have shown that Ethnic Studies programs increase student performance, retention and sense of self. Hold the university accountable. Our call to action: 1. The revitalization of Ethnic Studies at WWU. 2. Campus-wide justice-oriented curriculum reform,” the petition summary reads.

Senior Stacey Ejim attended the talk and said as a black woman, she wanted an opportunity to talk with someone she identifies with but felt like she was being pushed out.

“I just feel like inherently [Davis] is a black woman for a black woman and she advocates for other rights but her identity alone expresses so much,” Ejim said. “I feel a little disrespected by the fact that there were some white people taking up space in trying to have their moment with Angela Davis.”

She said she wanted to hear someone speak about their experiences of being a black woman in America and find comfort.

The Justice Speaks team invited Western alumni Andrea Tompkins, Belina Seare, Tahlia Natachu and Dillon Baker to help open the space and give historical context on Justice Speaks.

“Let us be reminded this event is not a form of entertainment, there are students

sitting in front of us who came to this gathering to continue on their journey,” Tompkins said. “The Justice Speaks series is a way for marginalized students to be rejuvenated, healed and motivated. Ask yourself, by being here are you giving a false illusion of support? Or will you be here for students after the speaker leaves?”

The biggest challenge was receiving a lot of really negative emails on top of coordinating the event, Alcantar Soto said.

“It was hard to get so many emails from people feeling entitled to an event that was not put on for them in the first place,” Alcantar Soto said.

She said they had to move to main stage last minute in order to accommodate more people.

Harris said not only do Davis’ words inspire the committee in their activism, but her very presence on campus inspired her to take action.

They said she credits Justice Speaks organizers and the planning committee for putting this event together and this was the work of their fellow peers, not the work of Western.

“It’s just another example of how we need to continually do things to uplift ourselves and uplift our own communities

because Western doesn’t offer opportunities like this,” Harris said.

“We were in awe. The committee was very happy with how it went, it was everything we could have asked for. It was really difficult to get there, we had a few hiccups,” Alcantar Soto said. “Overall it was amazing, a lot of us were crying and we were happy with it.”

She said Justice Speaks is meant to provide students of marginalized identities with access to topics that are relevant to them.

Justice Speaks does not have an operational budget and the committee fundraises for everything, Alcantar Soto said.

While the Angela Davis event was the biggest event of Justice Speaks yet, they have had guests such as Cherrie Moraga and David Stovall, Alcantar Soto said.

Alcantar Soto said a link to the talk will be provided for educational purposes only, because of the deal Justice Speaks made with Davis.

“We will allow those folks who didn’t get to see her a chance to watch it and then the link will be taken down,” Alcantar Soto said. “The video will then be available in a DVD in Center for Education, Equity and Diversity library for students and faculty to check out for educational purposes.”



Angela Davis speaks at the PAC Friday, May 5. // Photo by Rahwa Hailemariam

Space issues limit AS Child Development Center capacity

continued from page 1

“There’s an enormous demand for space on campus,” Moeller said. “Because of the way capital grant funding works at the state level, STEM is being heavily prioritized.”

If the center wanted to expand right now, they would have find a separate location on campus, Moeller said.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, 4.8 million students are raising dependent children, which amounts to over a quarter of all undergraduates. Around 15 percent of these students attend public four-year colleges. Women make up 71

percent of student-parents.

Junior Alexis Edgar said she has always been extremely career focused. After having her daughter, Edgar decided to take some time off of school to raise her child. After returning, she realized school had become a completely different experience.

“Not only are you worrying about midterms and finals, you’re sitting in class thinking about your kid,” Edgar said. “Are they having a rough day? Are they being well taken care of?”

After Edgar realized her child was 100th on the waitlist for the Child Development Center, she admitted her child to an off-campus

daycare in Winter 2016-17. She had a terrible experience with her off-campus daycare, so Edgar sought to properly enroll her child in the on-campus center.

After reaching out to the center, Edgar was informed there wasn’t anything the center could do since it was at capacity. She said although the staff were pleasant to speak with, she felt their services fell short since there was nothing they could do.

After constantly voicing her desire to enroll her child in the Child Development Center and her concerns with returning her child to the off-campus daycare, Edgar’s daughter was finally offered a spot in the center for Fall 2017.

However, Edgar is unsure whether or not she would like the center to increase its capacity.

“The student in me says ‘Yes, of course,’ because then I could go to school while my daughter is well taken care of,” Edgar said. “At the same time the mom in me says ‘No, if it gets too big then quality assurance goes to the wayside.’”

Krout said the center’s goal is to socially and emotionally prepare children for future schooling as

well as life in the world. The center wants for its children to be able to navigate different social situations while also giving them the courage to ask questions when they need to.

Located on the bottom floors of Fairhaven stacks 11 and 12, it serves children ages 2 to 5 and employs work-study students, as well as early childhood education students from Woodring College of Education. There are currently eight teachers and assistants, as well as 20 student employees.

Krout said the center wants to meet the needs of students and faculty. Both students and faculty prefer having their children close by and on campus, which is why space is the biggest issue.

The center’s data report states up to 40 percent of the available spots are offered to student-parents, while the other 60 percent are given to staff. In the current school year, 35 percent of children in the daycare are from students while the other 65 percent are children of staff.

Krout said faculty are given priority because, from her experience at the Child Development Center, children of faculty members are in more need of constant care. She said student schedules

vary from quarter to quarter, whereas faculty members need to rely on the center to provide for their kids throughout the work week.

Of the 123 children on the waitlist, 31 are from students, 84 are from staff and eight are from alumni.

If the Childhood Development Center was to expand, Edgar hopes they would consider accepting a wider age range of children.

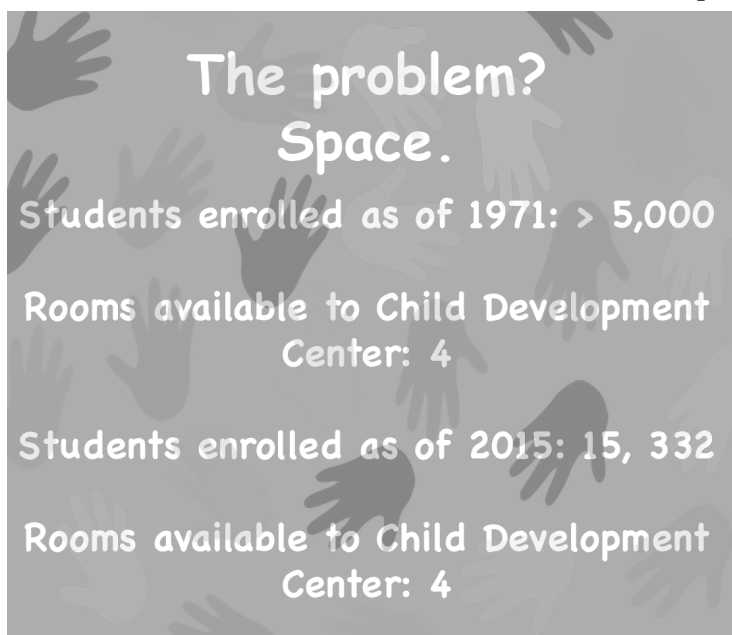
Many young parents who want to begin their education again do not want to wait until their child is old enough to be enrolled in the center, she said.

Of Washington’s 75 colleges, 35 provide daycare services for their faculty and students. The University of Washington has three on-campus children’s centers with a fourth in construction.

Eastern Washington University’s Children’s Center has a capacity of 194 children, while Central Washington University’s Center can only hold up to 45.

The story will be updated online if information from administration addressing the child care center is received.

Infographic by
Layne Carter



March highlights farmworker rights

continued from page 1

Approximately 30 people left the Lynden Fairgrounds at 7 a.m. and walked to Maritime Heritage Park in Bellingham. The 15-mile walk took just under nine hours.

The marchers walked along Meridian Street waving signs. A woman with a megaphone led a chant in Spanish.

In English, it translated to: "What do we want? (Justice!) When do we want it? (Now!) Government, listen, we are in a fight!"

Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns and waved.

Volunteers had set up stations along the way with water and snacks for the marchers.

Brenda Bentley, one of the event coordinators, wants people to recognize what the workers do and the toll it takes on them.

"Today's march is really to celebrate and honor the workers, because a lot of the work that they do goes unrecognized," she said. "The kind of work that they do actually shortens their lifespan. [Agricultural labor] should be a step to a better life and not the life itself."

Very few people were hostile toward the marchers. Peacekeepers, volunteers who had received brief safety training, wore bright orange

vests and looked out for traffic and hostile spectators.

The march stopped at the Bellingham Police Station before its final stop at Maritime Heritage Park. Olga Prado from Western's Blue Group, a club for undocumented students, gave a short speech

Bellingham City Council's ordinance did not go far enough.

After the organizers finished their speeches, the march continued to Maritime Heritage Park, where Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, a church and nonprofit, provided food.



The march crosses through downtown Bellingham Sunday, May 7.// Photo by Jonathan Pendleton

thanking the participants of the march and the Western community. Franks also gave a short speech and said he hoped Bellingham police will refuse to work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Groups like Community to Community Development have pushed for more protection for undocumented immigrants, as they feel the

Volunteer Karly Storms said this march was a collaboration between several nonprofit organizations working together for a cause that arguably affects the entire community.

"If everyone eats then it impacts everyone," Storms said. "Food is always touched by farmworker hands and we need to respect those people."

AS election turnout sees slight increase

continued from page 1

events. This year, they have addressed issues including the resident advisers' concerns, divestment from fossil fuels and increasing services for undocumented students.

Western Votes is trying to teach students about what the AS does in order to increase interest and voter turnout, Pollet said.

"One of the things that we are working on...is raising awareness about what the AS is," he said. "Especially with the restructure, now that it passed, next year's elections are going to be very different since there are going to be a whole lot of other positions to elect."

A ballot measure to restructure the AS constitution and add a student senate passed with 95 percent of votes in favor, according to the election results webpage. The senate will consist of students from each of

Western's colleges, including seats for undecided students, according to the constitution on the AS website.

Pollet hopes the student senate will increase voter turnout.

"Trying to build that awareness about what is going on, and all the changes that are happening next year, is going to be really big," he said. "Hopefully, with the new student senate, people will be able to see a more direct link between them and elected positions."

Not all students voted for all categories, according to the AS election results. The measure to continue the transportation fee, which pays for students' bus passes, received the most votes. It received 2,016 votes, 1,886 in favor. By comparison, the AS presidential race had 1,987 votes cast, according to the results page.

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Active Minds Changing Lives
AA/EO





LEFT: Participant walks with a horse during a therapy session Wednesday, May 3. ABOVE: A participant grooms Obi, an 11-year-old gelding Wednesday, May 3. // Photos by Kirstyn Nyswonger

STABLE THERAPY

Animals take the reins assisting individuals in need of comfort

Kira Erickson
THE WESTERN FRONT

Sometimes, all you need is someone comforting to listen to your problems.

Animals as Natural Therapy offers a safe space for individuals to interact with animals, serving mostly at-risk youth and veterans. The 5-acre farm offers goats, rabbits, dogs, chickens, a llama, one barn cat and horses.

Sessions are held on the farm for kids to come and spend time with the horses.

"Those sessions are pretty much led by the horses. The kids and horses get to pair up organically," office manager Jessie Pemble said. "We don't assign anyone [a horse]. That's because we really honor the horse's intuitive nature and trust them when they want to work with a specific kid."

She said the horses push the kids' boundaries, often helping them become more assertive or gentle.

"The main thing that we try to work on is communication because horses communicate non-verbally," Pemble

said. "Working with them really helps kids learn social and emotional intelligence and how to read situations better. That can be really hard for kids who are caught up in their anxiety, depression or anger."

Pemble, herself a past participant of the program, works closely with teenage girls in drug and alcohol recovery. Letting the girls have time alone with their horses is very important, she said.

"Often times, kids will feel comfortable saying things to a horse that they would never say to an adult. They can admit things to a horse without fear of judgment or retaliation."

Jessie Pemble
Animals as Natural Therapy office manager

Along with developing communication skills, Pemble said she sees improvements in confidence and self-regulation skills.

During the sessions, the focus is on building a relationship with the horse. The participants do this by grooming the horses, leading them through obstacles and talking to them, Pemble said.

"Often times, kids will feel comfortable saying things to a horse that they would never say to an adult," Pemble said. "They can admit things to a horse without fear of judgment or retaliation, and it really lets them get things off their chest that they might be holding in."

Some of the horses on the farm have been working as therapy horses

their whole lives, and others have been rescued. One of the horses, Patriot, was rescued as a therapy animal for the program after his owner mistreated and starved him.

"If he can get through that horrible situation and still want to work with humans, then he knows how to forgive," Pemble said. "If a horse knows how to forgive someone, then that's pretty amazing."

Program Director Sonja Wingard started the nonprofit organization 20 years ago on her own farm after seeing the amazing effects interacting with horses had on her three kids.

Wingard was also inspired to host a similar program on her farm after working as a nurse at a summer camp that had horses. She knew people working with at-risk kids from Catholic Community Services, who brought kids out to her farm to interact with the animals.

"We saw a softening that happened with the kids around the animals -- taking down their defense a little bit -- and compassion coming out of these kids," she said.

Wingard said she closely follows the angriest kids in the program because of her years of experience working as a nurse.

"I realized [the horses] weren't just here to ride, be brushed, smell good and leave your clothes smelling like a farm. They have a whole other agenda, and they can read people," Wingard said.

She said she has witnessed people crying while revealing their pain to the horses.

"These horses stood there with them, [hearing them] revealing their deepest sorrows, and to me that's a really fulfilling moment," Wingard said. "These people feel safe to be vulnerable, to speak of their pain."

LaRae Soleimante said she has also experienced rewarding moments in her time as a mentor at Animals as Natural Therapy.

"For me, the biggest awakening is seeing how the animals are so intuitive with the kids," Soleimante said. "The horses help guide the kids with the lessons they need, and that's such a fabulous thing to watch."

Current volunteer and former participant of the program, Geni Kingsland, said she experienced personal growth from connecting with her horse, Sundance, a 27 year-old Quarter Horse.

"When I was younger, I had a really bad speech impediment so I wouldn't talk a lot," Kingsland said. "Sonja always had us talk to the horses, and that really helped me open up and become vocal about what I want and what I need."

Her advice for others is to not be afraid about putting yourself out there and connecting with animals.

"I know it's awkward, they really don't talk back, but they listen and they will give you advice," Kingsland

said. "Not only do they teach you, but they also comfort you."

In addition to their after-school sessions with horses, Animals as Natural Therapy offers a mobile program which visits schools and nursing homes with dogs, rabbits, chickens, miniature horses, goats and the llama.

Animals as Natural Therapy receives funding from grants, sponsors and donations. Pemble estimates the program takes on 400 kids per year, from ages 6 to 18. Veterans can attend the program free of charge.

"For a lot of them, it's a last resort to come here. Nothing else has worked," Pemble said.

She said she wants to make the distinction that everyone involved in the program, from attendees to mentors to animals, are all participants.

"We're trying to remove the stigma of coming to get counseling or therapy, and everyone is truly on the same team here," Pemble said.



There are 12 horses at the farm available for participants. Photo taken Wednesday, May 3. // Photo by Kirstyn Nyswonger

Stepping outside the classroom

Program offers students a chance to interact with communities around the world

Justin Stercula

THE WESTERN FRONT

Halfway around the world, a family of strangers can impact the life of a Western student by accepting them into their home through a Bellingham nonprofit.

The Institute for Village Studies offers Western students the chance to integrate into village communities across the world.

Students can travel to the Himalayas, Thailand, Kenya, Bali, India and Nepal, depending on the season.

The programs offered by the Institute for Village Studies allow students and volunteers a chance to immerse themselves and interact within a community.

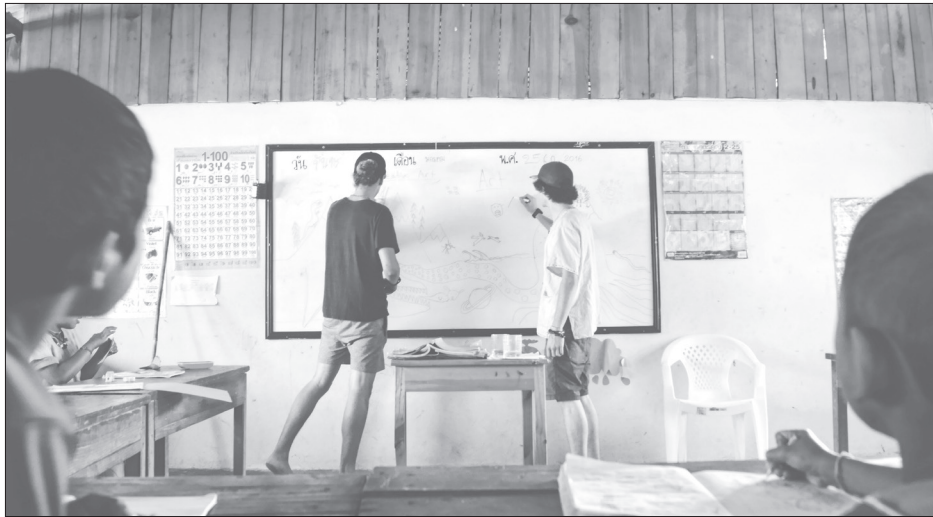
“We work with village communities around the world in achieving their vision of a better future,” Charlie Ashbaugh, the director of the Institute for Village Studies, said.

The goals of the program shift based on the theme of the trip, which vary depending on the destination. Themes include global health, indigenous rights, climate change, water resources and sustainability.

One of the most important aspects of the program is its engagement in community-driven developments on a local level, Ashbaugh said.

“We don’t want to be a burden or force our way in for the benefit of our own experience,” Ashbaugh said. “[It’s] really important to us that we’re not coming up with solutions in Bellingham and going over and implementing [them].”

Serena Cueva, a senior environmental education and geography major, went to the Indian Himalayas for six weeks with the program. She had always wanted to travel



Institute for Village Studies students teach creative art in Thailand. // Photo courtesy of Montanna Binder

to the Himalayas and the institute provided her with the opportunity. Though university credits are offered, Cueva found her biggest take away was the experience itself.

“I was eager to try something that seemed out of my comfort zone,” Cueva said.

For three weeks of the trip, Cueva took part in a homestay, living with a local family. Despite a language barrier, she was able to integrate, learn from and communicate with her hosts. Cueva said there was a sense of peace and a general ease within the community.

“The difference in the pace of life was the biggest takeaway for me,” Cueva said. “I felt like I had to time to be a person.”

While living abroad, Cueva said she came to appreciate some of the privileges taken for granted in the United States.

“We didn’t really shower while we were there at all,” Cueva said. “You only get one or two days a week where you actually have water.”

Montanna Binder, a second year transfer at Fairhaven College, concentrating in global studies and

photojournalism, went on the winter 2017 trip intended for Burma and Thailand. Her group was forced to abandon the Burma portion of the trip due to violence in the area. Instead, the group spent all 52 days in Thailand, which presented other challenges.

“I learned the most from the hard situations that I didn’t want to necessarily be in,” Binder said. “Just learning how to deal and communicate with a huge language barrier and then seeing how easy it is to break down that barrier.”

Binder was a part of three separate homestays, all of which were in villages struggling to retain their cultural heritage, in part due to expanding tourism in the region. Binder said the intimacy with these communities was impactful.

The Institute for Village Studies strives to address the ethics of U.S. citizens’ responsibility to the rest of the world.

“We have a couple of big goals,” Ashbaugh said. “One is developing meaningful relationships with people from different cultures and communities around the world.

[The second] is fostering a sense of global citizenship.”

Ashbaugh said the institute focuses on fostering long term relationships with the communities, opting to return year-after-year rather than moving on to a new location.

Founded by Ted Hope in 1999, the Institute once partnered with other schools including Prescott College, Evergreen State College and Santa Clara University. While still not completely exclusive to Western, the Institute for Village Studies has a long-standing partnership with the university and, since moving its board to Bellingham, Ashbaugh considers Western to be its main partner.

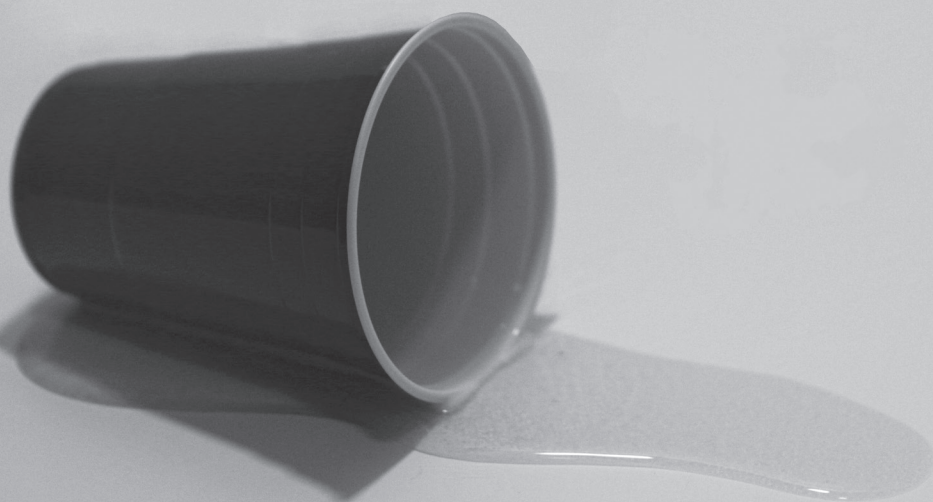
Long term, Ashbaugh hopes to see the Institute expand its geographic outreach. In its current form, the focus lies heavily on South and Southeast Asia.

“If you do end up having the opportunity to go abroad,” Ashbaugh said, “I think bringing [a] huge dose of humility with you is one of the most important things I could try to emphasize.”

The Institute for Village Studies has several trips planned for the coming year, including a social justice trip to Kenya in the winter.



Illustration by Shannon DeLurio



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Frontline: Sustainable food is more than a trend

Guest column by Taylor Nichols

The natural-food market has been gaining popularity for some time now, but the “natural” label found on many products is not as credible as some may think.

Since the phrase is completely unregulated — meaning companies can use it without meeting any requirements or restrictions on chemical additives, GMOs and pesticides — it allows companies to market themselves as healthy and sustainable without actually doing much to back up these claims.

A 2015 study by The Nielsen Company found many consumers, millennials in particular, will pay more for products they perceive as environmentally friendly or sustainable.

Companies have long been capitalizing on the natural-food market and the willingness to pay more for better products by using vague words like “green” and “natural,” or implementing earthy packaging with leaves on the front of products, because marketing yourself as sustainable is easier than actually being sustainable.

Stores that call themselves “natural grocers,” like Whole Foods Market and Trader Joe’s, are piggybacking on the momentum of the eco-friendly movement. It’s undeniable that this increases interest in environmentalism, but these stores are misleading people by creating the impression that their products are natural and sustainable. This isn’t really the case.

Western’s campus, and Bellingham as a whole, has a focus on sustainability, and there is a huge market

here for natural and sustainable businesses. It’s easy for big companies to come in and promote themselves as having these values, especially if it matches the current social environment.

These stores may be sincerely trying to adhere to more ethical and sustainable practices, or trying to provide people with better options, but the fact that they are making a minimal effort to improve doesn’t mean they deserve the high praise they receive.

If local stores, like the Community

Food Co-op, can dedicate themselves to sustainable practices, Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s should be able to — especially if they’re going to overcharge for their products.

Trader Joe’s is a key offender. The company describes themselves as a “neighborhood grocery store.” People want to support their community, and this slogan creates a positive image. But how can a multi-billion dollar company truly be your everyday neighborhood grocer?

In 2016, Trader Joe’s announced

plans to only sell cage-free eggs in western states by 2020, and nationally by 2025, because of customer feedback. Sounds pretty admirable, right?

Cage-free is another misleading term, and it has people convinced they’re supporting humane practices. In reality, it’s only marginally better than those PETA videos we’ve all seen where chickens are crammed into tiny cages and can’t see the light of day. If Trader Joe’s is really such an ethical company, they should be working to get all their products, not just eggs, from ethical sources. And

they should be doing it of their own accord.

Consumers shouldn’t have to throw a fit to force companies to adopt more ethical practices, especially if they portray themselves as the good guys.

Whole Foods touts itself as America’s healthiest grocery store. While they do carry more options for people looking for healthy alternatives to mainstream brands, their organic options are limited and difficult to find.

This is problematic because organic is one of the only USDA-certified terms for healthy, sustainable foods. The certification ensures products are produced using methods that are better for you and better for the environment than nonorganic ones.

Companies truly dedicated to feeding and growing the eco-friendly green movement should provide goods sourced from companies that live and breathe those values in a genuine way, as many locally owned stores across the country do.

Luckily, Bellingham is abundant with opportunities to truly support the movement in a sustainable way without spending hours reading labels and doing research. Shopping locally is one of the best and most ethically sound ways to do this. There are many organic farms in surrounding areas like Deming or Lynden that offer their products locally. They can be found in grocery stores, at the Farmers Market downtown or through Community Supported Agriculture boxes, which deliver fresh produce and vegetables weekly.



Illustration by Shannon DeLurio

The Western Front Editorial Board consists of Kaitlin Eslinger, Alec Regimbal and Natalie Breymeyer

Viking Voices

How do you pay for school?



“I pay for college all on my own. My parents don’t really pay for any of it. I have a lot of scholarships and grants. And I just take out loans for living expenses. I’m also a work-study student in the Athletic Training Room for varsity athletes.”

Becca McNurney
Senior, community health



“I have financial aid. I have some student loans and my parents took out some loans. I worked at Fred Meyer for a while to supplement the amount of money because my financial aid refund couldn’t quite get me through life.”

Macey Wolfer
Junior, creative writing



“My parents saved money and are able to help me. But I have to work almost full-time while I’m going to school which is really hard. I’m taking way over a full course load — 20 credits. I don’t really have time to do anything else besides those two things. I’ve taken out some loans, but hopefully I’ll be able to find a job that helps me pay for those”

Natalie Jones
Senior, English literature

Kasner leads Vikings to GNAC title



Western softball will head into the first round of the West Regionals as the No. 8 seed. // Photo by Nick Vitalis

Nick Vitalis

THE WESTERN FRONT

The Western softball team won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championship tournament title Sunday, May 7, claiming their first conference title since 2011. They defeated the Western Oregon University Wolves 5-0 in the championship game.

Freshman Anna Kasner led the way in the tournament for the Vikings, winning the MVP award. Kasner threw a two-hit shutout on Sunday and an eight-inning, 13-strikeout performance on Saturday, as well as 4.2 innings of scoreless relief on Thursday's tournament opener.

Kasner threw 19.2 innings, didn't give up an earned run, and collected 23 strikeouts and all three

also batted .454 for the tournament (5-for-11).

"She's consistent, she's a gamer," head coach Amy Suiter said. "I can't say I didn't expect it from her, because she's set that expectation for herself."

Kasner and Suiter both said the defense played a big part in the win. The Vikings didn't have a single error in all three games. When Kasner got into a jam with runners on first and second base in the top of the second inning, she said her defense helped her mental game.

"I [was] just like, 'Anna, just throw the pitch because no matter what you pitch, [your defense has] got you,'" Kasner said.

Kasner said the tournament overall was a great experience, and has given

ing forward to the national tournament.

"We have an 11-game winning streak, which is insane," Kasner said.

Senior Kali Patterson knocked in the go-ahead run with a sacrifice fly, the first of five runs scored in the bottom of the second inning.

The Vikings were able to produce their runs with just four hits, thanks to some excellent at-bats and pitch reading; they walked eight times as a team, including three for lead-off hitter sophomore Shearyna Labasan.

Junior Makinlee Sellvold recorded two RBIs on a single pulled through the left side, extending her Western single-season record for RBIs to 51.

This season, the team

has adopted the motto of winning every inning.

However, it's not the only thing the Vikings consider when playing. They constantly put and think about the team first.

When asked about winning the MVP award for the tournament, Kasner said the entire team really deserved it, and said she was thankful for all of them.

Patterson also knocked in the go-ahead run on Saturday with a walk-off single in the bottom of the eighth inning, and mentioned her fellow players.

"Anything I can do to help my team is all I want to do," Patterson said.

The fact that it wasn't always the big stars of the team getting the crucial

plays speaks to the team's depth, Suiter said, and bodes well for the future.

"When everybody starts clicking over the next couple weeks, some good things could happen," Suiter said.

The win secured the Vikings' first trip to the NCAA Division II national tournament since 2011.

"I'm really excited. Since I've been [at Western,] we've never been [to regionals,] so it's just a new experience," Patterson said.

The Vikings will be playing in Seaside, California against the host team, Cal State Monterey Bay, on Thursday, May 11 at 5:30 p.m. in the double-elimination tournament.



Anna Kasner receives the GNAC Tournament MVP Award Sunday, May 7. // Photo by Nick Vitalis

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Shugarts and White to the Sounders

Two of Western's women soccer players will play together in Seattle this summer

Katie Webber
THE WESTERN FRONT

Two of Western's stand-out soccer players, Sierra Shugarts and Karli White, will be joining the Seattle Sounders Women's soccer team this summer.

Junior captain and defender Shugarts scored a total of four goals and had one assist during the 2016 National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship season. She said she is hoping to work on her speed and taking light touches on the ball.

"That's what separates Division I and Division II, as well as little details and finishing your chances," Shugarts said. "It'll be a good mental challenge, as well as physical;

going against bigger, stronger [and] faster players.

Sophomore forward and midfielder White, who transferred to Western from Seattle University this spring, played for the Sounders in the summer of 2016. She played a total of three games, scored six goals and had two assists.

"It's intimidating going into something like that, but at the same time, [Sounders' head coach Kim Calkins] asked me and Sierra to play for a reason. She obviously sees something in us," White said. "It'll teach me how to play with other players, learning other people's strengths and challenge me to develop the areas of my game that are more weak."

Shugarts and White are the only Division II players on the Sounders' roster. The rest of the players are from seven different Division I universities.

The Western women's head coach Travis Connell said during the summer there's no substitute for actually playing in games, so this is a great way for them to get ready for the fall season.

"One of the big challenges for fall sports, in general, is coming off of summer break, and all of a sudden, two weeks later, you are playing meaningful games that will determine your seating in the NCAA tournament," Connell said. "Their offseason workouts, like summer, are critically important to preparing us for early season success."

Junior defender

Malia Maack said Shugarts is a team player and thinks of everyone else on the field.

"She thinks about the big picture and how each person will contribute to the team," Maack said. "She puts all the puzzle pieces together [with] relationships, friendships and how people work on and off the field."

Maack said even with the small amount of time White has been playing for Western, she is the playmaker.

"To her, everything is a challenge that's she's going to overcome," Maack said. "[With] the diversity of coming to a new team, she's not taking it as negativity, she's taking it as, 'It's a challenge. I'm going to make my mark on this.'"

Connell said he hopes Shugarts and White get to play a lot, so their fitness and timing is at mid-season speed at the beginning of the fall season.

He pointed out the positives of playing for a different coach with a different style of play and formation.

"That stuff can only make you better as a soccer player," Connell said. "It makes you smarter, more versatile and ready for anything. The more perspectives on the game, situations you are exposed to and experiences just makes you a more well-rounded player. And I hope they are able to garnish some of that from this summer."

Shugarts said it's definitely intimidating and a lot of pressure because she is one of the only two Division II players that's going to be on the team.

"I'm looking forward to playing out of my comfort



Sierra Shugarts defends against Washington State at Harrington Field Sunday, April 2. // Photo by Jonathan Pendleton

zone and playing against some of the best players that have come out of Washington," Shugarts said. "It'll be a good experience for me to grow, and experience what it's like to play at that next level."

Their eligibility won't be affected because the Sounders' season doesn't interfere with Western's spring and fall season. Shugarts and White won't join the club until spring quarter is finished in early June.

"That's what's great about it. It's a program I can play over the summer, and it won't affect anything for college, which is nice. But it also gives me, along with the other players, an opportunity to get out what you put in," White said. "It's all about how much you put into it and what you want from it."

The Sounders' season starts in May and ends in July. Western's exhibition

matches for fall season don't begin until the middle of August.

2016 WOMEN'S SOCCER

Overall record:
24-0-1

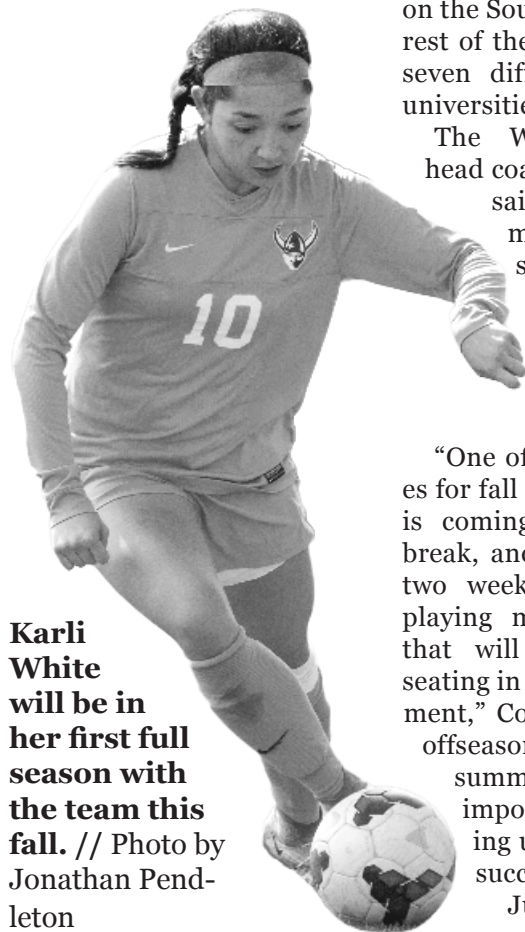
Goals scored: 66

Goals allowed: 10

Goals allowed per
game: 0.4

GNAC champions

National champions



Karli White will be in her first full season with the team this fall. // Photo by Jonathan Pendleton



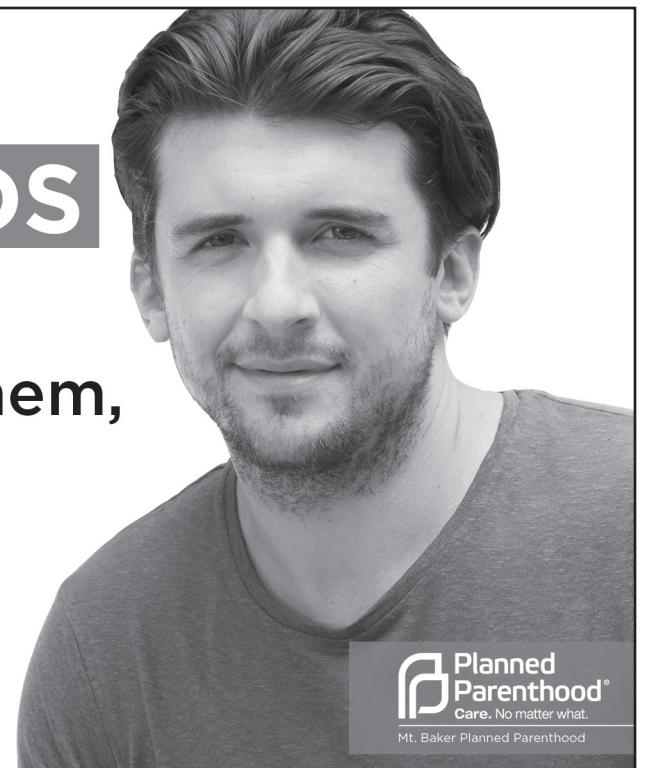
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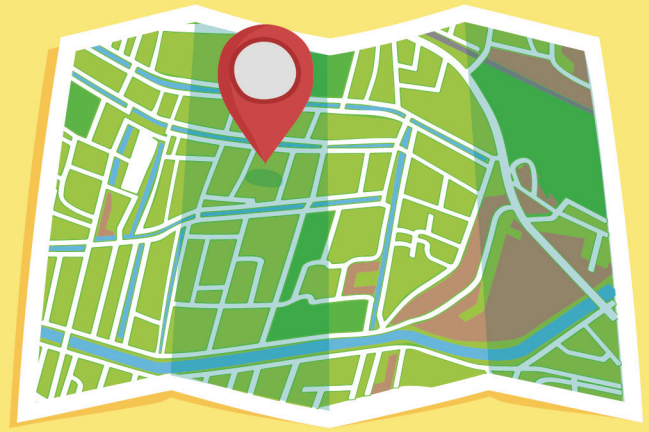
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