

Man arrested in Wilson Library on suspicion of stalking, voyeurism

Man trespassed from Western's campus after reports of photographing female students

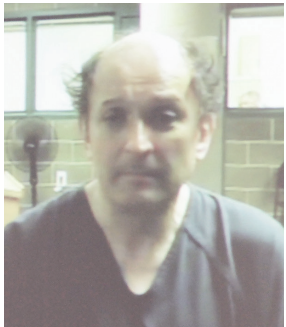


Photo by Julia Berkman

**Julia Berkman
Zoe Buchli**
THE WESTERN FRONT

A 57-year-old Bellingham man, who police said committed acts of voyeurism in Wilson Library and stalked a Western student, made his preliminary appearance in Whatcom County Superior Court

on Friday, May 18.

Whatcom County Superior Court Commissioner Leon Henley set bail for Charles Gregory Vergin at \$5,000.

He was released on bail from the Whatcom County Jail at approximately 7:45 p.m. on Friday, May 18, according to the Whatcom County Jail releases website.

Vergin's arraignment is scheduled for Friday, May 25, at 9 a.m., at the Whatcom County Courthouse.

Vergin was arrested on the evening of Thursday, May 17 at Wilson Library after a student who observed him taking photos called University Police, Deputy Prosecutor Jonathan

Richardson said.

Richardson told the court the student had seen a man taking photos up the skirt of a female student from underneath a desk on Tuesday, May 15.

The reporting student was able to identify the suspect and

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SPORTS

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Bellingham bikers took over Bay Street // pg. 6-7

OPINION

University responds to editorial by journalism faculty on public records requests // pg. 9

A year after sit-in, annual stipends have increased for RAs

Stella Harvey
THE WESTERN FRONT

It's been a year since a resident advisor movement brought Western's attention to the RA position, but the work has continued behind the scenes.

According to Leonard Jones, director of University Residences, RA stipends increased from \$731 annually to \$1,440 this year in response to last year's movement and RAs now have more flexibility in their meal plans. RAs are also now paid up to 120 hours for training, and training days have been decreased from 12 hours to 8 hours.

In April 2017, RAs from across campus held an open forum where university administrators were confronted with concerns about pay, residence safety and inclusivity, according to previous reporting by The Western Front.

On May 22, 2017, RAs held a sit-in at Jones' office to show they weren't going to stop until all their needs were met.

Newly-elected Associated Students VP for Student Life Anne Lee was an RA for the SHADO community, which includes Ridgeway Sigma, Highland, Alpha, Delta and Omega, at the time of the protests and helped organize the open

forum.

She said the movement grew out of a distrust of Western's administration after several incidents where an RA in Highland Hall was targeted.

Lee said after several meetings with administrators to talk about how to make the dorms safer, she and the other RAs didn't feel they were being listened to.

A year after both the open forum and sit-in, Lee said she is encouraged by the changes that have been made, including the increased stipend.

Read the full story at westernfrontonline.com

Students voice opinions about marches addressing gun rights



Junior Sarah-Jane Bentley-Spring participated in the March for Our Lives in New York City. // Courtesy of Sarah-Jane Bentley-Spring.

Read the full story at westernfrontonline.com

Students react to Eric Bostrom becoming Uber driver

Zoe Deal
THE WESTERN FRONT

Students and Bellingham residents have taken to social media to issue public service announcements after it became known that notorious preacher and former City Council candidate Eric Bostrom became a driver for Uber.

The posts brought at-

tention to Bostrom's anti-LGBTQ+ and "Repent or Burn in Hell" signs and reminded Uber users to check their driver's profile when requesting a ride. One repost by Bellingham resident Valentine Perez, 28, has nearly 700 shares.

Junior Maddie Rackers thinks the PSA will allow more of the community to be prepared.

"A lot of people just won't feel safe being in the car with him," Rackers said.

Evelyn Hobbs, coordinator of the Associated Students Queer Resource Center, agreed.

"To have somebody who is clearly hateful and actively going into places to disrupt people's lives be in such a public position is dangerous,"

she said.

Hobbs said she recognizes that Bostrom has no known history of violence, but said the danger is that riders are at the driver's mercy.

"[A driver has] control over what happens to you until you get to whatever destination you're going to," Hobbs said.

Though some on Facebook have vowed to avoid

Bostrom and Uber at all costs by using Lyft, others commented their intentions to seek out Bostrom as an Uber driver.

Bostrom said he won't take the bait. When he opens the Uber app, he said he keeps his personal life to himself. Uber's policy doesn't allow either the driver or rider to pry into the other's personal beliefs, Bostrom said.

"If somebody wanted to [engage], I'd say, 'Well, this is not the time or place. The only thing that we're doing is a ride from point A to point B,'" Bostrom said.

As of May 22 at 4:15 p.m., Bostrom had facilitated 353 trips.

see *UBER*, page 3



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Freshman Hannah Isham falling off a slackline in front of Old Main on Tuesday, May 22. Isham picked up slacklining two months ago. // Photo by Kevin Lake

AS Board votes to generate \$294,000 more per quarter for health-related services

City Council discusses reforming transportation

Max Brunt
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Associated Students Board of Directors reviewed the 2019 Budget Recommendations and other fee changes on Friday, May 18.

The budget has been updated to reflect the increase in student salaries resulting from the 4.2 percent increase in minimum wage.

The budget committee recommended that Western eliminate its New York Times paper subscription, saying students didn't frequently utilize it. It currently represents \$8,765 of the annual budget, according to the recommendation.

Subscribing to a different newspaper or an online-only approach are being considered.

The board gave unanimous support to a proposal for an increased Health Services Fee separate from the budget recommendations.

The fee will increase from \$106 to \$113 per quarter. This will generate

an additional \$294,000 in revenue for Western's health-related student services, according to the proposal.

The board postponed voting to allocate funds to continue the Student Enhancement Fund due to technical issues with the proposal, though they voiced their full support for it.

The Student Enhancement Fund sets aside \$35,000 annually, which students in need of assistance with expenses can apply for.

VP for Academic Affairs Hunter Eider read a resolution to address incidents of antisemitism on campus.

"We as the AS Board of WWU resolve to hold university officials, ourselves, and the campus community accountable for creating a welcoming space for students, staff and faculty who identify as Jewish," Eider read from the statement.

Other components of the budget recommendation are available on the AS Board website.

Stella Harvey
THE WESTERN FRONT

The City Council is aiming to make Bellingham a more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly city in this year's Transportation Improvement Program.

According to the City Council Agenda Bill, the six-year TIP program is adopted every year to plan public funding to improve Bellingham's transportation.

The plan aims to improve all forms of transportation including walking, driving, biking and taking public transit.

Transportation Planner Chris Comeau said there are 17 improvement projects included in the 2019-24 program.

According to the TIP draft, among the improvements will be installing a buffer for protecting bicycle lanes on Chestnut Street from Railroad Avenue to Ellis Street. This will entail removing one vehicle lane.

According to the TIP draft, another project will be improving Bill McDonald/34th Street pedestrian and bicycle crossing areas, including adding flashing crosswalks.

The council held a public hearing on the program plans on Monday, May 21 where Bellingham residents voiced their concerns for different roads

around town. Donna Meehan, a resident at Northern Meadows Estates, an over-55 gated community, requested the council include installing a traffic light on the corner of Telegraph Road and James Street to project number 15 in the TIP.

She said there has been a high number of "almost accidents" that have occurred in the area due to the traffic that makes it difficult to turn out of the parking lot.

Meehan said she is also concerned about the safety of those who have to wait at the bus stop on the busy street because there is low visibility at night and no reflective signs.

Debbie Tornquist, a resident of James Street Estates, a housing community across the street from Northern Meadows, echoed Meehan's worries.

"I am very concerned, not only for myself but for all the residents," Tornquist said. "It is an accident waiting to happen, and a fatality is in the works."

According to the City Council Agenda Bill, state law requires cities to adopt their transportation improvement program before July 1.

The City Council will hold a work session to consider adopting the program draft on June 4.

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to send them our way or discuss sharing information confidentially.

New project provides resources for homeless youth

Chelsea Smiley
THE WESTERN FRONT

The First Congregational Church of Bellingham and Northwest Youth Services are collaborating on a new project to provide day-to-day services for youth experiencing homelessness.

The Ground Floor Project will transform the church's ground floor into a safe, confidential and caring space for youth in need of basic services, according to the Ground Floor Project website.

"We want to meet people where they're at," the Rev. David Weasley, pastor for youth, young adults and mission, said. "The ground floor of helping someone is often giving basic needs. When building a building, one starts with the ground floor and builds from there. This is really basic services, but basic services that are designed to help a young person step up with the next building of their life."

For the church, it's at the core of their faith to be doing the work of love and justice in the community. In that sense, it's the ground



The Ground Floor Project will take over The First Congregational Church's bottom floor to provide a safe space for homeless youth. // Photo by Kevin Lake

floor of who they are as a community to be providing this space and services, Rev. Weasley said.

"A young person comes in and certainly they're [able] to take a shower or do some laundry," Rev. Weasley said. "But also they're building relationships with supportive folks who are going to help them throughout however long their process is."

Junior Hannah Svendsen is president of Western Community Outreach, a

club that helps build relationships between Western students and people experiencing homelessness by engaging in community service.

"If you're [experiencing homelessness] at such a young age, it's much more encouraging to be around people of the same age," Svendsen said.

The First Congregational Church has a long relationship with Northwest Youth Services, Rev. Weasley said.

He said a lot of people from the church have worked on the staff, been on the board or have helped at Northwest Youth Services.

"Northwest Youth Services does awesome work with young people experiencing homelessness, but it happens in a pretty tiny space right now," Rev. Weasley said. "We have all this space, and you have great work that could use more space, so let's team up for this project."

Northwest Youth Services have been running a drop-in center on North State Street for the last four years every weekday, Jenn Daly, director of development and community relations at Northwest Youth Services, said.

Currently, Northwest Youth Services is in a 200-square-foot space with one bathroom that includes a shower and one nap room, Daly said.

"We do have that experience and we do see the need, so it's not something we're creating out of thin air," Daly said. "We're expanding an existing program to meet the demand of our community better."

Daly added that they have offered them a 10-year free lease.

"We're partnering with them for what we intend to be at least 10 years, hopefully more," she said.

For the past few years, the two groups have been working together to dream up and plan out what this project would look like, getting the congregation on board and preparing to raise money, Rev. Weasley said.

Northwest Youth Services will be providing all the staff and all the marketing expenses through federal grants, local donors and the city, he said.

The church will be doing the renovating with funding that will come from fundraising, foundations and the community, he said. Daly said there isn't one thing that makes a youth experience homelessness, and every youth has their own unique story and services they need to find stability.

"I think it's important for people to know that the need exists," she said. "In order to really provide the services that the youth deserves, we need a dedicated space."

UBER

Continued from page 1

He had received a five-star rating from 88 percent of rated trips, and his cumulative Uber star rating was 4.74 out of 5.

Bostrom said he doesn't think people in the community should be afraid or concerned about sitting in his backseat. They can always cancel their request. If anything, he said, he should be the worried party.

"In all my preaching, I've never assaulted anybody, but I've been assaulted many times," Bostrom said. "I'm the one who should worry about my safety. I have people that are worried about my safety just because I'm out driving."

Whatcom Community College student Jayna Edmonds said she wouldn't be afraid to ride with Bostrom, though he has called her a "bigoted troll."

"I don't think that he's dangerous. It might be a little awkward or uncomfortable, but at the end of the day he's just a sad, old man who's trying to make a living," Edmonds said in an email.

Some community members are going a step further to protect themselves and others. One person posted directly on the Uber Facebook page requesting Bostrom's removal. Hobbs said she plans to contact Uber directly.

Though Bostrom said he has experienced his fair share of online backlash in the past, he said he will consider suing if the community continues attacking his choice of work.

"You don't get to affect people's livelihood just because you don't like something," Bostrom said.

However, Bostrom said he is still open to conversation — outside of his red Prius.



Eric Bostrom poses in front of his red Toyota Prius. // Photo by Zoe Deal

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Fighting the addiction

The impact of the opioid epidemic on Bellingham first responders

This story is the final piece of a three-part collaborative report on the opioid epidemic by Melissa McCarthy, Rahwa Hailemariam and Katie Meier. They collectively obtained and analyzed data and interviewed sources.

Katie Meier
THE WESTERN FRONT

In a motel room on Samish Way, the body of a man lies still on the ground, heroin coursing through his veins. He is in the middle of an overdose.

His girlfriend had tried desperately to wake him up before reaching out for help, dousing him in cold water and attempting to breathe for him.

First responders flood into the room: police, firefighters, and EMTs all preparing for the worst, but hoping for the best.

He has just minutes before he will succumb to the effects of the drugs in his system. His heart rate is dangerously low and they cannot get air into him.

He is going to die.

Bill Boyd, a 38-year-old engine medic, grabs a syringe from his bag and leans down toward the patient. Opening up his mouth, Boyd inserts the needle underneath the patient's tongue and injects its contents into the patient.

The drug: naloxone.

Naloxone is an antidote to opioid overdoses. Used in the form of a syringe or nasal spray, it has the ability to stop an overdose in its tracks. The effects are almost immediate, causing it to be a very effective tool in the fight against addiction.

"What are you doing?" a police officer asks.

Boyd explains the actions that he has taken to the police officer. During an opioid overdose, the central nervous and respiratory systems become suppressed, leading the body to shut down if it does not get enough oxygen.

Naloxone directly battles the lack of oxygen by restoring normal respiration for a short period of time, giving time for medical professionals to perform life-saving actions. It is not a cure for an overdose, but can help in the short term.

ARREST
continued from page 1

University Police found Vergin on the fourth floor of Wilson Library on Thursday, May 17, according to Richardson.

Vergin was arrested after dropping a small camera while being interviewed by University Police, Richardson said.

According to Richardson, Vergin then admitted to the police that he had taken photos

"I'm out of here, I can't even watch this," the uncomfortable police officer mutters in the background.

It takes about a minute for naloxone to kick in, but once it does the patient starts to breathe on his own and even-

duced by Adapt Pharma Inc.

Originally created in 1960 and used in a syringe form, Narcan was injected intravenously beneath patients' tongues, in strong veins in their arms and in other common sites where an IV would

of administration now is nally, EMS supervisor Scott Farlow said.

Syringes preloaded with Narcan are connected with a mucosal-atomizing device at the tip. The mucosal atomizing device causes the Narcan

to see the effects.

"That five minutes can seem like it's really long for people who are not used to looking at someone who's not breathing for five minutes," Farlow said.

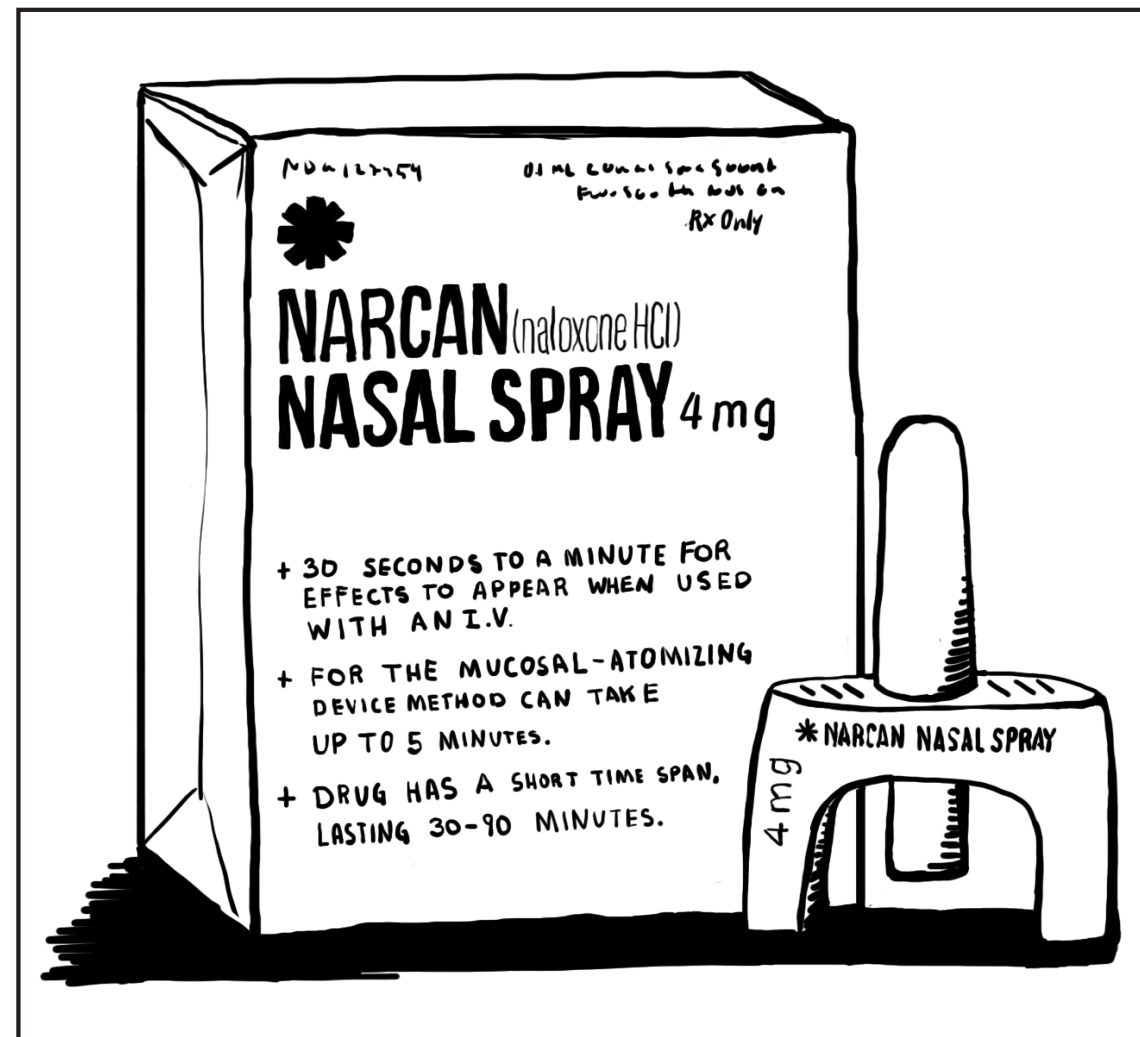
Five minutes without oxygen can also have a huge impact on the quality of life a person has when they wake up. The brain needs oxygen and when it does not receive it, cells start to die off, which causes brain damage. Patients can wake up with memory loss, impaired vision and hearing, communication impairment or the loss of coordination.

This practice of using Narcan was implemented in Bellingham about 20 years ago to both keep the first responders safe by avoiding exposing them to untested blood, and to make it more efficient, by avoiding scarred-over veins.

Fairly quick to act, the drug also has a short time span once injected, lasting only about 30-90 minutes. While in the patient's system, it keeps the patient awake and breathing, but once it leaves their system they can end up right back into an overdose.

If a patient took a lethal dose of an opiate, some might have worn off in the time-frame, but if not enough has worn off, the patient could start overdosing again. There is no way to know how severe the overdose is, which is why it is important for first responders to persuade patients to go to the hospital.

Overdose symptoms include a variety of characteristics including sweating, nausea, difficulty breathing and vomiting which can span from a few minutes to a few hours.



Infographic by Sophia Greif

tually starts to wake, even before the medic unit arrives on scene.

This is the reality of opioid overdoses.

Lucky saves and near misses have become the reality for first responders in Whatcom County as opioids are becoming more prevalent.

Narcan: The Basics

Naloxone has become one of the top tools in fighting opioid overdoses.

In Bellingham, first responders use Narcan, which is a brand of naloxone pro-

be started, according to Bill Boyd, fire chief of the Bellingham Fire Department from 2003-12.

"Take a piece of cloth and pull the tongue up and there are blood vessels. All you do is you take that needle and you shove it under the skin because it's very vascular there, and the Narcan is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream," Boyd said.

It takes about 30 seconds to one minute for the effects to appear when used with an IV.

Flash forward to 2018 and the most common method

to become a mist, which is a more effective method of administration. The greater the surface area that it mists, the greater the body's capacity to take the medication in faster.

In a scenario where time is of the essence, methods like this can make all the difference. Administered correctly, it can take up to five minutes

Read the full story at Westernfrontonline.com

of various women in the library.

He is trespassed from campus, and it is unclear if this case is related to other incidents of voyeurism on or around campus, according to a Western Alert advisory email.

Richardson said Vergin had also stalked another Western student both on and off campus.

The student had noticed Vergin staring at her in the

library, Richardson said. She then saw him staring at her on her way home and avoided entering her house within his line of sight.

After another encounter with Vergin at the library, where he sat across from her, touched her foot with his and appeared to look down her shirt, she told the circulation desk, who called University Police to report him, Richardson said.

Richardson said police asked Vergin to leave the library. The student was later able to positively identify him in a University Police photo lineup, Richardson said. Vergin was issued a harassment no-contact order, but it is unclear when.

Vergin was booked into Whatcom County Jail just before 10 p.m. on May 17, according to the jail roster.

Vergin has lived in the Bellingham area since 1975 and currently resides with his father and siblings, his father said.

Vergin's family was approached in court and declined to comment.

*This story will be updated as more information becomes available.

Western's museum specialist and storytelling extraordinaire to retire after 29 years

Samuel Fletcher
THE WESTERN FRONT

As Western Gallery's museum specialist of 29 years nears retirement, students and faculty imagine a gallery with only the echoes of the vivid storyteller, unique educator and adored friend.

Paul Brower has constructed exhibits and hung 1,500 pieces of art currently displayed on campus. He has done lighting for all of the gallery openings and art events, he said. He also leads eight internships a year where he teaches students all the behind-the-scenes work of an art exhibit.

"It's a glorified carpentry job," Brower said. "A carpenter with art knowledge."

He worked with the first indigenous artifacts on loan from Soviet ethnographers. He also displayed the Terracotta Army sculptures, a deal negotiated before the U.S. had diplomatic relationships with China, Brower said.

Brower worked on "Crossroads of Continents" in Seattle, a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, he said. Through 14-hour shifts, he also worked on the new building in Seattle's Museum of Flight.

Raised by an artist and a teacher, Brower spent his childhood in museums, he said. The carpentry work came later.

"I became a carpenter because it was a way to make a good living," Brower said. "I kind of pretended like it took care

of the creative outlet that I needed, and it did in many ways, but sometimes you realize [hanging drywall] isn't very creative, no matter how much people like your work."

Starting the pursuit of an ample creative outlet, Brower reached out to his neighbor who was a curator

"I really thought that working with students would be kind of a pain," Brower said. "But instead it has proven to be one of the most enjoyable memories of being here. Every year I have faith knowing that the world is going to be great because these kids who I have watched grow

Interns learn how to frame and hang art, assemble exhibits and install entire shows, Greeneisen said. The learning comes from discussing and figuring it out together, as opposed to traditional classroom methods.

"You don't get that in a

mindset have helped artists realize their own display.

Greeneisen's favorite part of the internship is the relaxing work and hearing Brower's many stories, something he is well known for, she said.

"He has an ocean of stories," Yugvason said. "I think he is popular as a teacher because he has stories to explain things."

Brower's current projects involve dissembling the latest gallery, "Projection Paintings," and installing the Bachelor of Fine Arts Show coming next week.

He is also working with Ann Morris, who donated the "Sculpture Woods" on Lummi Island to Western, he said.

His last day at Western is Sept. 4.

The art dynamic on campus will seem strange without him, Yngvasor said. Brower has such rich expertise on campus.

"Paul has all this institutional history that is kind of hard to lose," Yugvason said. "He is very well known on campus and very well-liked."

Brower said he looks forward to hitting the road on his motorcycle. He loves to travel and camp in his Volkswagen bus.

Brower said he is excited about his future.

"I read these daily readings from this Buddhist monk. One of the things he talks about a lot in his daily readings is impermanence," Brower said. "Kind of like, we are not here forever, whether that be on the earth or in our job, so I'm very comfortable that my time is over."

lecture class," Greeneisen said. "You are being talked at, opposed to having a conversation and really being able to interact with all the stuff that is happening."

Brower also assists the artists themselves, Western Gallery Director Hafthor Yngvason said. His patience, experience and



Paul Brower said, "We are not here forever, whether that be on earth or in our job, so I'm very comfortable that my time is over." // Photo by Samuel Fletcher, frame illustration by Julia Furukawa

and started assembling art museums as a volunteer, he said.

Brower joined Western before half of its buildings were built, he said. He started as a preparer of fine arts and has absorbed many roles, becoming the museum specialist.

But his favorite role, he said, is educator.

over several years head out and graduate. I know they are going to go on and do big things and the world is going to be okay because of these kids."

Senior Anna Greeneisen, an anthropology major and art history minor, has interned with Brower all year, she said. It's her favorite class.

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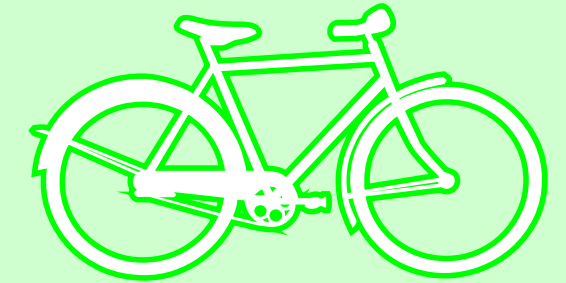
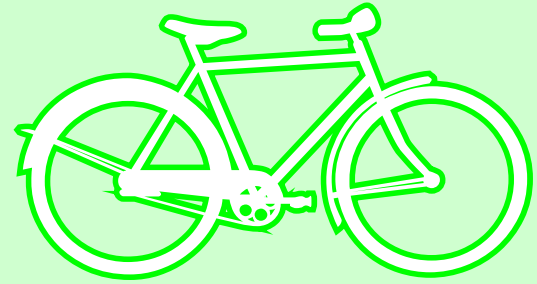
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A BASH FOR BELLINGHAM BIKERS



Smart Trips hosted its first annual Bike Party on Bay Street, combining festivities, fun and sustainability

By Isabel Lay
THE WESTERN FRONT

Bikes and beer and races, oh my!

The first annual Bike Party on Bay Street was put on by Whatcom County Smart Trips on Friday, May 18 and followed its other event, Bike to Work and School Day.

Organizers kicked off the afternoon with bike polo and free bike registration.

Michelle Grandy, outreach coordinator for Smart Trips, said she was excited to watch other bike enthusiasts enjoy the day.

"I'm most looking forward to seeing people arrive on their bikes," Grandy said. "That's such a fun part of Bike to Work and School Day. You really see the mass of riders."

The party was developed after years of putting on another event, involving "Celebration Stations," pop-up stands where bike riders could stop in the morning. The stands, staffed by local businesses, were set up around Bellingham during the morning of Bike to Work and School Day and sold snacks like bananas or muffins, according to Grandy.

However, Grandy said she received feedback over the years that people didn't have time to stop at the stations in the morning, or worked later in the day, so the Bike Party was born as a way to still celebrate a sustainable way of commuting.

Local restaurants and cafes, including The Mount Bakery, The Mile Pie Club, Feast Food Truck and The Black Drop, were among the vendors selling food. Additionally, a beer garden was constructed outside the Pickford Film Center featuring brews from Boundary Bay Brewery.

Later in the evening, a tri-

A bike polo participant shows his passion for Bike Day. // Photo by Isabel Lay



cycle race took over the street with family relay teams drawing crowds of toddlers and parents

WTA employee Heather Essmeier assisted partygoers on learning how to hook their bicycles up to the front of buses when traveling around town.

// Photo by Kelly Pearce



as well as attendees.

Bryan Beatty, a Bike Party attendee and avid Bike to Work and School Day participant, said he was happy to take part in the celebration.

"It's like my favorite holiday, better than Christmas, better than Hanukkah, it's the best," Beatty said. "It's nice to have a gathering place to be able to celebrate."

Walking into the event, volunteers from the Bell-

ingham Police Department in bright orange vests registered bikes for free.

One of the volunteers, officer Keith Jackson, said the event was the perfect way to get lots of bikes registered.

"We're looking to curb bike theft in Bellingham and one of the things we identified as being one of the biggest problems is people not knowing the serial numbers of their bikes," Johnson said. "This system that we're using allows us to record the serial number and also get some additional information, [take] pictures of the bike, pictures of the owner that'll help us recover bikes and get them back to their owners if they're stolen."

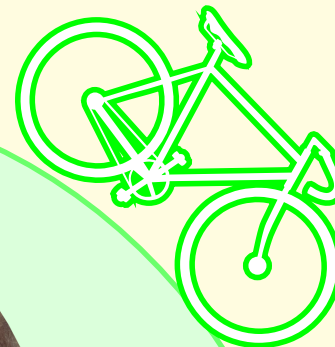
Included in the festivi-

ties was bike polo, an international sport where participants on bikes rode around a partitioned-off area, passing balls around with sticks.

Dan Vee, a volunteer helping to facilitate games, said he was excited to share a sport he loves with Bellingham residents.

"We're really excited to get to partner with Smart Trips to help put on some bike polo here," Vee said. "We're excited to do a little outreach so we can show the city of Bellingham that bike polo is a boon for your community."

In Grandy's opinion, the Bike Party was well-attended by Bellingham bikers and she said she hopes to make it an annual event.



4
The Mile Pie food cart, ready to feed hungry bikers. // Photo by Isabel Lay

3
A bike polo player warms up for a heated game at Bike Day. // Photo by Kelly Pearce

SORTED WITH CARE

Western's Associated Students' Recycling Center makes sustainability a hands-on task

B B B B B B

By Ali Raetz
THE WESTERN FRONT

Knee-deep in a metal dumpster full of paper products, Lucy Kodish, an Associated Students Recycle Center employee, sorts through the blue recycling barrels by hand.

One of 16 laborers at the center, Kodish said she must collect every paper product and sort them into the correct bin.

This sorting is a routine task, that is, until a laborer encounters a non-recyclable item, like a partially-full coffee cup.

A leftover latte can cause contamination in the entire recycling barrel, according to the center's operational manager, Jared Miller.

"Coffee juices get all over the pa-

per and contaminate it, therefore making it not recyclable anymore," Miller said. "Either someone has to dig through all this moldy, curdled coffee, or it all just gets garbage."

Coffee cups purchased on campus are compostable and not recyclable, according to Megan Spencer, staff manager at the center. Spencer said despite educating students at informational fairs on how to sort waste properly, the center still finds countless cups misplaced in the campus recycling barrels.

Since everything thrown into the blue barrels is hand-sorted, the coffee cups can still be composted, but sometimes at the risk of sending the rest of the paper in the barrel to a landfill.



Recycle Center employee Lucy Kodish smiles as she digs deep into a barrel of waste. // Photo by Ali Raetz



The walls of the Recycle Center lined with choice finds from Western's trash cans. // Photo by Ali Raetz

Spencer said the Recycle Center added compost bins and a compost dumpster to their sorting center to try to extract as much compostable material as possible. This addition occurred within the last year to accommodate the large amount of compostable material they were receiving, Spencer said.

Both the compost collected on campus and the extra from the Recycle Center are picked up by Sanitary Services and brought to Green Earth Technologies, an industrial composting facility in Lynden, Miller said.

Disposing waste correctly requires knowledge, so Spencer said it's important for the center to start educating students who may not have composting and recycling experience as soon as they get to campus.

She said fall quarter is the center's busiest and most important time of the year to educate incoming freshmen about recycling on campus.

"These students come from all different parts of the country and recycling is handled in all different ways," Miller said. "Our goal is to get them to adapt to our circumstances here."

Lizzy Thompson, the new Recycle Center educator, said freshmen, particularly those living in the dorms, are the center's target audience for education.

She said she hopes to do presentations in the dorms next year about proper ways to recycle at Western and why it's important to do so.

"If you know how to recycle as a freshman, you can continue to

do it correctly until you graduate," Thompson said.

The Recycle Center's work isn't new either. The center has been around for almost 50 years, run by students since 1971. It then became an official AS program in 1977, according to Richard Neyer who has been the Recycle Center coordinator for 28 years.

Neyer said each year, around 900,000 pounds are recycled through the Recycle Center and their partnership with Northwest Recycling in Bellingham.

"Northwest Recycling compresses the recycling from Western into bails that can be shipped to either China or somewhere in the US where it can then be pulped," Neyer said. "If it was a paper product, it would be pulped and then made into new paper."

The Recycle Center's dedication to sustainability isn't just known in Bellingham either. It's been recognized by other institutions and served as an example for a similar program at Washington State University.

"WSU's program is very similar to ours," Neyer said. "They came to our program in the 80s and patterned their program after ours."

In the coming year, Spencer said the AS Recycle Center hopes to increase awareness and education about proper ways to recycle.

"The whole reason this is here is so that we can encourage people in the university, students and staff to recycle, to reduce and reuse throughout their entire lives," she said.

University: Western follows public records law, doesn't stall

Guest column by Dolapo Akinrinade, Paul Mueller and Jennifer Sloan

Dolapo Akinrinade is Western's Public Records Officer and University Policy Manager. Jennifer Sloan is Assistant to the Assistant Attorney General and Rules Coordinator with Western's Risk, Compliance and Policy Services and Paul Mueller is director of Risk, Compliance and Policy Services.

In a May 9 column in The Western Front, several journalism faculty members said that Western is stalling on the release of public records. We feel that is inaccurate. The university scrupulously follows the law regarding public records.

First, some information on the process of public records requests at Western.

The public records officer will respond to a public records request within five business days of receipt of the request in the Public Records Office. She acknowledges receipt of the request, identifies the Western department or office holding the records and requests records from those departments or offices.

Depending on availability of records, the volume of records responsive to the request, the legal review and redaction necessary, the five-day response typically takes one of the following forms: either the records are provided as requested, or the requestor is provided with a deadline date to receive the records.

In their column, the faculty members claim that journalism students have received records more quickly from other universities. But were those the exact same requests? Often the size of the request – and the ability of university offices to fill the requests – significantly impacts how

long requests take to be completed.

Like many public institutions across the state, Western has seen a significant increase in the number of public records requests, from 79 in 2016 to 132 in 2017 to 71 so far this year, which is not yet half over.

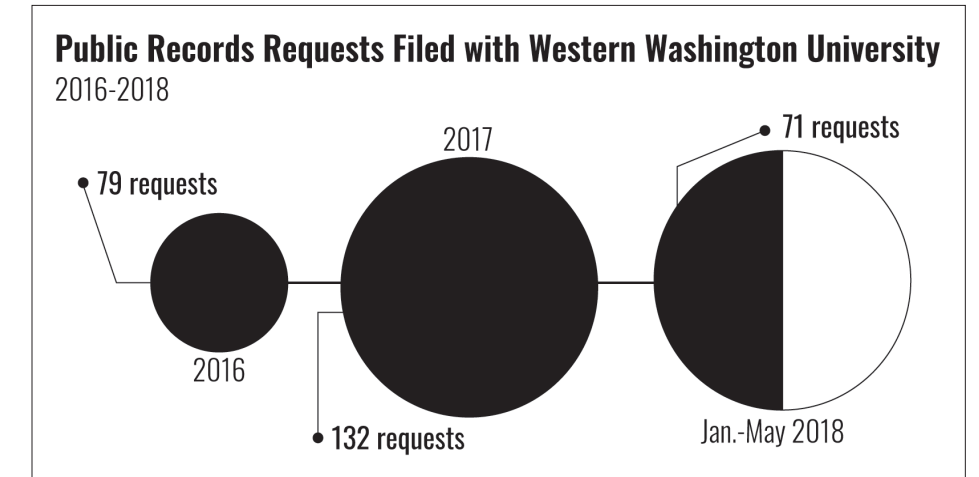
From our perspective, narrowing and focusing requests would assist in reducing time to receive such records.

Upon receipt of records from an office or department, the public records officer reviews them, and then redacts any records or referenc-

ence" including students, faculty and staff. They cite a North Carolina state court ruling as the basis for why Western should release more detailed information. The implication is that the university is deliberately withholding such records through "heavy redaction."

Contrary to that view, the North Carolina court ruling is not applicable, especially as it likely applies to a North Carolina state public records law, which has no jurisdiction over Western or the state of Washington. The university is following Washington state and federal law supported by the advice of the Washington State Attorney General's Office. In terms of students, that includes the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records. Western applies a U.S. Department of Education FERPA regulation that requires the "de-identification" of any student from a student's records before the records are released – unless the student has signed a waiver allowing that student's identity to be disclosed.

The university administration recently reexamined and reaffirmed that this is the proper, legal response to any and all requests of student records. So the university redacts information as it must under law. Western is a public institution and is committed to providing public records as outlined above. We are happy to provide records to journalism students and any others seeking public records. But to imply that Western is stalling is both inaccurate and an unfair blanket criticism of many hard-working university employees seeking to do their jobs well and according to law.



Source: Western's Public Records Office

Infographic by Sophia Greif

Of the 79 public records requests in 2016, 20 were from media, nearly all student media. That increased to 51 media requests in 2017 and 40 so far this year.

More and more, we hear from already overtaxed offices on campus who say their operations are adversely affected by public records requests, sometimes involving thousands of pages of documents stretching back years. Certain university offices receive multiple large public records requests at the same time. Those documents don't magically appear; they must be assembled by each office's staff, often a tedious and time-consuming process.

Perhaps journalism faculty, as part of the education process, might work more closely with journalism students on the types and scope of public records they are requesting?

which fall under legal exemptions. To aid the requestor in understanding why certain records have been redacted, the public records officer develops an exemption log, which explains the exemptions applied.

Another factor that can contribute to a delay is that, once the records have been assembled, anyone named in the records has the right to petition the court for an injunction to not release their name or other information. Injunction is a legal process through the court system and the timeline or dates for a hearing on the question of injunction is set by the court and not controlled by the university.

In their column, the journalism faculty also say that, "the university continues to redact reports containing the names of those found responsible for acts of sexual vio-

Viking Voices

What do you think is the most harmful stigma about mental health?



Jacob Kleiman
Junior, computer science

"That people who don't have them don't understand them. That their problems are invalid in society and their problems don't matter."



Makoa Iha
Freshman, history education

"That having a mental illness makes someone less successful or less of a whole person or less of an ideal person."



Breanna Barrick
Senior, ELL education and math

"You have a weakness if you ask for help."



Ayisha Olanrewaju
Freshman, computer science

"That [having a mental illness] is dangerous and that you'll do something dangerous because of it."

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Read our editorial on harmful stigmas of mental illness at www.westernfrontonline.com

Compiled by Mysti Willmon

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Bellingham gym focuses on inclusivity

Owner Hunter Clagett said Bellingham Mixed Martial Arts is more than a place to train, it's a place for family

Mckenna Hunt
THE WESTERN FRONT

Tucked away amidst car shops and warehouses along the waterfront of Bellingham Bay is the Bellingham Mixed Martial Arts gym. Its location is slightly hidden, but for the patrons of the studio, it's their haven.

Bellingham MMA trains a diverse array of professional, amateur and inexperienced athletes who come from far and wide to be coached by Hunter Clagett and his team.

On a sunny day, the large warehouse garage doors of Bellingham MMA open to reveal a martial artist's paradise.

A large grappling mat takes up the right half of the gym, while the other half is fitted with workout equipment, punching bags, weights and just about anything one would need for strengthening and conditioning their body. A glass trophy case showcasing championship title belts and medals from local fighters stands in the back of the room.

Covering the gym walls are pictures of well-known fighters within the community and flags to represent the homes of martial arts students.

Included in the memorabilia lining the walls are photographs of gym founders Charlie Pearson, Jeremy Saunders and Landon Showalter. All three are professional fighters that established the gym in 2010. According to the Bellingham MMA website, the men have provided a solid foundation that the gym stands on today.

Ownership of the gym has since been passed down to 32-year-old Hunter Clagett, head coach and professional fighter at Bellingham MMA, who has trained under Pearson, Saunders and Showalter and continues to be trained by Saunders in his professional career.



Bellingham MMA owner Hunter Clagett gives a thorough explanation of the beginning moves his students will be performing in class. // Photo by Mckenna Hunt

Clagett is an experienced fighter who has been practicing martial arts for over 15 years.

His love for the sport began in his college years at Western when his interest in kung fu films led him to take an introductory Muay Thai class with his mentor, or shifu, Michael Frison.

From there, Clagett was hooked. "I just kind of fell in love with it," Clagett said.

Clagett explained he was never an athlete growing up and claimed the title of "nerdling."

"In high school I was captain of the Hi-Q team," he said. "Academic competitions, stuff like that."

Although Clagett is now a well-trained fighter who has a professional career and years of extensive experience, he said it took some time for him to get where he is today.

"I have known many people who have progressed much faster than I did, but I just kept doing it," Clagett said.

Clagett's amateur career began in 2014 when he took his first fight.

"After a few years of training and connection with my current coaches who do live MMA fighting, I decided to take a fight because they said I was ready," Clagett said. "It was my first physical confrontation so I had no idea how I'd react to it, but I ended up doing well and I enjoyed it."

Clagett said that in the fight he had his nose broken right away by his opponent and there was blood everywhere.

"Blood from my nose was pouring into his face and he was not into it and I was like, 'This is the best thing ever,'" Clagett said. "That's when I knew I was kind of hooked."

Although Clagett is the head coach of the gym, he has others on his team like John Keay, Clinton Sana, Gunnar



Championship belts and trophies won by students and teachers of Hunter Clagett's gym adorn the back wall of Bellingham MMA. // Photo by Mckenna Hunt

Doggett and Talor Kebel to run different classes.

"Some of them are my students that became more experienced and had something to offer," Clagett said. "Clint is a very adept kickboxer and his Muay Thai kickboxing is very good, so I have him teaching for me on Saturdays."

On the Bellingham MMA website, Clagett said the gym is more than a place to train, it is a family and that can be exemplified by the relationships within the fighting community.

"We have family connections so there's a constant lineage in martial arts of, 'My instructor's instructor is someone who matters,'" Clagett said. "We have connections to these different gyms."

Clagett said that his students go to his instructors' gyms and that everyone is intertwined in the fighting scene.

"Charlie Pearson is the overall head coach of our little family," Clagett said. "He's granddaddy and then Landon and Jeremy are like my uncles."

Clagett explained that Pearson received his lineage from Matt Hume, who is a renowned world champion and trains at AMC Martial Arts in Kirkland as a coach to UFC Flyweight Champion Demetrious Johnson, as well as other athletes.

"It turns out to be a pretty decent pedigree over time," Clagett said.

With a gym comes gym culture and Clagett has made it clear in Bellingham MMA's philosophy that he wants to create an atmosphere of friendliness and mutual support. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Margaret Rockey, communications professor at Western and student at Bellingham MMA, attested to Clagett's

inclusive gym atmosphere.

Rockey said the people, as well as Clagett's physically challenging workouts, were what made her choose Bellingham MMA over other gyms she had tried.

"They are really, really nice," Rockey said. "It doesn't feel like that big of a deal, even though I am one of the newest people there. Everyone is very patient and eager to help and show me things, and it does really wear me out by the end of class."

"Blood from my nose was pouring into his face and he was not into it and I was like, 'This is the best thing ever.'"

Hunter Clagett
Bellingham MMA
owner

Read the rest of the story
online at
westernfrontonline.com

Opinions from the Western community on all things sports.
Compiled by Molly Workman.

With the recent Robinson Canó scandal, what do you think is in store for the Mariners' future?



Laura Miyatake

"I have to remain positive the rest of our season will be successful. We are currently 27-19 and are in the second wild card slot so I am remaining optimistic because in my opinion, we have to take the playoffs odds with a grain of salt. I think the return of a beloved player like Ichiro can be good for morale and incite nostalgia for the fans but if we are to break this terrible streak of not going to the playoffs we need a serious overhaul. This includes adding some new players that are young and good, but we also need to see some change in management, such as a new general manager, president of operations and possibly even a new head coach. I think that in doing so, we would be able to change the culture surrounding the Mariners and hopefully bring home a much-needed championship."



Hugo Santiago

"I think the Mariners usually do better in the beginning of the season and then kind of choke at the end of the season. With Robbie Canó, the third best hitter gone, there is no way we will make it to the postseason."



Elijah Gries

"The Angels and the Astros are in our division and there's no way we get the wild card over Boston. I think it's BS [about Robinson Canó] and I don't know if he is hiding anything, but the drug he was taking is commonly prescribed to people to flush their system of an ailment. I don't know, I don't want to believe it."



Carter Draper

"I think Dee Gordon is probably going to move to second, I think Canó is probably going to come back with the team and I think maybe the way people look at him will be different. I mean there's a lot of talk about how he was a first-ballot Hall of Famer to begin with, but now this might taint it 'cause all the other guys that have done the same. I don't think we're going to make it. Without your No. 3 hitter it's hard, especially in the middle of a season. But, if the Mariners were ever in a better situation to do it now is the best team that this could happen to because they have the most hitters and another Gold Glove second baseman on the team."


Seattle Mariners' All-Star second baseman Robinson Canó was suspended 80 games for violating baseball's joint drug agreement.

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Tennis club elects new captains

Alaena Fletcher
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western's tennis club is getting two new captains.

Freshman Ryan Meredith and sophomore Allie Mackey have been elected following the departure of four of the team's graduating captains.

The club is entirely student-run. There are no coaches, so captains are in charge of running practice and managing the club's finances.

Meredith said he hopes his background in leadership helps him resolve issues among the team and help everyone have a good time.

"I'm looking forward to devoting a little more time to the team," Meredith said. "It's definitely something I'm passionate about, so being able to focus on that and help out everyone to have a good experience, that's really awesome."

Meredith and Mackey said they both recognize the big shoes they have to fill, but are up to the challenge. Meredith said maintaining the family atmosphere and camaraderie are goals for him as captain.

"It's always been super welcoming," Mackey said. "It's intimidating [becoming a captain]. I came on to the team not knowing anyone. Right off the bat one of the graduated captains, Manny, every day at practice



Freshman Ryan Meredith and sophomore Allie Mackey have been elected captains of Western's tennis club. // Photo courtesy of James Matson

he'd come up, give everyone high fives and ask how their day was. It just made it more comforting."

Tournaments are in a co-ed format and so is the club. Men and women practice and play their matches together.

According to Britta Springer, a current captain on the team, captains are expected to do a lot. Fundraising, ordering gear, running practice, facilitating travel, filling out paperwork for tournaments, setting up volunteer events and manag-

ing social media are just a few of the tasks captains must handle.

Meredith said the goal for the team this year is to place top three in their section's tournament in the fall and qualify for the club national championships in South Carolina. The club didn't complete that goal last fall.

Mackey and Meredith both picked up a racket for the first time at around 7 years old. Meredith said he enjoyed the challenge of tennis and stuck with it, but Mackey's first love was field hockey.

"For me it's a family sport," Mackey said. "My grandfather was very big into tennis, he got my mom playing. When I was young, my mom tried to get me to play tennis, but I wanted to play field hockey. I'm from Maine, and when we moved to Washington, field hockey is just not a thing here, so back to tennis."

According to Springer, the plan is for Mackey to take over volunteering duties and Meredith will help run practice and order gear.

"Alex Lok and I would like to improve upon the commitment level of each captain, as we consider this position to be like a job," Springer said. "We want to invite change into the team, and allow structures to adjust when needed. That means constant innovation and creativity to make the team be the best it can be."

Western club showcases local surfing

Olivia Klein
THE WESTERN FRONT

When thinking of surfing, the warm weather and pristine sand beaches of Hawaii or California usually come to mind. A sport of vacation and relaxation.

But this excludes a lively subculture of surfers in the cold and perhaps unlikely location of the Pacific Northwest.

Freshman Antonia Parrish has been surfing for the past two years.

"I live about two hours away from where I usually surf on the Oregon coast," Parrish said. "It's this little beach called Short Sands, and it's in Oswald West State Park."

Evergreen trees scatter the rocky landscape leading up to the water, and moss is growing everywhere.

"It's just beautiful," Parrish said. "Everything is so green."

Once outside of the forest, the open beach is alive with activity.

"There's people with campfires set up and there's dogs running everywhere," Parrish said. "And surfers already in the



Surfers prepare their boards on the beach near Pacific City, Oregon. // Photo courtesy of Antonia Parrish

water."

Parrish is one of many surfers at Western. Although the sport may seem catered to a niche audience, Western's Surfrider Foundation chapter is the

longest-running Associated Students club according to its webpage.

Junior Laura Anthony is one of the three co-presidents of Western's Surfrider club.

"Surfrider is actually a national organization that began in California when some surfers wanted more public access to beaches. As it moved north, it became [about] just general keeping our beaches clean for recreation," Anthony said. "Right now, we do a bunch of ocean advocacy work like beach cleanups and water quality testing."

The club meets once a week and holds events like beach cleanups on the weekends.

"On Earth Day we did a beach cleanup, but it was through the whole Northwest Straits chapter of Surfrider," Anthony said. "We got over 50 people to come and help out at Locust Beach, 10 minutes from campus."

Recently, Surfrider has also been working on "Ocean Friendly Restaurants," with the mission of promoting marine environmentalism through partnering with Bellingham restaurants.

"We're trying to get local restaurants to cut back on one-use plastics and styrofoams and stuff like that," Anthony said.

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