

# THE WESTERN FRONT

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Wednesday, June 6, 2018

## 2018 Lawnstock features silent disco, multiple artists



The crowd at the mainstage of Lawnstock. See page 5 for the full story and more photos. // Photo by Jaden Moon

## Man pleaded not guilty to charges of stalking, voyeurism

Julia Berkman  
Zoe Buchli  
THE WESTERN FRONT

A 57-year-old Bellingham man pleaded not guilty to charges of voyeurism, a class C felony, and stalking, a gross misdemeanor, after he was arrested in Wilson Library on May 17.

Vergin was arrested on the evening of May 17 at Wilson Library after a student (Student 2) who observed him taking photos of female students called University Police, Deputy Prosecutor Jonathan Richardson said.

According to court

see *CHARGES*, page 2

## Transfer student praises Western's inclusivity

Sam Fletcher

THE WESTERN FRONT

A Central Washington University student is transferring to Western in fall 2018 after his experience with the lack of inclusivity on Central's campus.

Freshman Aiden Ochoa said he came out as transgender in high school. When he arrived at Central to study English and sociology, he kept his identity a secret.

While Ochoa didn't have to worry about peers poking fun at him, he was still fearful of revealing his identity, he said. At times, he felt he couldn't even defend

those his peers were making fun of.

"I'm from the west side [of the state], and I'd never seen a Confederate flag before, until I got [to Central]," Ochoa said. "And I saw one, and I was like 'wow,' and I got here and there were a lot of white people saying the 'n' word with a hard 'r.'"

When Ochoa did come out as transgender at Central, people were not generally welcoming, he said. His dorm walls were thin and he could hear his roommate making transphobic comments. He

see *CENTRAL*, page 3

## Sexual assault survivors say Western should do more

Asia Fields

Melissa McCarthy  
THE WESTERN FRONT

*CW: Sexual Assault*

Eight survivors of sexual assault who are current or former Western students say the university needs to better address sexual assault and support survivors.

These survivors said Western should better educate students on consent, more publicly stand against sexual assault and listen to survivors. They said their stories are part of a larger issue in our society that needs to be addressed.

The survivors responded to a call for stories from The Western Front winter quarter. Six of the survivors were sexually assaulted while they were Western students. One was sexually assaulted while in high school. One did not specify.

Only one of the survivors, Tia Petri, went through the university's reporting and investigation process, and did so before Western made changes to how cases were investigated in 2016.

Three survivors told the Front they didn't report at all, because they heard

others had bad experiences, didn't know what resources were available or didn't recognize what happened to them was rape. Two survivors shared their frustrations with reporting to law enforcement.

The Front does not name survivors without their permission. In this story, the Front uses what survivors prefer, whether that is first name only or anonymity. Identifiable information has been removed from anonymous responses, so as to protect survivors' identities.

see *ASSAULT*, page 3

## News

New nonstop route from Bellingham to Denver.

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## Features

Salmon are being given a second chance.

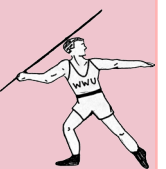
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## Sports

Western javelin throwers earn First Team All-America honors.

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This is the final issue of The Western Front for spring quarter

The next issue will be out on June 27





A drone photo over Boulevard Park shows a train passing under the boardwalk on May 22. The park makes a great hangout spot in the summer, and has picnic tables, barbecues and beaches. // Photo by Nic Ulmer

## Outage hits MyWestern

Nicole Martinson  
THE WESTERN FRONT

The MyWestern portal was down as Western Academic Technology and User Services worked on updating the system. Students had been unable to access the homepage when the software supporting the login page on MyWestern unexpectedly crashed on May 23.

Since last week, the homepage has started responding again.

John Farquhar, Academic Technology and User Services director, said a "central authentication service" allows users to access a single sign-on throughout Western's campus on computers and programs such as Canvas and Outlook email.

"It's a surprise to us that it broke," he said.

One of the main reasons it broke is because the CAS software is running several versions behind the modern update, he said.

He said MyWestern being used as a page that links to various resources for students means that it was mainly an inconvenience for students.

## CHARGES continued from page 1

records, Student 2 had seen a man in Wilson Library taking photos of students' feet and up the skirts of female students from underneath desks on May 15.

Student 2 was able to identify the suspect and University Police found Vergin on the fourth floor of Wilson Library on Thursday evening, 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 of various women in the library.

According to a Western Alert advisory email sent out on May 18, he is trespassing from campus, and that it is unclear if this case is related to other incidents of voyeurism on or around campus.

Another student (Student 1) also filed a report regarding Vergin's behavior on March 13 and May 17, according to court records.

After an encounter with Vergin at the library on March 13, where he sat

across from her, touched her foot with his and appeared to look down her shirt, Student 1 told the circulation desk, who called University Police to report him, court records said.

Stephanie Morgan is a library and archives paraprofessional at circulation services in Wilson Library. "Whenever there is a problem we can't handle, we call the police," she said.

Morgan declined to comment on how many reports circulation services receives.

According to Richardson, the responding University Police officers asked Vergin to leave the library.

On May 8, Student 1 then saw Vergin staring at her on her way home and avoided entering her house within his line of sight, according to court records.

Then on May 16, Student 1 saw Vergin at the library and left, according to the court records. Vergin then also left the library and looked at the student until her bus came, court records show.

At 8:07 a.m. on May 17, Student 1 filed another report with the University Police, according to court documents.

That same day, Univer-

sity Police received a report from Student 2, claiming he had seen a man taking photos of students, court records said. Police were able to link the two cases, court records show. Both students were later able to positively identify Vergin, Richardson said.

Vergin was issued a harassment no-contact order against Student 1, but it is unclear when.

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

He made his preliminary appearance at 3 p.m. on May 18 at Whatcom County Superior Court.

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

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

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

Vergin's trial is scheduled for August 6, 2018.

This story was updated on Wednesday, May 30, at 5:45 p.m.

## The Western Front

The Western Front  
Western Washington University  
Communications Facility 222  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Newsroom number:  
360-650-3162  
Email address:  
westernfrontonline@gmail.com

### Editor-in-Chief

Kira Erickson

### Managing Editor

Eric Trent

### News Editors

Zoe Buchli

Ray Garcia

### Features Editor

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Taylor Nichols

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Hannah Wong

### Copy Editors

Zoe Deal

Walker Sacon

### Letters to the editor:

westernfront.opinion@gmail.com

### Press releases:

wfpress.release@gmail.com

### Faculty Adviser

Jack Keith

Jack.Keith@wwu.edu

### Advertising Department

360-650-3160

### Advertising Manager

Cameron Ohlson

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## ASSAULT continued from page 1

### Sexual assault at Western

Madison, a current student and survivor, said more needs to be done at Western to show how prevalent sexual assault is.

"Many people have the opinion that survivors are being dramatic, or that the stories

we have are not common," she said. "No. We are everywhere, and we need to work together to take action to end sexual violence [and] assault."

Consultation and Sexual Assault Services Coordinator Michelle Langstraat said while more and more students are seeking services from CASAS, they still face difficulty getting information out to the student body, and she suspects many survivors are still not utilizing their services.

"Whatever it is, we know one out of five identified females in college is [sexually] assaulted, and our numbers don't reflect that," Langstraat said.

The rate is one in 20 for undergraduate men, according to a 2015 survey by the Association of American Universities.

The study found LGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities face significantly higher rates of sexual assault.

Experts say underreporting of sexual assault is common, making the scope of the problem difficult to determine.

Madison said she wishes there were more opportunities for survivors to come together and share their stories. She said CASAS has been extremely helpful, but she hasn't been able to attend its support group due to a class conflict.

Madison said she's proud of the student advocacy and efforts to raise awareness about sexual assault on campus, but wants to see Western continue to better support survivors.

Paul Cocke, director of communications and marketing,

listed a number of actions taken by the administration in opposition to sexual assault.

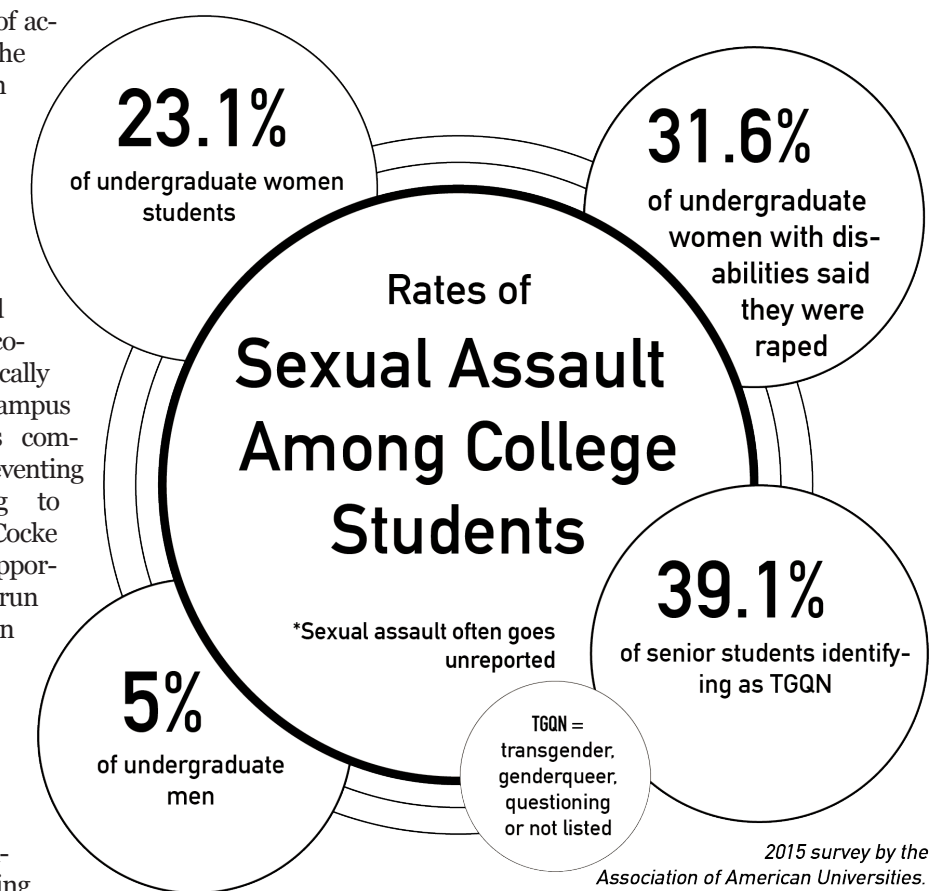
He said administrators receive training on being trauma-informed and the Title IX coordinator periodically sends emails to campus about Western's commitment to preventing and responding to sexual violence. Cocke said the Equal Opportunity Office has run ads or columns in the Front in the past year.

Cocke also said posters and resource cards from the Title IX coordinator about reporting options and resources are available around campus. He said Prevention and Wellness Services peer advocates provide educational programs and events about prevention.

But all of the survivors said there is more Western can do.

Survivors' responses included that they didn't feel believed, professors were not accommodating, they wanted more education on consent and they were frustrated with the readmission of students found responsible of sexual misconduct.

Western has been under investigation by the U.S. Depart-



ment of Education since 2015 for its handling of sexual misconduct cases.

In fall 2016, The Western Front reported that survivors said the Office of Student Life's sexual misconduct investigations lacked sensitivity and that mild punishments were given.

Sexual assault investigations were moved that quarter to the Equal Opportunity Office, although the Office of Student Life is still in charge of determining sanctions for students.

Karen Burke, executive director of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County, has worked

with survivors at the organization for 11 years.

"The response on campus is not meeting survivors' needs, that's what survivors are telling us. And the process of campus isn't meeting their needs either. I think that we all need to challenge ourselves to do better and we can still uphold our roles while supporting survivors," she said.

Read the full story at westernfrontonline.com

## CENTRAL continued from page 1

was misgendered constantly.

Through his friends, Ochoa saw snapchat of Western's campus, he said.

He saw trans and rainbow flags and felt the campus would be a more embracing place for diverse identities, he said.

When Ochoa visited Western's campus, he said the community immediately felt more like his home of Auburn, Washington.

Ochoa said he was happy to see LGBTQ+ people open about their identity walking through Western.

"There's LGBTQ people [at Central], but they're hidden," Ochoa said.

Stories like this are not uncommon, Crow Chloupek, Western Associate Students Queer Resource Center's co-education coordinator, said. Western has many resources for students worried about being outcasted.

"I come from Texas," Chloupek said. "I come from a place that was just never inclusive toward my gender

and my sexuality, and it's really imperative to make sure to the best of my ability that no queer person has to go through what I went through."

"I feel like I almost have this internal duty to make as many queer and trans folk as comfortable and to feel as 'in' as they can," they said.

The AS Queer Resource Center plans events to create cohesion with the community, Chloupek said. An ice cream social at the start of the year is a good place for students to meet others in the LGBTQ+ community, they said.

Western has a lot of faculty and staff who make sure trans and gender non-conforming students are heard, Chloupek said.

Central has an organization called Equality through Queers and Allies, but they aren't available to students all the time, Ochoa said.

They are run by a six-person, all-white staff who aren't representative of Central's LGBTQ+ community, he said.

Outside of Central's pride



Aiden Ochoa said visiting Western's campus felt like home. // Photo courtesy of Aiden Ochoa

Something that would help raise awareness of these issues would be a diversity workshop that all students are required to take, Hall said. Western's General University Requirements will not guarantee education around gender fluidity. Depending on a student's educational track, they may never learn about it, she said.

Ochoa is excited to return to western Washington to continue his education with a bigger and more diverse population, he said.

"I just plan on showing up and hoping for the best," he said.

A request for comment was not returned by Central's Equality through Queers and Allies.

Ochoa is excited to return to western Washington to continue his education with a bigger and more diverse population, he said.

"I just plan on showing up and hoping for the best," he said.

A request for comment was not returned by Central's Equality through Queers and Allies.



# Bellingham Tenants Union hosts kick-off event, discusses rent rates

**Kenzie Mahoskey**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Year after year, Bellingham rent continues to climb, causing many people to live on the streets.

The Bellingham Tenants Union kickoff on May 31 brought awareness to the community about rising rents and how it needs to change, Conner Darlington, a BTU leader, said.

Alex Ramel, Democratic Washington state representative candidate of the 40th District, has faced the same problems as many others looking for a home in Bellingham.

“My son and I had six weeks to find a place in our price range and in the same school district,” Ramel said. “We found one place out of all the houses for sale in Bellingham and I know that there are others who haven’t found a place at all.”

Ramel said he has talked to hundreds of people and asked what the big issues are in Washington, and they have said housing prices and homelessness are on the top of the list.

“The Bellingham Tenants Union is doing a great job of organizing people and there is real political power here,” Ramel said.

Resident Justin Boneau, Democratic candidate for the 42nd District, has been renting in Bellingham since 2005 and has seen a difference in rent.

“When I first moved here my rent was \$750 for a two bedroom and 1.5 bath,” Boneau said. “In 2014, I started



Attendees gather at the end of the kick-off event to display posters. // Photo by Kenzie Mahoskey

seeing the changes in my rent and my wages have stayed the same. It hasn’t doubled, but it has gone up by at least a couple hundred dollars.”

Boneau said he is 100 percent in favor of rent control. He wants to see that if rents increase, they only have an inflation of 1 percent.

Senior Vanna Orecchio has faced the same issues with renting off campus as many other students.

“I rent here in Bellingham and it’s always a lottery, especially for stu-

dents. We just roll the dice and hope we find a house and people to live with,” Orecchio said.

Orecchio said students have an advantage of public housing. If things don’t go well, students have campus housing to fall back on.

A working person in Bellingham has no backup plan, it’s either an overpriced rental they’re stretching to afford or homelessness, she said.

Many people at the event won-

dered where the rent money goes after the landlord collects it from their tenants.

“They do whatever they want with the rent money,” Boneau said.

Local property manager Bob Lycan said the money he collects from his tenants goes towards managing the properties.

“First, you have to pay a mortgage on the property,” Lycan said. “Then, after that, you take care of the loans, operating expenses like ground maintenance, property taxes and water and sewer.”

Rent is increased because the city raises property taxes and water and sewer every year and maintenance contracts want more money too, Lycan said.

“No one stays the same, the issue here is if you don’t raise your rent to pay for expenses you will just lose money,” Lycan said. “This is just business. You negotiate as best as you can but, at the same time, you need good maintenance.”

Elected officials right now hear people complaining but it hasn’t reached the critical mass yet, as we need more seats to be democratic, Orecchio said.

“We need regular working folks to be our voice in Olympia and make the right choice,” Orecchio said.

To become a member for the BTU and help decrease rent prices, you can sign up at the BTU website membership page.

# Sixth annual Lawnstock Festival draws in scores of people

**Ashley Lockett**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

With the smell of kettle corn in the air and vivacious music wafting through south campus, students and community members joined together on Saturday, June 2 to celebrate one of the largest Associated Students productions of the year: Lawnstock.

For the sixth year in a row, Lawnstock has gathered people from all over the community and beyond to watch performances, play games, eat food and participate in other activities. The vendors included Burrito King, Pizza’zza and Sugar Shack. Toward the middle of the lawn, different activities such as badminton, cornhole and even a silent disco were set up for those that wanted to partake.

J u - n i o r

Mariah McNamara said she attended Lawnstock last year and was excited for the food and to feel the sense of community at the event.

“I think it’s a good, fun event. I think it’s really cool that the university puts things like this together that are free and open to all the students,” McNamara said.

Among the different line-ups and food vendors, various Western clubs and outside community members set up tables to advertise and/or share their merchandise.

“Everyone’s sitting down right now, kind of like a big picnic and enjoying some music and community,” Alexander Dixon, one of the organizers of Summer’s End Music and Arts Gathering, said.

M u c h like Lawnstock, Summer’s End hosts a n



People gathered from all over the community to watch performances, eat food and participate in other activities. // Photo by Zoe Deal

annual festival to bring out musicians and artists who are willing to showcase their talents.

Seated at table 13, an artist that goes by the name of Syco came back to Western’s Lawnstock after five years to display his work at his own table.

“I just remembered coming

here and being like, ‘Western’s awesome for throwing this on’ and this is my first time coming back as a vendor and it’s been fun. People are very friendly,” Syco said.

As the crowd grew larger on the Communications Facility lawn, audience members mi-

grated toward Stadium Piece, or as most people know it as, “the Stairs to Nowhere.”

From the tops of the steps, you could see a clear overview of the packed lawn with guests on stage performing, such as DJ JNasty and this year’s headliner The Black Tones.



Located as a giant bubble towards the back end of the lawn was the Silent Disco packed with students. // Photo by Zoe Deal

# Wilson Library opens temporary gender neutral bathroom

**Alyssa Bruce**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

What was once a women’s restroom on the fifth floor of Wilson Library is now a gender-neutral facility until the end of finals week.

The new accommodation for gender-neutral restrooms began on Friday, June 1, after students expressed concern over the hours which the current accessible gender-neutral restrooms in the library operate.

Mark Greenberg, dean of libraries, said the gender-neutral restrooms on the sixth floor, the only permanent gender-neutral option in the entire library, were only open for a portion of the library’s hours of operation.

Currently, a new gender-neutral restroom, which will also be compliant with all American with Disabilities Act rules and regulations, is under construction on the first floor of Wilson Library. Construction has taken longer than expected, and the delay led to a need for a temporary solution in the meantime, Greenberg said.

“This is the beginning, not the end, of a commitment to try addressing the needs of the community,” he said. “I am going to be working close-

ly and advocating strongly that we try to expand gender-neutral restrooms wherever possible.”

Wilson Library was originally built in 1928. During construction of the new restroom, the crew found multiple repairs that were not originally in the remodel plan. Recently, the crew discovered the floor of the new restroom is uneven, which caused the latest delay, Greenberg said.

Mal Warren, an archeology major, said people who are non-binary have an equal need for accessible restrooms and that using men’s or women’s restrooms is not a fair expectation from the university.

“Often we are uncomfortable in the restroom, or at worse, we can be assaulted or somehow discriminated against offensively,” they said. “That is not something we want to face when we use the restroom.”

Upon hearing about the new accommodations in the library, Warren said they were concerned because they were not made aware of the new option.

They said there is no point in inclusive spaces if people do not know about them.

Greenberg said there were signs in the library addressing the new gender-inclusive



A gender neutral bathroom will be open from Friday, June 1, until the end of finals week. It will replace the women’s bathroom on the fifth floor of Wilson Library. // Photo by Mathew Roland

options.

Amina Lee, a human services major and advocate for gender-neutral restrooms across campus, said what the library is doing is a good start for a solution to an ongoing problem.

“Most classes get about five minutes for a bathroom break and that is barely enough time to go to the bathroom and get a drink of

water, even if you are using a bathroom right down the hall,” Lee said.

In multiple buildings across campus there are no gender-neutral restrooms, resulting in students having to travel outside of their class buildings, taking time away from their education, Lee said.

“Gender-neutral bathrooms are really important

because they are kind of a statement that the school is seeing trans students and aware of trans students and making space for them,” Lee said.

A date for which the new gender-neutral restroom in Wilson Library will be open to the public has not been decided yet, Greenberg said.

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# Bellingham International Airport introduces new flight to Denver



Emily Jackson  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Flying can be stressful. Freshman Bailey Jacobson is no stranger to that fact.

"It's stressful to pack, and the act of flying itself is so stressful because you have to go through security," Jacobson said. "And Sea-Tac has the dogs that they sniff you with, and all you want to do is pet them and you can't because they're the drug dogs."

Jacobson is from Denver, and until last month, she couldn't fly directly home from Bellingham International Airport, she said. She had to take a bus to Sea-Tac International Airport and then fly home instead.

On May 18, Allegiant Air launched a nonstop plane route from Bellingham to Denver, Jordan Lyle, public relations specialist for Allegiant, said in an email. This is the first time Allegiant has offered the route, he said.

The temporary, nonstop flights will run twice a week from May through August, Lyle said. One-way tickets were \$58 at first, but future prices may change.

Allegiant started offering the route after market research showed a high demand for non-stop flights between the two cities, Lyle said.

The airline has seen a positive response via ticket sales, social media and support from



**The flight crew behind the inaugural flight from Bellingham to Denver on May 18. // Photo courtesy of Jordan Lyle**

Whatcom County partners, he said.

Jacobson said she thought a lot of her fellow students would take up the offer.

"The majority of out-of-state students are from California or Colorado," she said.

A study by Western's Office of Institutional Research confirmed her statement. In Fall 2017, 26.2 percent of out-of-state students came to Western from California. In second

place, 11.7 percent of out-of-state students came from Colorado.

Jacobson visited family in Denver during each school break this year, she said. After fall 2017 finals, she took the bus to Sea-Tac because she didn't know anyone well enough to ask for a ride. Then bus delays almost made her miss the flight.

"I had left so early that I thought I'd be fine," Jacobson

The nonstop flights should make visits home much easier, she said.

Sunil Harman, director of aviation for the Port of Bellingham, said in an email that the route has been in the works for over two years.

"Denver was identified two and a half years ago as a route with high potential for success," Harman said. "It had performed well previously when served by Frontier."

A key part of Harman's role as director is to bring air service to different markets of passengers, he said.

In this job, he communicates with airline route planners. He also projects the profit and benefit of bringing certain routes to the airport in Bellingham.

"We're confident that this route will be popular with college students," Harman said.

College students in Whatcom County don't make up a huge part of passenger demand for the airport, Harman said. Still, they add to peak periods like spring break, summer break and major seasonal holidays.

Bellingham International Airport serves three airlines on a scheduled basis, including Allegiant Air and Horizon Air, a feeder subsidiary of Alaska Air, he said. The airport also serves a few charter airlines and several more airlines for pre-booked tours to Nevada.

said. "But I was so close to missing it. I was booking it through the airport."

Luckily, she made it on time for her flight home, she said. But on the way back, she flew into Sea-Tac and missed her bus back to Bellingham.

Jacobson has flown out of Sea-Tac at weird times and waited on long layovers, she said. One time, one of her friends from Colorado had to leave at 2 a.m. to fly home.

## After 23 years, Western bids farewell to sustainability innovator

Naomi Schapiro  
THE WESTERN FRONT

When Carol Berry started working at Western 23 years ago, the blue bike shelters around campus today didn't exist. The sidewalk down Bill McDonald Parkway was just a ditch from Birnam Wood to Wendy's.

Berry, program manager for Campus Conservation and Sustainable Transportation, is retiring from Western in June.

"Transportation is a place where I can make a difference," Berry said. "We all need to think about transportation because we all need to get from place to place."

In 2006, Western started developing the sustainability program. Berry's boss at the time decided that transportation and sustainability fit well together, Berry said. That's when her job moved to the Office of Sustainability.

In fall 2007, students developed and voted on the trans-

portation fee they now pay as part of tuition.

Berry, working alongside Whatcom Transportation Authority, used money from that fee to ensure all students got a bus pass as part of their student identification cards. In the past, if you wanted a bus pass, you had to buy it individually from a vending machine in the bookstore, Berry said.

Now, thanks to Berry, bus riding is accessible to all students.

In the last couple of years, Berry has let her employees do most of the hands-on work so they could learn the job before she retired, Kay McMurren, student transportation program support supervisor, said.

Berry has been McMurren's supervisor for the last 10 years.

"[Berry] is creative, an artist at heart, and she brings that to her job," McMurren said. "She is a very hands-off boss, giving us room to grow. She

has a real heart for sustainable transportation."

Jillian Trinkaus, transportation program coordinator, has



Photo courtesy of Carol Berry

worked with Berry for the last two years, and will be taking over the transportation part of her work.

She said she really appreciated how good of a listener Berry was.

"[Berry] has a long history of transportation involvement," Trinkaus said. "We are losing a lot of institutional and community history."

Trinkaus and McMurren both said that they will miss Berry's positive energy, as well as the homemade cookies and scones she brought to the office.

Berry started at Western in November 1994 working part-time at the visitor information center. Her job was to give people information about campus and help them find a parking spot, Berry said. She did that until 1999 when a full-time position as commute trip reduction coordinator became available.

Berry, who studied fine arts in college, is now looking to

# Western Libraries announces winners for 2018 Undergraduate Research Award

Isabel Lay  
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Western Libraries' Undergraduate Research Award winners for 2018 were announced on May 15, marking the fifth year of the annual award.

Winners this year included Madelyn Merritt for "Intention and Action: Facebook Unfriending Habits Following the 2016 Presidential Election," Asia Fields for "Media Coverage of Transgender People Through Danica

Roem's Election Coverage" and Matthew Horn for "Change in the Usage of 老 in Chinese Vernacular Literature."

The three winners each received \$500 and the publication of their paper in CEDAR, an online database that is discoverable and accessible from all over the world.

Merritt, a senior sociology and Spanish major, first got the idea for her paper from a conversation with a roommate who, like her, had grown up in a small,

conservative hometown. As the two talked about their observations concerning the increasing trend to form friendships based on political ideologies as the election approached, Merritt decided she wanted to know more about this phenomenon.

"After the elections we started noticing a lot of animosity coming from both sides and that conversations weren't very open," Merritt said. "A lot of daily interactions were starting to be framed by this event

that was occurring."

Ready to research, Merritt turned to the library for help in delving into her topic.

Previously intimidated by the Hacherl Research and Writing studio, Merritt found it especially helpful for her as a studio professional sat down with her and went through her paper with her, giving her the resources that she needed.

She said the tools she was introduced to at the library convinced her to submit her paper for the award.

Horn, a senior Chinese and East Asian studies major, challenged himself with something that he felt unfamiliar with.

"Since I'm not a linguist and I'm not trained in reading old Chinese, it was very out of my depth. Admittedly, it was very difficult," Horn said. "So, to me, it gives me confidence and shows me that I can do something that is out of my comfort zone and out of my training."

He also relied on the library for resources, which helped him decode the Chinese vernacular. Horn used databases in the library to frame his work within a larger field of research.

"It was definitely something I couldn't have accessed without Western's resources," Horn said.

After submitting their papers, the applicants waited to hear back from a board made up of two librarians and three faculty members, one of which was Elizabeth Stephan.

Stephan, the Learning Commons librarian for student engagement, highlighted that the award leaves students with a sense of pride that keeps her excited about it each year.

"I think one of the benefits [of the award] is just making sure that students know that we're really proud of the work they do and allowing them to be really proud of the work they do, giving them a space to be proud of it," Stephan said.

The award generates about 13 to 14 applicants each year, and Stephan hopes that these numbers will keep rising.



**The winners Matthew Horn (left) and Madelyn Merritt (right) each received \$500 and the publication of their paper in CEDAR, an online database. // Photos by Isabel Lay**

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Illustrations by  
Julia Furukawa

*The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association is taking a stand against threats to salmon in the Pacific Northwest*

By Maddie Smith  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Salmon in Washington state are struggling.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson went up against tribes and the federal government in April, opposing the state's responsibility to fix over 800 salmon blockages.

These fixes won't be cheap, either. In fact, the Washington State Department of Transportation has estimated the total cost of the project at nearly \$2 billion.

On April 18, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments from each side of the financial debate of opening salmon habitat. The argument centers around culverts, metal pipes used to connect streams un-

der roads, because they are often responsible for blocking the passage of salmon.

The case began with the Boldt Decision, a 1974 court case which granted tribes their treaty right to fish. The effort was led by Nisqually activist Billy Frank Jr., said Tim Ballew II, Whatcom County councilmember and former Lummi Nation chairman.

According to the treaty right to fish, Coast Salish fishing tribes, 22 tribes in total, are entitled to 50 percent of fish catch and a "moderate standard of living," Ballew said.

However, Ballew said conditions in river environments correlate with decreasing fish populations, making for cultural and economic hardships for fishing families.

"It is becoming extremely difficult

to not just practice the treaty right but also to put food on the table, from the stories I hear from fishing families," Ballew said.

For Ballew, the right thing for the Supreme Court to do is to uphold the ruling, which would hold the state responsible for fixing stream blockages, so fish can get through.

This case has attracted attention. Those getting involved now are not just from the government or local tribes – community leaders have begun to voice their concerns.

Bellingham Port Commissioner Michael Shepard wrote an opinion article for the Bellingham Herald in April about the culvert case.

In his article, Shepard outlined the legal history of the case and highlighted that both tribes and the state

government have historically avoided taking treaty rights disputes to court. Since court battles are often costly and tribes can't be certain the court will rule in their favor, they often decide to simply not take legal action, he said.

Shepard used an example of Skagit tribes not suing the state for the Baker River Dam disrupting fish passage, and instead choosing to partner with Puget Sound Energy to install fish passage systems in the lower Skagit River in 2008.

According to Shepard, this was a more low-risk option for tribes.

"Tribes understand that they put their treaty rights on the line every time they go to court over a treaty rights issue," Shepard said.

And there is a lot on the line for the

22 fishing tribes who work with the state to maintain treaty rights to fish, Ballew said.

"Family traditions and values are rooted in the act of harvesting and bringing in the resources to share with other family members and the community," Ballew said. "It's a main fabric of our way of life."

Local nonprofit Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association works on restoring salmon habitats in Whatcom County to improve survival rates among fish populations.

Project Manager Darrell Gray said the association has a lot of work to do, as there are currently around 850 barriers for fish in streams in Whatcom County.

There is a state-owned culvert blocking an area under Interstate 5

near Samish Road that is responsible for blocking roughly 67 percent of coho, steelhead and trout passage, according to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Gray said the department provided initial culvert assessment training for NSEA and tribal members for a program intended to assess fish blockages in Whatcom County. From there, the county, the Nooksack Tribe and NSEA have evaluated fish barriers in Whatcom County, both on public and private land with permission from landowners, he said.

The barriers in the assessment were ranked based on accessibility to fish, Gray said.

"All we've been doing is just going down that list, starting from the worse barriers to the lesser worse

barriers," he said.

One fish in particular, coho salmon, is the species most affected by culverts blocking their passage, according to Gray.

Endangered chinook salmon are most affected by the Nooksack Diversion Dam in the middle fork of the Nooksack River. Tribes are especially interested in opening the dam due to the critical condition of Chinook.

The dam was constructed in the 1970s to divert water to the Georgia-Pacific paper mill in downtown Bellingham, according to Shepard. He said since operations have ceased at the old factory site, Bellingham no longer has the industrial need for the large quantities of water the dam can provide.

Now, without a major industrial

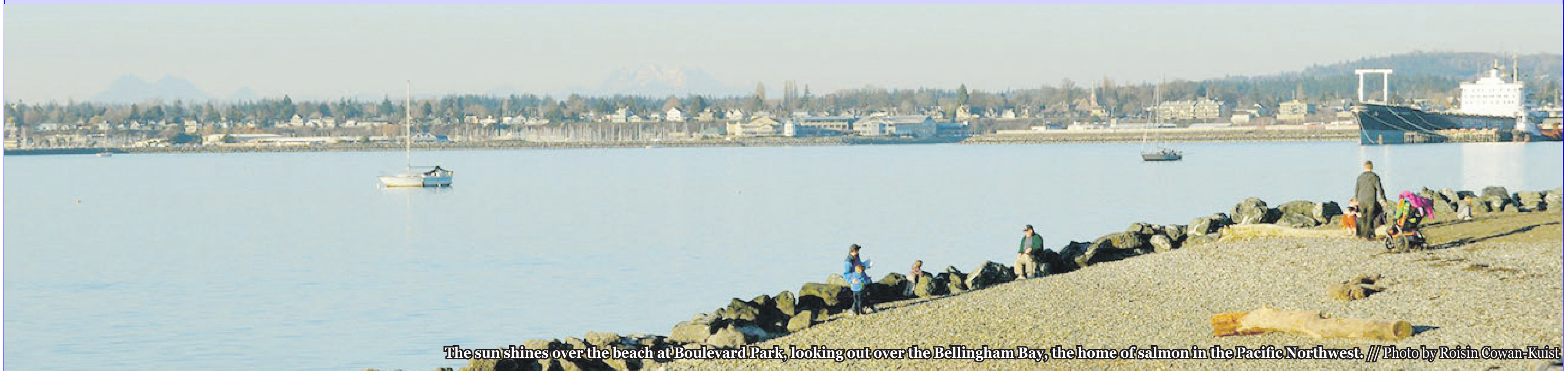
need for the water, Shepard said, removing the dam is the number one thing the state could do to improve salmon passage in the Nooksack River.

Gray said multiple culverts throughout Whatcom County create fish blockage, but the Nooksack Diversion Dam is the largest factor.

"The dam is definitely the biggest smoking gun," he said.

Ballew said local governments need to focus less on legal battles and more on salmon recovery. He said the three most important factors in restoration are fish habitats, hatchery programs and clean water.

"The habitat, the salmon and the people would all benefit if we actually just get to work, rather than just fighting about it in court," Ballew said.



The sun shines over the beach at Boulevard Park, looking out over the Bellingham Bay, the home of salmon in the Pacific Northwest. // Photo by Roisin Cowan-Kuist



# A Western welcome

*Western's International Buddy program connects students from near and far, making the adjustment to a new culture not so bad*

By Alison Eddy  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Imagine taking a boat ride in Bellingham Bay, surrounded by students from all over the world.

You are meeting new people, learning new languages and exploring a college town with students from other countries.

This is the experience freshman Megan Phillips had in early October during her first excursion with Western's International Buddy Program.

Starting fresh in a new country can be scary, but that's what the buddies are for.

International Student Advisor Abigail Borchert said she has been involved in the program for five years. She reaches out to international students about the program and helps to facilitate the different events the group hosts.

"The goal of the program is to match U.S. students with international students so that [they] have someone who they know already when they get here," Borchert said. "It's just a way to help international students feel more welcome and integrated in the campus community."

Phillips said she has been an international buddy for the past three quarters at Western. Before starting school in the fall, she researched every club Western offered and knew she wanted to be involved with international students.

"It's a totally great way to get them more connected to not only Western but to the community," Phillips said.

Each international student in the program is paired up with a U.S. student before coming to Western. They

can email over the summer, meet up with each other on or off campus and participate in group events, according to Borchert.

Senior Yuka Danno is an international student from Japan. She said she first heard about the buddy program from a presentation during orientation week and she thought it would be a great way to connect with Western students.

"It [positively] affected me because I had a friend on campus," Danno said.

Danno said she and her buddy were both first-year students at Western so they were able to get to know Western and the Bellingham area together.

The two also went to events organized by the program, including snowshoeing, hiking, rafting, ice-skating and bowling. The program has also hosted cultural events like pumpkin-carving in the fall, an early Thanksgiving dinner and a Super Bowl party.

Phillips said she likes participating in the group events because members get to do a lot of fun activities for a low cost, making them much more accessible.

Freshman Sydney Randolph said she also enjoys going to the group events and helping her buddy become more accustomed to the culture in the U.S.

"A buddy has a pretty important role of making sure your international student can get acquainted with all the nuances of living in America," Randolph said.

Randolph said one of her favorite things is helping her international buddy learn English and explaining different slang terms.

"She will come to me and she'll say,



**Two buddies take a spin on a pedal boat at the Lakewood Boathouse.** // Photo courtesy of Sydney Randolph

"What does 'lit' mean?" and then I will get to explain it to her," Randolph said.

Both Phillips and Randolph said they like learning about the different cultures their buddies come from and expanding their worldview. Borchert also said students who are interested in studying abroad enjoy this program because they get to see the other end of a study abroad experience.

"They understand how important it is to have a welcoming face when you come to a new place," Borchert said.

Borchert said those welcoming faces aren't temporary either. This is true for Danno and her first buddy at Western.

"We still contact each other," Danno said. "Last Christmas I visited her hometown and spent time with her family."

Borchert hopes the program will bring more awareness to the interna-

tional student population, since they make up just about one percent of the student body.

"This is a way to help that small population feel more integrated into the university community," Borchert said. "It also helps the larger university community to get to know the small international student population."

Randolph and Danno said they both hope to expand the program's reach so more Western students can get involved—and meet new friends while they're at it.

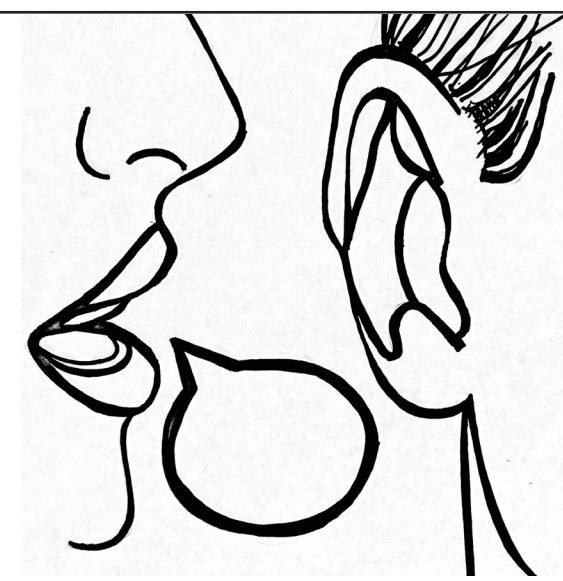
"It's a shame more people don't know about it because it's probably my favorite club on campus," Randolph said.

Anyone who is interested in learning more about the International Buddy Program can check out their Facebook page or email Abigail Borchert at [abigail.borchert@wwu.edu](mailto:abigail.borchert@wwu.edu).



**A group of International Buddies pose playfully with their corresponding partners after their trip to Lakewood Boathouse on May 19.** // Photo courtesy of Sydney Randolph

# TALK IT OUT



*The Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center is solving conflicts in the Bellingham community through conversation*

By Sarah McCauley  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Conflict can be an uncomfortable part of life.

But it doesn't have to be, according to Addie Candib, community engagement manager for the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center.

"Conflict is a normal, healthy part of everyday life," Candib said.

Resolving, understanding and coming to terms with conflict is what the WDRC thrives on. The center offers multiple workshops, programs and services to help people find ways to resolve conflicts in their lives, according to the WDRC website.

These services are essentially divided into two categories: conflict prevention and conflict intervention, Candib said. The prevention side of what the center does involves educational opportunities for community members of all ages. For post-conflict interventions, the center provides conflict coaching and mediation.

According to Candib, when individuals are able to sit down and have their needs heard, it can be a very positive experience, even if an agreement isn't reached at the end.

"Mediation is really at the heart of what we do and it's part of why we were originally founded," she said. "About 81 percent of our mediations reach an agreement, but our level of satisfaction with the process is closer to 95 percent."

On their website, the WDRC describes their goal: to make Whatcom County a community in which people can approach conflict in creative and healthy ways.

The WDRC is working toward that goal through community outreach. Their most recent program was a training for residents to help neighbors become more comfortable with conflict, according to their website.

Candib said she helps to facilitate these trainings and that the outreach programs have been a positive experience for her as well, not just those receiving the services. She said about eight neighborhoods in Bellingham

have applied for the trainings and four have already taken place.

Bellingham Mayor Kelli Linville meets regularly with selected representatives from each neighborhood, in what is known as the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission, Linville said. She said she is a big supporter of the WDRC's conflict resolution work within the Bellingham community.

These workshops bring neighbors together in more ways than through resolving conflict. They also create an opportunity to foster connections by attracting new community members to their local neighborhood association board meetings.

"Neighborhoods are always looking for ways to get their meetings better attended to provide something with value," Linville said.

Linville said her latest work with

the WDRC involved asking their recommendation for ways she can make sure all Bellingham residents feel safe approaching her with problems they may have. Since this can be difficult, Linville said she wanted to find a way to create a space where people in conflict can make sure they feel their voices are heard.

Linville said the mission of the WDRC is one that resonates with her: that conflict is inherent in human interaction, but it can be dealt with.

Senior Rebecca Hargraves has been interning with the WDRC for almost a year now. She said she had never heard of the center before finding a posting that they were seeking volunteers or interns for their youth program.

Now, Hargraves said she regularly helps with facilitating workshops for

children to help them learn how to handle conflict early in life. In her opinion, those skills are especially important for kids, but valuable for adults too.

"I'll be helping teach stuff in an elementary school classroom, and I'll go home and be using it with my friends, roommates, family," she said.

When it comes to handling conflict in life, Candib has an easy yet profound recommendation: stay curious.

"I would the say most important thing is just to stay curious about conflict," she said.

Staying curious about how both you and the other person are interpreting the conflict you're facing, Candib said, can really take you a long way toward solving the problem.



**The welcoming entryway at the WDRC greets those who are ready to talk through their differences—or prevent conflict before it even begins.** // Photo by Sarah McCauley



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# Starbucks' bias trainings a step in right direction

## FRONTLINE

Opinions of the Editorial Board

It's no secret: racism is alive and well in America, and it is pervasive. However, despite stories from people who experience it, scholars who have studied it and data that supports it, many people don't acknowledge racism's strong presence in modern society.

Instances of racism and racial bias have come to the forefront of the public conversation more and more frequently – and rightly so. Social media has been a catalyst for sharing these stories and a platform for public outcry.

Because of posts and videos of the arrest of two black men waiting for a colleague in a Philadelphia Starbucks, the company is now publicly grappling with how to address issues about racial bias.

The knowledge that racial bias still exists in the world is not something new for people of color, but for many white people it may be hard to understand or acknowledge because they do not experience it.

Growing up in Bellingham, where a very small

part of the population are people of color, I did not see racism firsthand. As a white woman, I do not experience racism firsthand. As a result, my understanding of racism and racial bias is shaped by stories from others who do experience it.

These public conversations are what push racial issues to the forefront. Public backlash, particularly on social media, is what fuels these conversations and is a critical component of beginning to acknowledge and respond to racial bias, both implicit and explicit.

Whether or not Starbucks is sincere in its efforts to address racial bias in the workplace, theirs and every other action to address racism publicly sends a message.

Their intent matters far less than the effect of their actions. Taking these issues seriously creates a more welcoming climate for more people to share their stories and reach out for support. It's a great first step, but it will only be effective if followed by a shift in action, not just attitude.

**Alyssa Bruce**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Corporate social responsibility is rapidly growing and if businesses do not keep up, the current political climate will eat them alive. Staying silent on social justice issues is beginning to be seen as taking the side of the abuser. This is why it is not only right but necessary for big corporations such as Starbucks to take a stand against racism and other wrongdoings in our nation.

Starbucks closed down over 8,000 locations to engage employees in a racial bias training on May 29. The campus store in Arntzen Hall was not one of those locations.

Starbucks has a long history of gentrification in minority communities. The multi-billion-dollar company has also been on the receiving end of multiple anti-discrimination lawsuits.

In 2015, Starbucks attempted a campaign "race together." While baristas and customers were supposed to engage in conversation about biases, they were not given anywhere near the proper amount of education on how to have this dialogue effectively. What was supposed to be a discussion about the company's morals.

Communities began to

wonder if Starbucks was trying to make an effective difference in racial inequality, or if they just used this political statement as a way to profit off of injustice. Starbucks employees agreed the campaign lacked effort, planning and training.

Two men of color were arrested and held for nine hours on April 12, after being falsely accused of trespassing while awaiting their colleague's arrival at a Philadelphia Starbucks. After this incident, the company made a long-overdue decision to start a new conversation about bias and what they can do to prevent it.

This time around, Starbucks is getting the right stakeholders together to make sure this campaign is effective. Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel of the Legal Defense and Educational Fund for the NAACP, was involved in the training. To be effective, the day of training needs to be a kick-off for a much longer project and overall change in societal norms, Ifill said.

Solving racial biases comes in three parts. First, people have to be able to recognize their own and each other's biases in everyday life. Next, people have to understand the implications and effects these biases have on other people. Lastly, people have to gain mechanisms for addressing

and solving these implicit biases.

Bias is present in almost everyone. It is not always seen, but too often acted upon. People like to think that because they believe in equality, they are not biased, but that is not how it works.

People do not hold biases purposefully or consciously; they are ingrained in everybody by a system that profits off of division and hardship. Biases thrive on our own denial that we as humans could discriminate against each other so innately.

The best thing we as a society can do is recognize where we have privilege, acknowledge our privilege and use it as a platform to speak up against injustices worldwide. Although it is long overdue, it seems Starbucks is attempting to make a positive change.

Until more businesses, organizations and people in power can own up to their privilege and use it for the greater good, we cannot move forward. It appears what Starbucks is doing could be a step in the right direction.

It is difficult early on to evaluate if this was simply a public relations tactic or a genuine effort to make a difference, but either way Starbucks has set the tone for a new chapter in preventing racial bias in big corporations across America.

The Western Front Editorial Board is composed of Taylor Nichols, Kira Erickson and Eric Trent

## Viking Voices

Do you think racial bias is a problem on campus?



**Anne Lee**  
Junior, human services

"I do think that racial bias is a problem on campus and it comes in forms of microaggressions, and sometimes overt and covert signifiers of racial bias. It's not always individual acts, but I think that given it's a dominantly white institution, many students do not have education or even consciousness of being aware of the things they are saying that are typically racially charged and centered."



**Gavin Disney**  
Freshman, computer science

"I feel like there isn't racial bias to the extent that it gets talked about. I feel the reason it seems so pronounced and active is because we look for the connection to racial bias. There are of course, issues like the vandalism in the library, things like that – it's not that intense."

Compiled by Mia Steben



**Hoku Rivera**  
Junior, creative writing and cultural anthropology

"I think the school has a definite issue with favoritism based on races. I've been in a couple of native study classes in indigenous literature. Those teachers have been white, so it shows me that the school is giving preference to white teachers who may not be qualified and who happen to not usually be qualified to teach those things."



**Kara Henry**  
Freshman, Fairhaven concentration and Spanish

"Definitely in some contexts there is a lot of racial bias. Obviously Western is a pretty white school, so I think there's some white savior complex kind of issues around campus sometimes. I don't think the administration does everything they could to make diversity a priority, which is disappointing for sure."

# Running made easy

Fairhaven Runners & Walkers group hosts an "All-Paces Run" every Tuesday as its most popular event

**Molly Workman**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Summer is coming and that means more free time and warmer weather. Fairhaven Runners & Walkers is a resource available to fulfill many fitness needs and to collaborate with others and get active.

Cody Brocato is a Western graduate student who is the leader for the "All-Paces Run" that is offered every Tuesday, which is their most popular event.

"We call it our 'All-Paces Run' because all paces are welcome, including walkers and run/walkers, regardless of your running speed or experience," he said. "The 'All-Paces Run' is a 40-minute run that starts from the store at 6 p.m. every Tuesday evening. It is meant to be an easy run, very relaxed and social. Each group is separated by minute-pace, starting at seven-to-eight-minute pace all the way to our run/



Members of the Fairhaven Runners & Walkers group gather outside of Dirty Dan Harris Steakhouse in Fairhaven. // Photo courtesy of Cody Brocato

*"I've grown a lot since I've been here and I'm lucky to be a part of such an amazing, active community."*

**Cody Brocato**  
"All-Paces Run" leader

walk group."

Brocato said he started running track in seventh grade and ended up trying cross country in high school. He started working with Fairhaven Runners in 2012 and became a group run leader in 2014. He described his experience with the organization as "unforgettable." He highlighted his time with the company and his dedication to the work.

"I've grown a lot since I've been here and I'm lucky to be a part of such an amazing, active community. The 'All-Paces Run' and the store staff are like a second family," he said.

The store is located on 11th Street in the Historic Fairhaven District and offers resources for the avid runner to the first-day beginner. Employees in store are on-hand to offer assistance in picking the right

shoe based on an individual's specific running pattern, as well as exercise apparel and physical therapy help.

For \$15, clients can make a half-hour appointment for a one-on-one screening to see a physical therapist, in store. Fairhaven Runners recommends this service to those looking to avoid injury while increasing their mileage, or to those who'd like to talk to a professional about aches or pains they are experiencing.

Brocato has taken part in this service as well.

"As a staffer at the store it is important to know more about what customers would experience if they did a screening, so I participated in one to see what it was all about," Brocato said.

As a longtime athlete, Brocato said he has experienced injuries

and used this service while training for a 50K.

Reviews on Yelp say experiences with Brocato are educational and call him the "shoe guru," but he says it is much more than that.

"Fairhaven Runners & Walkers is not a shoe store. We're a community hub, a resource and we all share the same passions that you do," he said. "We can absolutely relate to your experiences and are dedicated to keep you moving comfortably. It is humbling to be part of such an excellent team that has such a selfless mission."

For more information and a full schedule showing event details, visit fairhavenrunners.com or stop by their store at 1209 11th St. Their hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

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# Club golf team tees off

*The co-ed team is open to all skill levels, genders and practices weekly starting in the fall*

**Alison Eddy**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western will welcome its first ever co-ed club golf team this coming fall quarter.

The club golf team will be open to all skill levels, genders and sexual orientations, Club President Cameron Ohlson said. He said the team will have weekly practices at a driving range and golf course to work on fundamentals, have fun, meet the other members and get better at golf.

Ohlson said he didn't see a strong golf presence at the university aside from the varsity teams, and that was something he wanted to change.

"My freshman year I noticed that there was no community surrounding golf, which I thought was a little weird considering there is almost 17,000 students here, and I know a lot of them must have played on high school golf teams," Ohlson said. "I don't know about everyone else, but I had a lot of fun."

Sport Clubs Coordinator Caitlin Sommers said in an email that this is the first non-varsity golf team at Western. She said the recreation department tries not to overlap varsity sports unless there aren't any other recreational opportunities like an intramural team.

Ohlson said the team will compete in two tournaments for both fall and spring quarter. They will

compete against other teams in the northwest like Eastern Washington University, University of Washington, Central Washington University, Boise State University, University of Oregon, Gonzaga and others.

"I want the team to be all-inclusive, and I want the tournaments to be all-inclusive as well," Ohlson said.

Sommers said the team will represent Western in intercollegiate competitions around the state, regionally and nationally. The golf team will be recognized in the National Collegiate Club Golf Association.

Sommers also said the goal of the club is to bring opportunities for people to learn the game of golf, as well as to get better and compete for Western's campus.

Club member Cullen Carter said one of his hopes for the team is to become a better golfer and meet new people. He said he thinks having a club golf team will affect Western for the better.

"I think it will build community a little bit in Western, and it will give everyone an opportunity to represent Western in a positive way," Carter said.

Ohlson said he is excited to have a club team at Western because playing a competitive sport can give people a break from the stresses of school and help develop a community.



**Western golf Club President Cameron Ohlson tees off on the sixth hole at Sudden Valley Golf Course. // Photo courtesy of Cameron Ohlson**

Ohlson said Sudden Valley Golf Course is providing discounted rates for the club so they can play and practice without spending a lot of money. He said he wants the golf team to be affordable and something anyone feels welcome to join.

"There is a stereotype that golf is super expensive and is only meant

He also said the co-ed aspect of the club will be something new and that every club sport should be co-ed.

"It will be fun to have different perspectives and not just a majority perspective," Carter said. "It will be a great way to continue to build that community at Western and bring

*"I think it will build community a little bit in Western, and it will give everyone an opportunity to represent Western in a positive way."*

**Cullen Carter**  
Club member

for rich, old dudes," Ohlson said. "With the discounts we've gotten and the collective team dues, I hope we can meet everyone's needs."

Carter said he played golf when he was in middle school and early high school, competing in camps, and he tries to play at least once a year.

"I like golfing, but I don't do it near as much as I should or want to," Carter said.

people closer."

Ohlson said he hopes to have a team meeting before school is over for the quarter and that a club page will be up shortly.

Sommers said students will be able to contact the recreation department about the club. Ohlson also said students are able to contact him with any questions about the club at ohlsonc@wwu.edu.



**Western golf club member Noah Vogues hitting out of the rough at Lake Padden Golf Course. // Photo courtesy of Cameron Ohlson**

# Outdoor Center hosts used gear swap

**Olivia Klein**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

The Associated Students Outdoor Center hosted its annual gear swap on Friday, June 1, selling a wide variety of used gear at a reduced price for students.

Claire Bickford, the equipment and bike shop coordinator, was one of the staff members facilitating the event.

"It's kind of like a clothing swap, but more gear-oriented," Bickford said. "We've got anything from hiking boots or climbing shoes to bike wheels and tents. Also, we have some clothing items, backpacks and cameras. There's anything for anyone."

According to Everitt Merritt, an excursions trip leader, high prices are an unfortunate limiting factor for students interested in becoming more involved in the world of outdoor recreation.

"[Outdoor recreation] can seem really intimidating at first, with the costs," Merritt said. However, he said there are a bunch of ways to start getting outside without spending a lot of money.

Opportunities like the gear swap help focus on this issue. Merritt said he would encourage students intimidated by this component of outdoor recreation not only to purchase used gear, but also to put themselves out there.



**Western students visit booths and tables set up outside the Performing Arts Center during the annual gear swap on Friday, June 1. // Photo by Olivia Klein**

"Western has a lot of resources like Cascadia Climbers, a club that offers all the gear you might need as well as a community," Merritt said.

In addition to attending discounted gear swaps and participating in recreational clubs, Merritt

also spoke about the partnership between the Outdoor Center and Student Outreach Services.

"Some of my favorite trips are through Student Outreach Services, a support system for first generation college students," Merritt said.

"We've done hiking, rafting and snowshoeing with them. It's been super fun to create community in that population to provide a fun day."

Freshman Hailey Schmidt was one of the many students attending the gear swap event.

"I like to ski and climb. I'd say that I hike and camp a fair amount as well," Schmidt said. "I'm just browsing today, but this is a great way for people to get new-ish gear for a cheaper price, and for everyone to get rid of gear they don't want or don't have space for anymore."

The only thing she said she would change about the event would be to expand the swap.

"I think that it would be more successful if it was opened up, so members of the community of Bellingham have an opportunity to add their things to the sale," Schmidt said.

Many students will soon pack up and leave for the summer and the Outdoor Center is hosting its final excursion event. Ellen Martinson, another excursion leader, encouraged anyone who is interested to sign up for this last outdoor event.

"Coming up June 7, there's a sunset sea kayak trip that is only \$30," Martinson said. "Basically, it starts in Bellingham Bay, then to a cool island for some sea life and then the sunset from a nice boat."

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# Two Vikings earn First Team All-America honors

*Junior Alex Barry and sophomore Raquel Pellecer placed in the top-8 of their respective javelin events at the NCAA Division II Championships*

**Miranda Roberts**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western junior Alex Barry placed fourth and sophomore Raquel Pellecer placed sixth in the NCAA Division II Championships in the javelin.

Barry, a Sequim native, has been involved in track and field since the age of four, and began throwing javelin in middle school.

This 2018 championship is Barry's second time at nationals, the first being in 2016.

"I was really happy with freshman year," Barry said. "I went in ranked as 20th and came out ranked as 14th."

Barry said he credits his improvement over the past two years to extra training during the off-season with his coach, Ben Stensland.

"My goal next year is to win nationals," Barry said. He said he aims to continue chasing after goals and striving to always become a better athlete, especially after training for this event for so long.

Pellecer began her track and field career six years ago, and started throwing javelin three years ago. She spent her freshman year at Portland State University, but said she truly enjoys being a part of Western.

"Western is a much better environment for growth, everyone is more focused on making you a

better person, not just a better athlete," Pellecer said.

She said that at both schools, being an athlete made her a better student as well.

A big part of Pellecer's motivation is wanting to continue the legacy of javelin throwers created at Western.

"It is a weight on my shoulders but also a great motivator to strive to make an impact on the national podium every year," Pellecer said.

Pellecer also said, "Alex is incredible and I'm so proud of him. Throwing as hard as he did is a huge step, he is on his way to throwing 70 meters."

Pellecer said she was excited to see how happy Barry was to place fourth at nationals, when he did not go into the event ranked in the top eight.

Both Barry and Pellecer earned First Team All-America recognition from the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.

This recognition is earned through placing among the top eight in an athlete's respective event, including relay teams.

Both Barry and Pellecer said they had anticipated this recognition considering their rank in their individual events, but both felt honored to have earned it.

Barry and Pellecer both plan to continue working hard to return and win at nationals next year.



**Junior Alex Barry launches a javelin during the GNAC tournament in Monmouth, Oregon.** // Photo courtesy of WWU Athletics

*Opinions from The Western Front staff on all things sports*

**The Mariners are currently in first place in the American League West. Can they sustain this success for the rest of the season?**



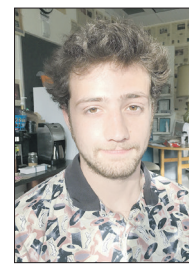
**Tyler Urke**  
Sports editor

Unless it's game 162 and we've already clinched a play-off berth, I'm refusing to get my hopes up about this team. After 24 years of fandom, I've learned it's the best way to not get my heart ripped out of my chest. But I will say it's fun watching them right now and I hope that I'm proven wrong.



**Eric Trent**  
Managing editor

They just shellacked the reigning world champions, the Houston Astros, 7-1 on their home turf. We don't even need Robinson Canó to win the AL West. Something magical is happening in Seattle. The Seahawks are now an afterthought and the 38-22 Mariners are on their way to a postseason appearance.



**Walker Sacon**  
Copy editor

If you had asked me before opening day if the Mariners had a real shot at competing with Houston and Anaheim, I wouldn't have given them any chance. This M's team seems to have some legitimate fight to it and their play overall has been better than expected, but I'll take Houston's pitching down the stretch.



**Molly Workman**  
Reporter

If the Mariners are going to get to the postseason this is the season. Losing Canó was not as rough as I thought it would be. I think the deciding factor of whether we'll stay in first is the games against the Astros at the end of the season. We've been through a lot this season, but in a cliché way I think it has made us stronger as a team.

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