

# THE WESTERN FRONT

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Photo by Harrison Amelang

## Western students stand in solidarity

Following Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the Supreme Court, students and activists protest in Red Square

**Hannah Blank**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

The noon bell rang across Western's campus as a crowd gathered in solidarity with survivors of sexual assault on Thursday, Oct. 11. Many stood on the edge of Fisher Fountain in Red Square holding handmade signs in protest of Judge

Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation into the United States Supreme Court.

Although three women accused Kavanaugh of sexual assault, he was confirmed following an FBI investigation of the allegations. The primary accusation came from Dr. Christine Blasey-Ford,

a psychology professor at Palo Alto University, who testified in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 27.

Freshman Jose Ortuzar organized the event along with fellow students.

"We were really impacted by the Kavanaugh hearing, specifically Dr. Blasey-Ford's testimony,"

Ortuzar said. "We knew we wanted to do something but we couldn't find any kind of protest or rally around this issue in the area."

Ortuzar went to work with a group of other freshmen to organize an event on Facebook. He said they started planning on Monday and after

gaining attention, they joined forces with another rally planned by Western's Planned Parenthood Generation club.

"The whole message is to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence," Ortuzar said.

The protest had multiple speakers lined

up, beginning with one of the event organizers, junior Joe Addison. Megaphone in hand, Addison stood in front of the growing crowd.

"We do not stand here to protest [Kavanaugh's] nomination, we stand here because there are survivors among us."

Read more online at [www.westernfrontonline.com](http://www.westernfrontonline.com)

## Local joint burns out

Brotha Dudes closes its doors after two years

**Ian Haupt**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

If you've been hoarding Brotha Dudes 20 percent-off and free Dudes Bowl coupons, you're out of luck. Brotha Dudes announced on Twitter on Sunday, Oct. 7, all locations are officially closed.

Opened in August 2016 by Julius and Briana Stoker, Brotha Dudes quickly became a beloved staple in the Bellingham restaurant scene. The

restaurant offered fresh ingredients and a hippie, cannabis-enthusiast vibe with menu items like the Dudes Blunt and the Cali Spliff.

On the morning of Thursday, Oct. 4, Briana Stoker sent out a mass text to their employees:

"Good morning all, "We have been behind in our sales tax payments and unfortunately the dept. of revenue has frozen our account. What this means is

the funds that were set aside for payroll are no longer available. At this time we will be laying everyone off effective immediately.

"We would like to thank everyone for doing a great job and apologize for letting you all down. Julius and Briana"

The Department of Revenue said they have not revoked Brotha Dudes' business license. If any action was taken by the department, they said a notice



Brotha Dudes Fresh Eats storefront. // Photo by Harrison Amelang

would be placed on the door of the business.

Second-year Western student Leah Skazinski worked at the downtown location of Brotha Dudes for about five months and was laid off shortly before the

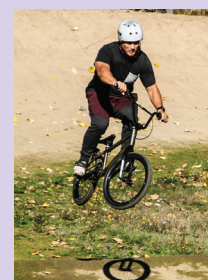
restaurant closed.

"They definitely had a really good business going," Skazinski said. "They were making good money, because it was popular, you know? But I just don't think they had the business

see *DUDES*, page 3

### INSIDE:

Cyclocross star



Bellingham cyclocross hits the course at high speed  
pg. 13

How to vote like a pro

Breaking down issues and candidates  
pgs. 5 - 6





KNKX Host Ed Ronco performs the show "All Things Considered" during a live broadcast at Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham on Thursday, Oct. 11. // Photo by Jaden Moon

## Title IX, Strategic Plan on the agenda at Board of Trustees meeting

**Cody Clark**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

At the Western Board of Trustees meeting on Friday, Oct. 12, the board heard both the results of the Title IX internal audit and the efforts of the Provost's Office to make Western's Strategic Plan more accessible to students.

### Title IX

Internal Audit Director Antonia Allen presented the results of the Title IX internal audit to the trustees. Allen was tasked with assessing how Western has handled Title IX sexual harassment and sexual violence discrimination complaints. The audit looked into metrics on Title IX resolutions since fall 2016, when the Equal Opportunity Office became responsible for investigating allegations of sexual misconduct. The audit identified

three opportunities for improvement in response time, documented procedures and providing written notice to complainants, Allen said. It also recommended that procedures be amended to reflect the actual practices for how Western handles Title IX complaints. According to Allen, Western's procedures for handling Title IX complaints are too old. They have not been updated since April 11, 2013.

"The documented complaint procedures were quite out of date and did not match what was actually happening," Allen said. The audit found that Western's response to 13 of 15 Title IX complaints took longer than 60 days to complete. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights recommended, but did not require, that universities across the U.S. resolve complaints in less than 60 calendar days to be considered prompt.

Sue Guenter-Schlesinger, vice provost for the EOO, said the office has taken steps to better these and procedures shorten the time-frame in which complaints are resolved. "When you're on a quarter system, prompt timeframes are imperative," Guenter-Schlesinger said.

The audit recommended that Western improve on providing written notice to complainants and respondents to Title IX claims after it was found that a student was not given notice of the results of a faculty-on-student complaint they were involved in.

President Sabah Randhawa was in attendance and acknowledged the results of the report, pledging to adhere to its recommendations. In response to the audit, Western has created a separate Title IX Office that reports directly to the president. The search for a Title IX Coordinator to direct this office is currently underway.

"As I approach students, faculty and staff, one thing became clear that what we've done isn't enough, and there's considerable addition work that needs to happen," Randhawa said.

### Strategic Plan

Vice President for Academic Affairs Brian Burton discussed efforts to make Western's strategic plan more accessible to campus community members.

Burton showed new additions to the strategic plan section of the website for the Office of the Provost, which included new metrics like student retention, graduation rates, and enrollment for students of color.

Burton said these efforts will go toward Western's need for increasing transparency and that the new section of the site makes "key information available easily" to students and faculty.

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Have story ideas?  
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## Sehome High nears end of construction

More open spaces, gathering places for Sehome High School students

**Anjali LeGrand**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Sehome High School is currently in the process of its first major construction project since its founding in the late 1960s, after years of surviving with outdated facilities.

The new addition is being built alongside the old building and will include a two-floor layout. Turf and synthetic fields and a central kitchen are also among the construction plans, according to the Bellingham Public Schools website.

Currently, Sehome is comprised of several buildings for different purposes and departments. Students must travel outside to get to-and-from classes, which Smith said

creates issues in terms of both weather and safety concerns for students.

Communications Manager for Bellingham Public Schools Dana Smith said she is looking forward to the open spaces which will allow for natural light and more places for students to gather. Smith knows the old building well as she was an English and journalism teacher at Sehome for 16 years before taking on her current position in June 2018.

"My classroom was downstairs, and if the blinds were closed because it was cold outside, it was like a cave," Smith said.

The Bellingham School District's Facilities Planning Task Force assesses overall structural issues, adherence to energy

codes and accessibility.

"Functionally, people often joked about the school being a 'Southern California' design since there was a significant number of classrooms you could only get to by going outside," Sehome High School alumnus Ben Wilson said via email. "This type of design isn't ideal for an area of the world that seems to rain about 200 days of the year."

In order to get the construction plan to a place of action, the process began with an evaluation by the Facilities Planning Taskforce. The taskforce is an open application group, which looked at the facilities and created a list of recommendations in 2013. The rebuilding of the high school was at the top



Sehome High School's construction is ongoing, and is expected to be completed by the end of this semester. // Photo by Jaden Moon

### DUDES

Continued from page 3

aspect of it down." Western junior Lia Henriksen mainly worked at Brotha Dudes The Kick-Back over the summer. The Kick-Back was their second location on Northwest Avenue that recently opened up in June 2018. She said they were not prepared to open the new location.

"What I think happened," Henriksen said, "They just weren't financially stable enough to open the second one so they had to split their funds."

Julius Stoker started a crowdsourcing campaign on fundraising website GoFundMe to help raise the money for their employees' final paychecks. In a video posted on the page, Stoker candidly explained the reasoning behind the closure.

"We fell behind in our taxes because we wanted to make sure our employees were paid every two weeks," Stoker said in the video. "We wanted to keep the restaurant open so the community had a great place to come for food. But August and September were just really slow, so we got behind."

However, for those still craving a Brotha Reuben, there may still be hope. Brotha Dudes posted a tweet on Monday, Oct. 8 that read:

"The amount of response that we've gotten from closing has been tremendous, and people have reached out to try and help us save Brotha Dudes. SO, it appears that maybe all hope isn't lost for us and we are trying to figure out what we can do to reopen, we will keep you all posted."

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# Student. Parent. Business owner. Stephanie Oppelaar does it all.

Alexia Suarez  
THE WESTERN FRONT

When Stephanie Oppelaar decided to go back to school, she wrote her goals on sticky notes and stuck them to her office mirror. As she accomplished them, her mirror became clearer, until just one sticky note remained.

Her last teal sticky note reads, in permanent capital letters: “end goal teaching degree.”

Oppelaar, a full-time Western student and owner of the Black Drop Coffeehouse in downtown Bellingham, juggles it all to pursue her dream of becoming a high school biology teacher. And she's got a little something more on her plate: two kids.

At 1 p.m. on Wednesday Oct. 10, Oppelaar sits at the Black Drop counter working on her genetics homework. She tries to get a few things done around the coffeehouse before heading back to Western for another class. But it isn't until dinner is served and her two daughters Beatrice and Edith are sent to bed that Oppelaar gets to relax and prepare for the following day.

Oppelaar, a self-identified workaholic, student, mother, craftista and nerd, came to Bellingham 17 years ago after ending a seven-year relationship with her then-fiance in Seattle. She said after moving in with a close friend, she decided to follow her dream of becoming a biology teacher and enrolled at Whatcom Community College.

“Teachers discouraged me from doing science because I was a girl, even though it was something I was really passionate about,” Oppelaar said.

After earning her associate degree at Whatcom, Oppelaar enrolled at Western to pursue a biology degree with a focus in secondary education. She said she wants to follow in the footsteps of her past teachers to hopefully encourage girls to like science and know that they too have a place in STEM fields.

After going to school on and off for 10 years, Oppelaar is a senior now. She took a long break between the birth of her first child, Beatrice, to when her second child, Edith, turned two. She also took a few quarters off to run the Black Drop.

Oppelaar said she loves the attitude of Bellingham,

specifically the collection of unique individuals, many of whom adhere to the values she holds such as being environmentally conscious and being LGBTQ+ friendly.

Oppelaar worked as an employee at the Black Drop from its start in 2003 until 2009, when the owners offered to sell the shop to her. She said she jumped at the chance because of her love for the coffeehouse.

“They [the Black Drop employees and owners] became my surrogate family



Illustration by Stella Harvey

when I moved to Bellingham because I wasn't close with my family, and the shop became the center of that,” Oppelaar said. “It's a second home to me.”

Oppelaar's children are ages six and four. The older, Beatrice, is enrolled in public school. Her youngest, Edith, goes to the Child Development Center on Western's campus.

Keri Krout, the center manager, said that 18 of the 59 kids enrolled at the center are kids of student-parents.

“Our waitlist is generally two years long. In order to be accessible to student families we strive to leave some slots open for student

families entering Western in the fall each school year.” Krout said. “Typically, students are unaware that we exist here to support them, therefore it has proved helpful to keep these slots open when possible.”

Oppelaar takes her responsibilities week by week, trying to check off as many boxes as she can each week as an attempt to keep up with all of her duties.

“Figuring out a schedule that works for me, that checks boxes off and still be present and aware in my classes is the biggest challenge,” said Oppelaar.

Oppelaar said her main goals when juggling all her responsibilities is to be sure her employees are taken care of and her business is running smoothly. Equally as important is that her children are taken care of and loved while also understanding the reason why the family is always on the go.

“I want to be an example for my daughters that you have to work hard to do the things that you want to do,” Oppelaar said. “It's really hard to feel like I'm trying to be an example but also, I'm missing everything that's important to them.”

In five years, Oppelaar said she wants to be teaching biology and possibly still running the Black Drop if she can still keep her reliable and helpful staff alongside her.

Oppelaar finds support from her husband, John Oppelaar, who she said is her equal partner in all aspects in her life.

John works at the Black Drop with her and said he notices her hard work.

“I'm constantly amazed



Stephanie Oppelaar studies in the SMATE library before class Tuesday, Oct. 16. // Photo by Zoe Deal

by Stephanie. She has so much responsibility and she handles it with such grace. I couldn't be more proud of the hard work she is constantly putting in for our community, our business and our family,” he said.

Oppelaar also finds support through an online network of Bellingham mothers where she can vent her frustrations and not only feel heard, but also get support from fellow mothers who want to help her situation.

Oppelaar said some of her professors at Western are pretty accommodating with

her busy schedule but that she sometimes struggles to keep up with rigid expectations. She said there was one instance when a professor told her to suck it up because it was her choice to have kids before finishing school.

But she tells other student-parents that what they're doing can be done. Her main tip: get a calendar and schedule and write everything down.

“Know there is an endpoint and that you can do anything for a short amount of time,” Oppelaar said.



Oppelaar is a full-time student, owner of the Black Drop coffeehouse and mother of two. // Photo by Zoe Deal

## Voters' Guide: Midterm Ballot Measures

### Initiative #1631

Initiative #1631 is a proposition to enact a fee on large emitters of carbon. The money collected would go toward funding water, forest and air health projects, as well as a community investment fund. The initiative is proposed to begin January 1, 2020. The fee would be \$15 per metric ton of carbon and would increase by \$2 per ton every year until greenhouse gas reduction goals are met in Washington.

Supporters of the initiative argue #1631 will minimize pollution and could potentially create over 40,000 jobs by investing in water and forestry projects, energy efficiency and clean transportation. Opponents argue the fee could result in higher gas prices.

Supporters: Planned Parenthood, Clean Air Clean Energy WA, American Federation of Teachers WA  
Opponents: Western States Petroleum Association

### Initiative #1639

Initiative #1639 concerns firearm control. The initiative proposes implementing restrictions on the purchasing and ownership of guns. These restrictions would include raising the minimum age to purchase a semi-automatic assault rifle to 21, increasing background checks, longer waiting periods and stricter storage requirements.

Supporters of the initiative argue #1639 will reduce gun violence and help keep communities and schools safe. Opponents argue this initiative would be a violation of second amendment rights.

Supporters: American Federation of Teachers WA, Safe Schools Safe Communities  
Opponents: The National Rifle Association

### Initiative #940

Initiative #940 concerns police accountability and would require police to receive de-escalation and mental health training. The initiative would also require law enforcement officers to provide first aid, and implement a “good faith test” to update standards of when police violence is justifiable.

Supporters of the initiative argue that it will save lives and combat police violence by providing education on understanding others' mental health states. Opponents argue the initiative wastes money retaining already competent officers and puts both police and citizens in danger by putting too much focus on first aid rather than quickly pursuing and ending violent scenarios.

Supporters: De-Escalate Washington, Fuse Washington  
Opponents: Seattle Police Officers Guild, Coalition for a Safer Washington, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association, others

### Bellingham Ballot Measure: Proposition 2018-5

Proposition 2018-5 concerns affordable housing. As more people move into Bellingham and property values continue to grow, more residents are struggling to find affordable housing. In 2012, Bellingham voted in favor of the Bellingham Home Fund, which has successfully preserved 700 homes. A vote in favor of Proposition 2018-5 would renew the Bellingham Home Fund to continue providing support for seniors and families at risk of eviction. For more information, visit [www.bellinghamhomefund.org](http://www.bellinghamhomefund.org)

Pros: The cost of living in Bellingham is increasing faster than wages. Proposition 2018-5 would help combat homelessness.  
Cons: Proposition 2018-5 would cost the average homeowner around \$108 a year, with an owner of a \$300,000 property paying \$9 a month.

### Statewide Advisory Ballot Measure #19

Ballot Measure #19 regards funding for oil spill prevention and clean-up. Over the past two years, legislators passed Bill 6292, which allowed them to direct the Department of Ecology to improve prevention methods for oil spills in Puget Sound, oil refineries, railroads and pipelines. A 5 cent tax per 42-gallon barrel of oil, primarily used by marine terminals and boat owners, was instituted to fund the bill. A vote in favor would maintain this funding, costing \$13 million over ten years for government spending.

Compiled by Zoe Hilgedick



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# Chat with the candidates



Reporter Lili McMurtrey spoke with State Senate District 42 candidates **Pinky Vargas** and **Doug Ericksen** leading up to the midterms.

**Pinky Vargas** - D is in her fifth year serving on the Bellingham City Council. Vargas worked with legislators on funding for the waterfront clean up from the Model Toxins Control Act. According to her website, she worked with the County Executive, the County Council and elected officials from Whatcom County on initiatives such as emergency medical services, criminal justice, affordable housing and economic development.



Illustrations by Julia Berkman

After serving six terms in the Washington House of Representatives, **Doug Ericksen** - R was elected to the state senate in 2010. As senator for the 42nd district, Ericksen serves on the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee. According to his website, Ericksen's legislative priorities include solutions to keep energy prices low, creating jobs and enhancing quality of life for residents of Whatcom County. Ericksen received his bachelor's degree from Cornell University and a master's degree from Western.

**Q: Right now, it is difficult to find well-paying jobs in Whatcom County, especially to keep up with the rising cost of living. What will you do to stand up for economic growth and infrastructure development?**

"There are a lot of things in regards to advocacy that I can do at the senate level to make sure that we get transportation dollars for transportation infrastructure, but also for other things. Some of our areas in Whatcom County don't even have cell phone or internet coverage and that does a lot for economic development as well because it allows people to work out of their home. Infrastructure also means improving our roads. We need to, in regards to ensuring economic development, work with our businesses here to make sure that they get what they need to stay in town and stay successful and keep people employed."

"Coming into the next legislative session, we'll stay focused on things we've worked on in the past. It's important that we continue to improve public education, give parents more choices on how and where their kids are educated. It's crucial that we protect our economic job base here in Whatcom County by preserving our great family-wage jobs and manufacturing at Cherry Point and protecting our agricultural community with those great jobs with more regulation of taxation. And the third thing is, is to focus in on our quality of life because people want to live in Whatcom County for a reason."

**Q: Why should a Western student vote for you?**

"Right now, millennials are about to be the majority and who they elect right now, their future depends on it. If they elect people who will protect our planet, who want to make sure healthcare is more affordable, want to protect a woman's right to choose, want to make sure that education is affordable, that we protect net neutrality and that we ensure there are future jobs for them. Right now, I would say millennials have more on the line than anybody else."

"I think Western students should elect me because I am an excellent representative of the 42nd legislative district. I have a history of about eight years in the senate, of funding education, creating excellent job opportunities and protecting our quality of life, the things I think Western students may be looking for in the future years. I think Western students should understand that with a great job, you can raise your family and enjoy the quality of life we have here in Whatcom County. It all goes together as a package deal."

**Q: What are the issues you are most enthusiastic about and interested in working on in District 42?**

"The things that I am most excited about are working on affordable healthcare, affordable housing, family-wage jobs and criminal justice reform."

"I've been a big supporter of Cherry Point industries, which are great manufacturing jobs. I'd like to see them be able to expand out there, to provide people with more opportunities. What I've done for cleaning up Bellingham Bay and focusing our toxic clean-up funds more efficiently has led to excellent job creation on the Bellingham waterfront. What we need to do is minimize massive tax increases that my opponent is advocating for and minimize the massive deregulations that she is advocating for. If you keep taxes low, you keep regulatory burden in check, and you help create great paying jobs here in Whatcom County."

Note: Democrat and former Lummi Tribe Chairman **Tim Ballew II** is also running for the District 42 Senate seat.

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# Western alumna shares love for coffee and cuisine in Fairhaven

**Rachel Carruth**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

On a gloomy morning in Bellingham's historic Fairhaven neighborhood customers shuffle into the Shirlee Bird Cafe to warm up and start their days. Upon opening the door, the smell of freshly baked pastries captivates those passing by as nostalgic music plays softly over an antique radio.

Shirlee Jones, a Western alumna and owner of the cafe, welcomes patrons as if she's known them forever. She sprinkles her humor into the conversation as she tells a customer about her latest culinary creation.

The cafe's locally-sourced menu includes a tempting array of hearty sandwiches, grilled paninis, freshly made salads and delicious breakfast combinations.

According to Jones, her culinary journey began in California where she attended culinary school. She said she made the move to Orange County after leaving Western shortly after she began school in 2000.

Along the way, Jones was inspired by mentors like her friend John De Frist who guided her as she envisioned opening her own business

one day.

"John De Frist is a great friend of mine and is the one who taught me how to operate a business," she said. "It's people and how you love your customers while setting boundaries that's really important."

She said years later when she returned to Bellingham to finish her degree at Western, she decided to further cultivate her culinary skills by working at local bakery Avenue Bread.

After Jones graduated with a degree in international relations and psychology, she decided to open the Shirlee Bird Cafe in August of 2015.

Jones said she has a drive to serve the freshest homemade creations that will leave people wanting more. The glass case by the counter is filled to the brim with treats both sweet and savory. As customers peer in, their eyes widen as they try to decide which ones to choose.

"When it comes to the basic building blocks of baking, I don't mess around with what works," she said.

The Shirlee Bird offers a wide array of coffee drinks as well, which according to Jones, is the life-



**Shirlee Jones chats with a customer as she prepares one of her signature coffee drinks.** // Photo by Matthew Tangeman

blood of many people in the Pacific Northwest and the key to any successful cafe. She said all the unique coffee drinks she offers her customers use a special blend of Latin American and Sumatran beans from Hammerhead Roasting Company.

Local coffee lover Mike Kempt sits and enjoys his morning coffee as Shirlee helps folks at the counter. He said he likes to try the different coffee shops around the area.

"On Sundays, my coffee is recreational, as opposed to on the weekdays when it is medicinal," Kempt said.

The look of Jones' classic, quirky cafe is elevated by the historic Sycamore Square Building in Fairhaven where it's located. Built in 1890, the building is surrounded by antique shops and cobblestone streets.

Janet Hobbs, a visitor from Vancouver, British Columbia, said she

makes a point to stop by the Shirlee Bird whenever she is in town.

"My all-time favorite thing to get here is the curried chicken salad with cashews, celery, green onions and golden raisins mixed with arugula pesto and tossed with a tangy mango chutney vinaigrette and served over fresh kale," said Hobbs. "It's absolutely delicious."

When it comes to the future, Jones said she is happy where she is and doesn't foresee opening up another cafe any time soon.

"I built myself a job when I created this place," Jones said. "I really can't imagine having another cafe because I would want to be there all the time. This is my passion, my heart and soul is all over this one."

The Shirlee Bird Cafe is located at 1200 Harris Ave. and is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. everyday.



**The Shirlee Bird sign glistens in the sun.** // Photo by Matthew Tangeman

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# Tenants Union educates new renters

Local union invites students and other first-time renters to learn about their rights at workshop

Grace Westermann  
THE WESTERN FRONT

With an average of 15,000 students attending Western each year, Bellingham is full of young adults encountering new experiences, including renting a home for the first time.

The Bellingham Tenants Union, a local nonprofit, seeks to help students and the greater Bellingham community understand their rights as tenants, working to create better experiences for local renters.

Founded by Western students in 2017, the union has already won two housing battles campaigned for by the union's members. Both wins included the passing of an ordinance that banned tenant income discrimination and the approval of city-wide accessory dwelling units.

As part of their mission to help empower renters, the union regularly holds meetings to discuss tenants rights issues. On Sunday, Oct. 21, attorney David Henken of Law Advocates will lead a tenants' rights meeting to advise renters and facilitate questions.

Law Advocates is a nonprofit that provides free legal assistance to low-income residents of Whatcom and Island counties. Their website says this service is made possible by volunteer lawyers, paralegals, students and community members.

Natasha Hessami, a Bellingham Tenants Union organizer, said the goals for the upcoming meeting are to educate renters about the laws that are in place to hold landlords accountable in Washington State and Bellingham.

"Bellingham Tenants Union wants tenants to have safe, healthy and affordable homes," Hessami said. "We want to protect tenant rights and part of that is letting people know they have rights, especially students."

According to the union's website, their vision for the future is for all housing to be owned and managed by the public, without an agenda driven by profit, but by what's best for people.

Hessami, a Western student majoring in biochemistry, said she wanted to get involved with the union because she heard about students facing problems with high rent prices. In her

own experience, Hessami said she's encountered a lack of transparency with landlords.

"When I was signing my lease, I was asking questions and the person I was signing the lease from asked me, 'What, are you a lawyer? Stop asking so many questions.' That was my first introduction to a landlord," Hessami said.

She said during her time renting in Bellingham, she's had to move into houses with mold, broken heating systems, leaks, long wait-times for repairs and rent increases every year by at least \$50 per room in a house with roommates. Since getting involved with the union, Hessami learned she's not alone.

On campus, droves of students pile out of their classes every day. Among them are current and prospective renters who may have no knowledge about their rights as tenants.

Western sophomores Amanda Wells, Madison Cromer and Payton Fowler are roommates in a four bedroom house on Harris Avenue. They said they share similar problems as first-time renters in their current residence.

"Getting started was scary. The lease was a little overwhelming and the rental company had a hard time explaining things," Cromer said. "There was a short video they showed us, but it seemed like we only got explained what they wanted us to know."

After getting the keys to their new house, all four roommates were optimistic about their new home. Then, Wells said they started having a difficult time communicating with their rental company about billing mis-

takes.

"Within the first month the rental company was charging us a bill for Puget Sound Energy for dates we weren't even in the house yet," Wells said. "Then they charged us an invoice fee for not paying the bill that didn't belong to us."

Wells, Cromer and Fowler also said the house they live in is fairly old. Although their landlord has new

carpets put in, some of the cabinets are falling apart and the bedroom and closet doors don't work well or at all, despite repairs.

On top of their housing issues are looming concerns about being expected to know if they'll renew their lease four months in advance, a common complaint Fowler said they saw on their rental company's online reviews.

According to Hessami, the union is attempting to expand by starting a chapter at Western that would provide support specifically for student renters. For people like Wells, Fowler and Cromer, the chapter could help them navigate through their housing issues.

Hessami said the chapter meet-

ings would potentially include workshops on how to talk to a landlord, knowing tenant rights and how to get rid of furniture when moving out.

"If you have an idea of something you want to see presented - a workshop or more info - bring it to the first meeting," Hessami said. "[The group will] need officers and members so if you want to take on a leadership role, I encourage that."

Hessami mentioned in addition to supporting renters and tenant rights, the union is also involved with finding long-term housing solutions through policy change. She said the union endorsed the Bellingham Home Fund, a 2012 housing levy that increased property taxes to provide funds for more affordable housing to be built in the area.

According to the levy's website, the funds also help preserve existing affordable housing options and emergency rent assistance. The levy is up for renewal on November 2018 ballots.

Hessami said the union is endorsed the levy because of the important work it does to provide new forms of affordable housing in Bellingham. She said there's a building

currently being constructed on State Street that will provide temporary housing for homeless youth and emergency rent relief.

"As much as the Bellingham Tenants' Union supports college students who may not know their rights, we're also supporting homeless individuals and older folks who are renting," Hessami said.

Along with tenants not having adequate knowledge of their rights, Hessami said there are also several laws against rent control in Washington, allowing landlords to raise rent every year without any restrictions. She said the union hopes legislators follow in the footsteps of Canada, where a rent control law has already been passed.

According to B.C. Government news, in September the rent control law that was passed will only allow landlords to increase rent by 2.5 percent every 12 months.

"That is something that elected officials on the state level need to act on," Hessami said.

"[That's] where lobbying comes into play."

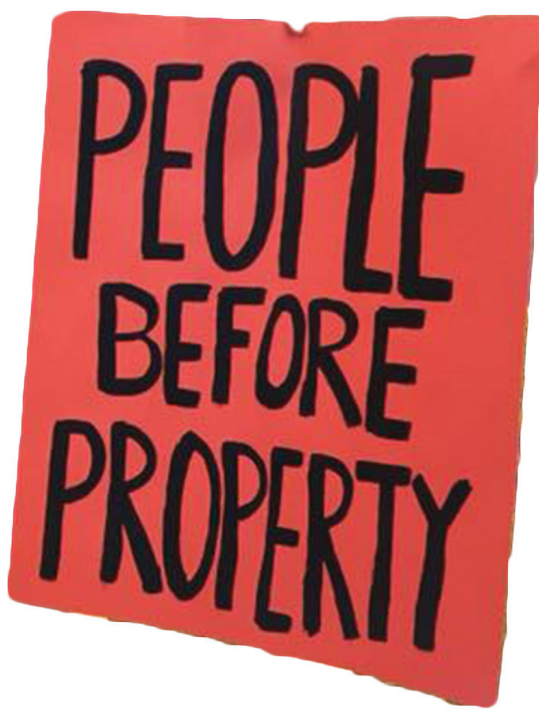
She said until further laws are passed regarding rent control and tenant rights, landlords should work with their renters to build transparency by being responsive, letting them know why rent is being raised and why there may be fees.

"I think large rental agencies have a lot of work to do in compassionate management," Hessami said. "I believe I speak for a lot of students who have rented from large rental

companies who say they've had a lot of difficulties getting their rental deposits back or repairs done in time and understanding how to navigate application fees and why there even are application fees."

The Bellingham Tenants' Union tenants' rights meeting will assemble at Local-group Studio on 221 Prospect St. on Sunday, Oct. 21 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Students can join the union using their name and email address on their website.

Tenants Union member Natasha Hessami holds her protest sign. // Photo Courtesy of Galen Herz



Signs cut from photos courtesy of Galen Herz.



# HIP-HOP ON THE RISE IN BELLINGHAM

Local rappers aim to put Bellingham's up-and-coming hip-hop scene on the map

**Samuel Fletcher**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

The brisk morning air filters through the trees of Sehome Hill Arboretum into a group of huddled rappers freestyling narratives about anything from encounters with the police to what they ate for dinner the night before.

It feels very old-school. Just buddies coming together, passing the aux cord and microphone to create a concoction of different beats, flows and messages.

No production, no equipment, just talent.

In its purest form, this old-school feel is what inspired hip-hop dancer Skai Johnson and co-creator Gabriel Swanson's to launch Revival, an event-planning organization in Bellingham. Revival's events are arts-focused and showcase many mediums and artists.

Swanson said he wanted to create a platform for his music, and share that platform with friends and acquaintances who, like him, didn't have one before.

When Johnson moved to Bellingham in 2015, he started teaching hip-hop classes. He said he soon realized that to have a successful studio, he'd have to establish an accepting place for the culture first to gauge Bellingham's passion for the art form.

"My life wasn't just influenced by rap music. It was hip-hop in general. It was beatboxing and Coogi sweaters, it was everything," Johnson said.

Thus, Revival Events was born. Johnson said his studio stands out from others in the area because they strive to incorporate all parts of the culture.

"What makes us different is that we are not just getting rappers. We are getting dancers, artists, spoken-word artists, painters," Johnson said.

The arboretum freestyle rapping session was part of a hip-hop tradition called cyphers where rappers trade improvised lines and verses. Johnson said sessions like these now occur weekly and were created to establish a culture beyond Revival events. They happen around Bellingham each Saturday and for Johnson, they're a rejuvenating experience.

"With the cyphers, you show up, it's early in the morning, you've had your coffee, you're kicking it with your friends, you're sober, the day is beau-

tiful," Johnson said.

When Johnson arrived in Bellingham, he said hip-hop dancers who had been hiding because of the lack of visibility in the community came out from under the rocks. As Revival progressed, he noticed a similar trend with rappers. More of them began to show up and Johnson said he recognized real talent.

"I'm meeting all these crazy-ass rappers who are so good and I'm like 'Where have you been?' and they're like, 'Well, we didn't know Bellingham f\*\*\*d with us like that,'" Johnson said.

One of these rappers is Jordan "The Rhetorician" Moss. Johnson said three weeks after the two met, Moss headlined a Revival event.

Rapper Vince "Lil \$pacy" Alberty ran into Johnson in a similar way. Al-

moters such as Revival are a good start in combatting this issue, he said.

Bellingham Rapper Tommy Couling, whose stage name is Tommy Jordan, said while currently the local music scene may seem stale to fans of hip-hop, its popularity has always come in waves. He said hip-hop started becoming more prominent in the area around 2010, which he attributed to the growing fame of Seattle rapper Macklemore.

"People can say whatever they want about Macklemore now, but back then we were rooting for anybody from the Northwest to make it big," Couling said.

Soon the hip-hop scene needed a home.

Local DJ Turntable Einstein started an event, Sunday Cyphers, at the Glow Nightclub in downtown Belling-

ence is larger and can be made safer for more people, he said.

"Hip-hop as an art form is often the voice of political change but also the voice of traditionally minorities," Couling said. "I think everyone who has to struggle for basic human rights deserves a seat at this table, especially since this table is the fastest growing, biggest cultural thing in the last hundred years, since the 80s."

Not all rappers have the same viewpoint agree on the point of activism, Couling said, as being edgy is a near requirement for the art form.

"I think being edgy in today's society is standing up for what you believe in," Couling said. "I think it's just as edgy to present yourself as a person with solid beliefs and someone who is willing to challenge norms, especially in light of Kavanaugh. To me being edgy is sticking to your guns and standing for something and it's up to every artist to ask themselves what they stand for."

This stance goes beyond a performer's message, Couling said. It's everything from where they perform and who they affiliate with.

Couling said he respects local businesses like The Black Drop Coffeehouse and The Shakedown because of the political involvement they encourage in Bellingham.

At an event on Oct. 6 at The Shakedown, a booth in the back helped event attendees and rap enthusiasts register to vote. He said the artistic

community needs to be more active in paving the way for the future they want.

"I don't think we live in a time or place where that complacency is welcome anymore," he said.

For Couling, Revival Events is driving the new wave in Bellingham's hip-hop scene. But he said to put the scene on the map, it will need a supportive and consistent community with a singular message.

"This is a cool wave," Couling said. "It's a strong wave, and I'm happy to be a part of it."

Hard work is also a big part of the success of any scene, Alberty said. He said crews that stay with the times and continually put out content for the community is bound to succeed.

"You meet these guys in person, they have such great energy," Alberty said. "It's really hard not to f\*\*\*k with them. So I see nothing but success."



Rappers Vince Alberty and Isaac Zonka trade verses at the Shakedown. // Photo by Samuel Fletcher

erty said Johnson recognized a talent in him and not long passed until he was performing at a Revival event too. He has now sold out shows throughout the Northwest, opening for rappers Aframan and Kirko Bangz.

"[Johnson] has that low-key genius instinct where he can look at someone and instantly know," Alberty said.

On Oct. 6, both Moss and Alberty performed at a Revival event at The Shakedown in downtown Bellingham. It lasted hours, featuring four acts and people filtering in throughout the night.

For audience Jordan Star, the event was a welcome change from the typically stale music scene in Bellingham.

"It's very polarizing," he said. "You either have local bands or Snoop Dogg comes through."

Star said most Bellingham musicians can't devote the necessary time into music because the community isn't supportive enough. More pro-

ham around 2010, Couling said. The culture was different then as rappers belittled each other for personal success.

"Hip-hop is a really politically-charged genre," Couling said. "It's also a genre where people really hate being edited or told they can't say things, so you find in the hip-hop community a lot of insular beefs between people who have small issues with each other that created divides instead of unification."

According to Couling, after the cyphers faded because of hip-hop's small, niche following in the community, a new era of rap began to emerge as a new group, the Live Your Trip crew, took over. With this new generation of rappers, Couling said the culture became less masculine-driven and more socially conscious.

To Couling, spreading messages of inclusivity is common sense. When you include more people, your audi-

# TAKE A SEAT UPFRONT

Local improvisors invite students to try comedy



Guests enter the Upfront Theatre on a chilly October evening. // Photo by Oliver Hamlin

**Emma Kivlin**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

In a candlelit theater nestled in the heart of downtown Bellingham, an anxious audience chats amongst themselves as they wait for the show to begin.

Black and white photos cover the walls leading to a red backlit stage, making the theater feel almost like an old Hollywood movie. As the lights dim and performers take the stage, they welcome their eager audience members to the Upfront Theatre.

Owned by well-known improv actor Ryan Stiles, the Upfront was created in 2004 as a space to learn, teach and perform improv within the Bellingham community, according to their website.

The Upfront's blended history of famous improvisors, dedicated local performers and first-timers alike make it a place for all to feel comfortable exploring improv acting.

Sometimes, if you're really lucky, improviser and owner of the Upfront, Ryan Stiles, will stop by for a surprise performance.

"I pretend it's something else, like I want to help, I want to create stuff, I want to help the community, it's not

that," Stiles said jokingly. "I just need a place to play."

Performers such as Colin Mochrie, Jeff Davis and alumni of the popular improv show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" on ABC have even passed through the Upfront.

With regular improv performances every Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, the Upfront's shows are constantly changing: no performance is ever quite the same as the one before, according to their website.

Now a member of the Upfront's ensemble, Cecilee Romano first learned about the Upfront six years ago. Romano was enrolled in a drama class at Whatcom Community College when two improvisors from the theater came ther to do a demonstration.

She looked into the theater further, and Romano learned that the Upfront hosted many different kinds of improv classes ranging from free drop-ins to stage-ready classes.

Romano started taking some of these classes and has since moved on to become one of the Upfront's Mainstage Ensemble performers. Now a seasoned improv performer, Romano said having access to the Upfront's classes influenced the way she performs.

"[The classes] opened parts of my brain that I didn't know were there," she said. "The first thing you learn is how to silence your inner critic. It's such an empowering self-confidence building tool and I just wanted to see that happen in other people too."

Romano said she has since taught youth improv classes at different elementary schools because she values the experiences she's gained from taking classes herself.

Western alumnus John Lee joined the Upfront's ensemble as well after he was recruited by another member. Lee said he was performing stand-up comedy at Western's Underground Coffeehouse when he was approached by a member of the Upfront who suggested Lee look into performing at their stand-up night.

Now a Western graduate with a bachelors' degree in theatre arts, Lee is in his second round of being on the Satellite Ensemble, another improv team at the Upfront. He encouraged other students and interested Bellingham locals to try improv.

"There's a lot of opportunities to perform and a lot of stage time willing to be given to make careers," Lee said.

Performers described their experiences as rewarding, listing some of

their favorite parts of working in improv.

"Every single show is so unique, no matter if it's a bad show or a good show, it'll never happen again," Romano said. "No matter what you do, you cannot recreate it. It's like this magic moment that slips away into the night."

Another member of the troupe is veteran Mainstage Ensemble performer Yonk Reinemer, who's been with the Upfront since it's opening in 2004 and has both taught and performed at the theater.

"Connecting on stage and having that connection be witnessed by the audience is really awesome," Reinemer said. "You can feel that through the energy exchange from stage to audience and back."

He said he loves to watch the transition from teaching a new student to the moment when they first perform onstage.

"If you're at all interested [in improv], definitely challenge yourself to try it," Reinemer said. "You'll know right away if you don't like it, and there's a pretty high chance that you'll love it."

For more information, visit [www.theupfront.com](http://www.theupfront.com).

## WTA IS PROPOSING IMPROVEMENTS TO WWU BUS SERVICE FOR JUNE OF 2019

WTA will be tabling on campus Tuesday afternoon 2:30 – 4:30pm in the VU, near the Info Desk, to provide information.

- Provide year round, seven day-a-week service from 32nd Street to and from campus.
- Add time to Route 190 (often runs late now).
- Add more service on Samish Way to campus.
- Add more evening service.



Details are also available online at [ridewta.com](http://ridewta.com). Comments on the proposed changes can be submitted October and November either online, at [ridewta.com](http://ridewta.com) or call 360-788-9311.



FRONTLINE

# The Times they are a-changin'

By Alyssa Bruce

In June, the Associated Students Board of Directors cut the funding previously allocated for student access to The New York Times from the AS budget. The decision was made unanimously in a 6-0 vote.

The board said The New York Times only reached 400 readers and reasoned that a subscription to The Wall Street Journal could be more cost-effective. The board decided to leave the decision of implementing a new subscription to the following year of directors, according to the minutes from their June meeting.

When students returned for fall quarter, they no longer had access to a reputable news source they once utilized.

In a time of political change and upheaval, it's more essential than ever for the Western community to have access to multiple media outlets.

Almost every day there is a new issue up for discussion in our nation. Leadership has changed significantly, legislation is being proposed constantly and tensions in the

Senate and House are rising. In the last year alone, heated disagreements resurfaced regarding health care, climate change and gun control.

So why we don't we stay more in tune when such important changes are up for consideration?

Over the course of the last few years, the ways in which people consume information and communicate have changed drastically. The transition from print newspapers to online news sources along with the advent of social media mean that many of us turn to our phones for news. Although these advancements have made access to information faster, they can do more harm than good if not handled with care.

Last year, two-thirds of adults in the United States reported that they got their news from social media, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center. In the same study, 64 percent of participants said that fabricated online news stories have caused confusion about the facts on current events and issues.

According to the American Economic Association, less than 20 percent of Facebook user's 'friends list' are made up of people who believe in opposing political ideologies.

The dangerous and misleading effects of obtaining information through social media were revealed during the 2016 presidential election. Many American voters felt they were left with inadequate candidates forced to vote based off of the candidates' political party affiliations - or, who they thought was the lesser of two evils.

The spread of news and 'fake news' through social media effectively polarized the nation, spoiling democracy as a whole.

This is where communication and the press can make or break a society.

To successfully maintain democracy, it is crucial to find common ground in a nation full of ongoing disagreements. It's difficult or almost impossible to find mutual understanding on an issue if people are against hearing an opposing argument.

The press can bridge this

gap by presenting facts from multiple sources and allowing readers to form their own opinions.

This is why it is imperative for our student body to have access to publications like the New York Times.

As the chances of encountering 'fake news' continue to increase, how are Western students supposed to stay in the loop when one of their only affordable news outlets has been ripped away?

One reason the AS Board may have considered switching over to the Wall Street Journal is that it could appeal to a larger audience. In another study from the Pew Research Center, The Wall Street Journal had one of the most diverse readerships in terms of political ideologies, split almost down the center of the spectrum. The decision may also have come from a desire to have a news source on campus that appeals to a wider audience. A different Pew Research Center study revealed that 65 percent of New York Times readers identify as politically liberal, meaning that the publication

could alienate some students with different political ideologies.

At the end of the day, it's possible that the AS cut the funds strictly to save money. This leaves many students questioning where those funds are being invested instead and why our knowledge is the first thing discounted to save a pretty penny.

Either way, it's impossible to put a price on staying informed. Western's community deserves access to as many news and information outlets as the University can afford to give.

We may still have a subscription to The Bellingham Herald, but maintaining a subscription to a nationally regarded paper is crucial to Western's community to stay informed.

As students, paying the price of tuition should be enough to guarantee access to publications like The New York Times.

If Western is going to build an informed community, it will begin with the foundation of truthful, unbiased journalism.

The Western Front Editorial Board is composed of Alyssa Bruce, Julia Furukawa and Ray Garcia

## VIKING VOICES: WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR NEWS?



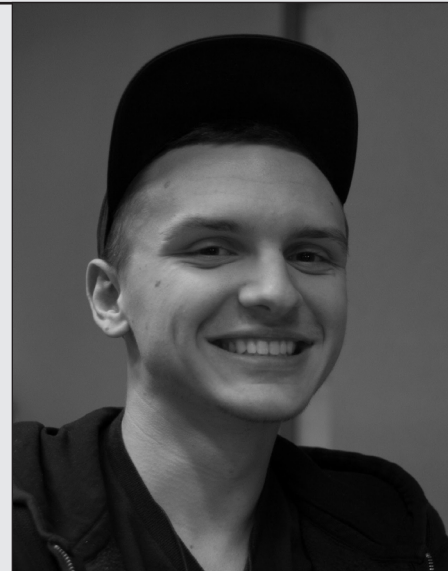
**Stuart Medalen**  
Third year

"When I have time, I used to read the Week. I guess I occasionally read the Atlantic articles but that's less news and more op-ed. I guess I don't get as much news as I used to which is unfortunate because being informed on civil matters is important."



**Nicole Roze**  
Fourth year

"Often I just look at the open browser that allows me to see what's the top news. A lot of times in class we discuss it and then other times I just get like a news report source on my phone that just kind of pops up and I skim through there."



**Eli George**  
Third year

"I mostly get my news from the iPhone news app that comes with it. I pick which sorts of stories or subjects I care the most about and get news about those. I follow news organizations on Facebook or you know, word of mouth. No newspapers or anything like that."



**Ingrid Myers**  
Third year

"I mostly get my news from independent online sources. I tend to not read any larger news databases because I find that a lot of it is just inherently way too biased for me to gain a proper understanding."

Compiled by Hannah Blank

# Watch out cycling, there's a new sheriff in town

Bellingham's cyclocross series provides an alternative to street cycling as winter rolls around

**Cole Sandhofer**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Sunny skies and 80s glam metal set the scene for cyclists of all ages and abilities, as spectators rang cowbells and shouted encouragement to riders during the Cascade Cross at Bellingham BMX on Saturday, Oct. 13.

The premier cyclocross series in Bellingham kicked off its 12th season this month, celebrating the sport with enthusiasm. As winter conditions tend to slow down mountain and road biking in the Bellingham area, cyclocross offers riders a way to keep in shape during the offseason.

Cyclocross is a form of bicycle racing in which competitors are challenged with different terrains and obstacles. Riders often have to dismount and carry their bikes, challenging their bike handling abilities as well as their aerobic conditioning.

Unlike other forms of cycle racing, cyclocross is measured

by the number of laps a rider completes within the designated time frame. These time-frames typically range from 30 minutes for beginners, and can last as long as 60 minutes for experienced riders. The time-frame allows riders to compete in harsh winter conditions, while demanding speed and bike control from the racers.

The cyclocross course at Bellingham BMX, located at 5502 Guide Meridian, is the first and only perma-course located in the Pacific Northwest. Cyclocross tracks are usually built on top of pre-existing biking and hiking trails, but the course at Bellingham BMX is exclusively for racing cyclocross.

Kip Zwolenski, director of the Cascade Cross series, said he wouldn't want to be kicking off the season anywhere else.

"This is sort of our home course," Zwolenski said. "Normally, it's a lot muddier."

He said conditions are expected to get much wetter as the series continues through January, but that hasn't impacted the turnout of fans.



"We had almost 160 people come to race today, which is higher than average," Zwolenski said. Matt Hoffmeyer, a cyclo-

cross racer and employee of Kona Bikes in Bellingham, said the sport has grown immensely since he's been involved in the Cascade Cross series.

"It's a very healthy sport," Hoffmeyer said. "It's a really good community vibe, the courses are really challenging and it's just a fun kind of family. Everyone is out here to challenge themselves."

The sport has expanded its reach to Western, too. Seniors Summer Sturges and Kate Berreman, who both

competed in the event, said they enjoy cyclocross for the friends and connections

they've made within the community. Both are members of Western's cycling team and said they use cyclocross as a fun way to stay in shape during the winter. Sturges added

that she enjoys how supportive cyclocross racers are of each other.

"You pass someone and they're like 'Keep it up!' or 'Nice work!'" Sturges said. "I feel like sometimes girls are under-challenged or there is not as much expectation, but I don't feel that with cyclocross."

Her teammate Berreman couldn't agree more.

"There's so many women out there supporting each other, and I think that's what makes the cross scene out here one of the best," Berreman said. "It's awesome to become part of the bike community. That's something I find really valuable anywhere."

The Cascade Cross series will continue through January and a full list of events, as well as information on how to register and contact the organizers is available online at [www.cascadecross.com](http://www.cascadecross.com).

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## Steady as they go: Women's volleyball on a roll

Power and precision keep Western women's volleyball streak alive as they take the conference by storm

**Andrew McClain**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Another night and another sweep for the Western women's volleyball team as they continue to chalk up wins in a fashion that is nowhere near going out of style.

This victory against the Northwest Nazarene Nighthawks was especially sweet for the Vikings as they celebrated Pink Night on their home court in honor of breast cancer awareness.

Despite giving up the first point of set one, the Vikings started the night hot pulling out to an early 6-4 lead before blowing the doors off the competition to close the first set at 25-15.

The second set started better for the Nighthawks as they fought well to stay within three points of the home team's lead. They managed to keep the score close until the halfway point when the Vikings went on a 9-2 run. That burst of scoring put the set out of reach and clinched a commanding 2-0 lead with a second set score of 25-13.

The third and closest set saw the teams battle their way to a 7-7 tie before the Vikings went on a 4-1 run, pushing themselves into a

definitive lead. The Nighthawks managed to keep the score tight heading into the finale, but it was the Viking's who emerged triumphant as they held on to the lead and claimed victory with a final set score of 25-19.

This victory marks the Vikings' fifth straight sweep, a stat that head coach Diane Flick-Williams said she wasn't even aware of.

"We try to focus on the game at hand," Flick-Williams said with a shrug and a smile.

It's a strategy that appears to be working. That focus looked razor sharp against the Nighthawks as the Vikings' box score showed contributions across the board.

Leading that charge was junior Kayleigh Harper. Harper mixed things up during the match using a variety of power shots and finesse finishes and at the end of the night the box score showed that the Nighthawks had a hard time slowing her down. Her 15 kills on .600 percent efficiency constituted what coach Flick-Williams called "a super-freak-night performance."

Harper laughed at the term, directing praise at her teammates, particularly se-

nior setter Brette Boesel, for setting up quality scoring opportunities for her.

"Brette killed it tonight," Harper said. "She's so smart at setting us up for 1-on-1's. She makes it easy for us."

Boesel's 39 assists for the game topped the Nighthawks' 29 assists as a team. One more would have extended Boesel's streak of 40+ assist games to seven, but the sweep still had her in high spirits at the end of the game.

Boesel was full of praise for the way the team communicated during the game and credited the back row with setting up good passes that she could pass strategically to her teammates.

Boesel also gave credit to a trio of her teammates for their defensive efforts. Abby Phelps, Alison Davenport and Aubrey Stephens all re-recorded double-digit digs.

Dori Green-

away, a cancer survivor and cousin to Boesel, served as the honorary coach for Pink Night. During the game athletes wore special white jerseys with pink lettering that were donated by prominent members of the Western community, Lynda Goodrich and Sara Penley.

Each player also dedicated the game to someone special in honor of Pink Night by giving them a single pink rose during team introductions. Many of those that the game

was dedicated to were cancer survivors who were friends or family of the Vikings athletes, adding a little extra satisfaction to an already strong win.

Funds raised by selling pink t-shirts at the event went to PeaceHealth St. Joseph Cancer Center.

The Vikings' next game will be away against the Alaska Anchorage Seawolves in the Alaska Airlines Center on Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. The Seawolves are 16-4 on the season and are going into the match-up on a one-game win streak.

Every action is smooth and executed with confidence. There are no stutters in Roth's movements, no hesitations derived from uncertainty. When he stops to make an adjustment to his swing or stance, it's done with a kind of precision that indicates an innate understanding of golf only born from countless hours of practice.

Roth said thanks to his parents, Craig and Jodi Roth, he began to rack up those hours early in life.

Roth's father Craig played collegiate golf for Iowa State University, which is where he met Roth's mother, and the two fell in love. Eventually, Roth was born.

Craig's love of golf meant it wasn't long before they had Roth out on the course. Jodi recalls their outings with a then two-year-old Roth in Houston, Texas with fondness.

"He couldn't wait to get Cody on the golf course," Jodi said with a laugh.

It didn't take long for Roth to show promise as a young golfer. By age seven, Roth was acting as his father's caddy in what Craig described as "big amateur tournaments."

At age 13, Roth beat his father on the course for the first time, a bittersweet event that his mother laughs about because of the effect it had on Craig.

"Cody rushed in all excited and said, 'Mom, I beat dad!' When his dad walked in, I expected him to be just as excited, but he was so mad," Jodi said, unable to contain her laughter. "He was mad for days!"

Craig endured the story in good natured silence. "I hate losing," he said simply, but couldn't hide the note of pride in his voice as he said it.

Despite those early successes in golf, Roth said his first love was actually hockey.

"I used to want to be an NHL player when I was growing up," Roth said wistfully of his days playing the center and right wing position for the Whatcom Warriors.

His mother said the potential for injury in hockey is likely what drove him to choose golf as his main sport instead. There was one particular conversation that Craig and Jodi said probably steered him away from hockey for good.

They described a scene from



Kayleigh Harper winds up to spike the ball at Sam Carver Gymnasium in a game against Northwest Nazarene on Saturday, Oct. 13. // Photo by Jaden Moon

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## Cody Roth: A man of and fore the people

It's senior season and for Western golfer Cody Roth, things are just heating up

**Andrew McClain**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Dolphins glide through water, eagles soar through the air and horses gallop majestically over rolling hills. Like those animals, senior co-captain of the Western men's golf team Cody Roth is a creature in his element when he's on the golf course.

"I've been golfing ever since I could walk," Roth said as he limbered up to hit the practice greens.

It shows. Every action is smooth and executed with confidence. There are no stutters in Roth's movements, no hesitations derived from uncertainty. When he stops to make an adjustment to his swing or stance, it's done with a kind of precision that indicates an innate understanding of golf only born from countless hours of practice.

Roth said thanks to his parents, Craig and Jodi Roth, he began to rack up those hours early in life.

Roth's father Craig played collegiate golf for Iowa State University, which is where he met Roth's mother, and the two fell in love. Eventually, Roth was born.

Craig's love of golf meant it wasn't long before they had Roth out on the course. Jodi recalls their outings with a then two-year-old Roth in Houston, Texas with fondness.

"He couldn't wait to get Cody on the golf course," Jodi said with a laugh.

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when Roth was about 14 and they were driving home after he took a couple of big shots on the ice.

"He asked us, 'Do you guys think I could really get hurt playing hockey?'" Jodi said.

After some sideways glances at one another, his parents said

being able to compete against the "big boys."

Welly said the two first started working together when Roth was only 9 years old. They parted ways when Roth was about 14, but after what he characterized as a lackluster freshman college season, Roth said he

he thinks Roth does well, and attributed his confidence in Roth's mental toughness to some of his innately mature characteristics.

"He's got adult qualities that a lot of college kids don't have," Welly said. It's a sentiment Roth's parents share, calling

nationals. The goal is to win nationals," Roth said with confidence. "We feel like we've got what it takes as a team to win it this year."

Roth said the bulk of his focus is on the present as he does his best to help put his team in contention to make some noise nationally, however he did admit to casting an eye to the future.

"Absolutely," Roth said when asked if he'd thought about pursuing golf after his collegiate career has ended. "If I still love it, and I believe I can do it, I'll go for it."

Welly didn't seem surprised by Roth's decision to potentially continue golfing competitively, though he did have some words of wisdom.

"You have to have a love of the game if you want to want to play at the highest levels," Welly said. "You have to love the competition, the failures and the adversity. You have to love it all."

Roth's father said he shows glimpses of that love already. As his self-proclaimed number one fan, Roth's parents travel to every tournament they can. Craig described one scene in particular from Roth's outing at the 2018 Concordia Invitational where Roth took ninth place with a 5-over-par final score.

Despite Roth's own disappointment at his performance, he still wholeheartedly supported his teammates, including fellow Viking Jordan Lee who took first place in the tournament.

"As he was walking back to us, I could see it in his eyes that he was a little disappointed with his performance," Craig said. "But when he saw Jordan, his face lit up and he was all smiles. It choked me up a little bit."

Craig knows firsthand the kind of teammate that Roth can be. The duo are three-time Washington State Golf Association Parent-Child Champions, having won the competition in 2012, 2016 and 2018.

The pair will continue their golf partnership as they're already qualified for the 2019 US Amateur Four-Ball tournament. The new event will be holding its fourth annual competition on May 25-29.



Roth follows through with a line drive down the fairway at the Bellingham Golf and Country Club. // Photo by Andrew McClain

that they admitted it was a possibility, especially being a little undersized compared to his older competition.

"Do you think I could get hurt so bad I could never play golf again?" he pressed.

"Well, yeah," Craig and Jodi said, trying to be sensitive, but needing to be honest with him too.

Jodi and Craig both admitted to breathing a sigh of relief when Roth said that he decided to stick with golf.

"He was so fearless [playing hockey] and he was really good," Jodi said. "But he was small too and we just didn't want to see him get hurt."

Roth's time on the ice certainly wasn't wasted, though. In fact, Roth credits the natural right-to-left draw on his drives directly to his hockey days. He demonstrated a one-handed swing that emphasized the specific turning movement of the club head that gives his drive its distinctive leftward drift.

"It's a lot of the same mechanics," he said of his golf swing in reference to his old slap-shot form.

According to spectators like his parents and swing coach Craig Welly who watched Roth's game evolve over the years, his drive was never his most dangerous weapon.

"Chipping and putting, now that's my bread and butter," Roth said. "It's always been my strong point."

Welly, a Western Hall of Fame golfer who has coached PGA pros, has been watching Roth's progress since he was just a child. His assessment of Roth's early playing was much the same and he credited Roth's knack for the short game with

chose to seek Welly out again to resume their training.

Welly acknowledged that Roth's continued physical development throughout his collegiate career has definitely been a boon to his playing. Especially in relation to the amount of power he can get behind his swing. Roth credited the significant gains on his driving distances to generally getting bigger and stronger.

"My freshman year, I carried the ball about 240 yards, and now it's about 260-270 yards," he said. "But I have focused on trying to swing it harder as well, it definitely makes the game easier if you can hit it a little farther."

Welly said his confidence in Roth's abilities has only increased with the added strength behind his shots.

"Now that he's on level playing ground [physically] with [the other athletes], there's not really a weakness in his game," Welly said. "He knows his swing and his abilities, and now it's about putting it together for a score."

That's something Roth has done well this year, culminating in back-to-back Great Northwest Athletic Conference Golfer of the Week accolades to start the season.

Welly talked about the mental strength it takes to play through bad breaks and adversity, something he said

him "a bit of an old soul."

Certainly not a grumpy soul, though. As Roth made his way through the golf course nearly everyone in sight gave him a wave or shout. He'd take a moment to smile and glad-hand, chiming in on conversations with club members he said he's known since before he was old enough to drive a car.

"He's got a love of the game and an infectious attitude," Welly said about Roth's popularity on the course. "And he's really level headed. Attributes you'd want not just in a golfer, but in an employee or friend, too."

However, that friendly exterior belies the heart of a fierce competitor, expressed by Roth's aspirations for this season with Western. Riding on multiple top-10 finishes that have helped his team take first place in every tournament they've played, Roth was optimistic about the season.

"The goal isn't to make it to



Roth glides across the ice in 2008 for the Whatcom Warriors. // Photo courtesy of Greg and Jodi Roth

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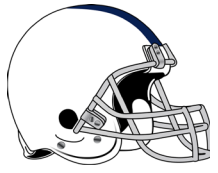
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# FROM THE SIDELINES



OPINIONS FROM THE WESTERN FRONT STAFF ON ALL THINGS SPORTS



*"GIVEN THAT THE SEAHAWKS ARE REBUILDING THEIR TEAM DUE TO THE LOSS OF MANY SKILLED VETERANS, HOW BIG OF A CHANCE DO YOU THINK THE TEAM HAS AT MAKING THE PLAYOFFS?"*



**Jaden Moon**  
Editor

In my opinion, the Seahawks have a solid chance of obtaining one of the NFC wildcard spots, but have a minute chance of winning the NFC West. Of the 500 teams in the NFL right now, the Seahawks have looked the strongest as of late, and has playoff potential barring any major injuries. They have seemed to have finally fixed up their previously underwhelming rushing attack with the surge from Chris Carson igniting an offense that hasn't been able to truly rely on their running back since Marshawn Lynch left. The other skill players have started to fill the shoes of players that left over the offseason, which has allowed for Russel Wilson to make plays in the air, rather than scramble in the pocket and get sacked.



**Ndey Sonko**  
Reporter

I think there is a 50/50 chance for the Seahawks to make it to the playoffs this year. Even though they have lost a bunch of key players to their game, they've also added new players who have brought added benefits to the overall team strength. I think their biggest focus needs to be building team chemistry and working as a unit to have the best chance at making it to the end. Rashaad Penny is a player to watch this year. He plays running back but his strength is receiving back. I believe he will be a key player to the Seahawks offense this year with some big plays through out the season.

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**Mitch Farley**  
Reporter

The legion of boom has been disbanded. But the strength of the team still remains. The Seahawks still have a great chance to make the playoffs. Their offensive line is stronger this year. They still have concrete members Bobby Wagner, Russel Wilson and obviously Pete Carroll. Their first round draft pick RB Rashaad Penny has strengthened the running game. They will likely be competing with the Rams for the division spot and although they lost to them already I know they've got it in them to pull ahead. Lets go hawks!



**Brooke Wilson**  
Reporter

Change can be unsettling, especially in large doses. While a number of familiar faces are missing from the Seahawks roster, a new crowd of athletes are on the move to break records, set new ones and ultimately elevate the team performance to new heights, including the playoffs. A few up-and-coming players to keep an eye on throughout the season are Rashaad Penny, Shaquill Griffin and Michael Dickson. Penny was drafted in the first round from San-Diego University. Griffin is a left cornerback who is taking the place of Richard Sherman but has already done a worthwhile effort of filling his role with 20 tackles and two interceptions for the season so far.



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