

# THE WESTERN FRONT

Volume 188, Issue 1

westernfrontonline.com

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

## Western celebrates first LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration

**Jordan Burrell**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western held its first LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration on June 5 outside the Wade King Student Recreation Center. The gathering kicked off LGBTQ+ Pride Month and honored graduating students in the LGBTQ+ community.

The event was coordinated by Western's LGBTQ+ director L.K. Langley, their advisory committee, the Associated Students Queer Resource Center, the AS Ethnic Student Center and a number of individual students and staff.

The ceremony opened with words from Langley, Western President Sabah Randhawa and a spoken word poem from an LGBTQ+ creative writing major. Purple Pride t-shirts were also handed out to the first 200 attendees.

LGBTQ+ students involved with coordinating the event raised a rainbow flag alongside Western's flag outside the Wade King Student Recreation Center. The rainbow



The Pride flag is raised at Western's LGBTQ+ celebration June 5, 2019. // Photo by Mike Oh

flag remained up for students and families to recognize and feel pride in Western's LGBTQ+ community during spring quarter commencement, Langley said.

LGBTQ+ graduates were recognized on stage during the celebration and bestowed with rainbow graduation cords by faculty.

"This is an opportunity to reaffirm our individual and institutional commitments

to making Western an increasingly inclusive community," Randhawa said during the ceremony.

Langley said events like Pride are important because they allow the community to imagine that inclusivity is possible, even at this time in our country.

"I want to acknowledge that people in our community, both here at Western and around the country and the

world, are holding pain, are holding fear of rejection, are holding uncertainty and realities of violence," Langley said.

They described the event as a place for celebration, finding joy in being queer and establishing Western's pride in its LGBTQ+ community.

Langley said despite it being dead week, the turnout exceeded their expectations. They discussed the joy of

being present during a time when LGBTQ+ students and faculty the opportunity to celebrate their identities. Langley said the joy and care at the ceremony was palpable.

"I think it's good that they're having an event like this," third-year student Hailey Walker said. "I also think that it should be appreciated and celebrated all the time, not just on a day or a month."

Langley mentioned that they shared the sentiment that Pride should be celebrated year-round. They said supporters should stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community even when there is no organized celebration and LGBTQ+ individuals might not be visible. Langley said they hope Pride celebrations become an annual tradition at Western, based on feedback from attendees that the celebration was affirming, meaningful and generally well-received by LGBTQ+ individuals.

"For all of us, the necessary and joyful work of doing justice should be year-round and life long," Langley said.

Emily Forrette, a second-year student on Langley's LGBTQ+ advisory committee, helped plan and organize the event. She said the event was a good representation of the LGBTQ+ community coming together and celebrating publicly.

"Pride is a very large celebration, it's a big part of the culture," Forrette said. "And we don't normally have a celebration like this, so this is our first attempt toward rectifying that."

## Western professor working to break new ground in NASA's 2020 Mars mission

**Chris Johansen**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

With howling winds, brutally cold temperatures, and a barren desert with vast mountain ranges and ravines, Mars holds mysteries of potential previous life and maybe even habitable landscapes.

Assistant professor in the College of Science and Engineering Melissa Rice researches planetary

science at Western and as a NASA team member, has been mapping areas of Mars in an effort to break new ground for the upcoming Mars 2020 Rover mission.

For the first time, NASA will collect samples from the surface of Mars and Rice is playing a role in opening this new frontier. These samples will tell scientists more about the ancient landscape of

Mars and its nearly 5 billion year history.

During her May 28 presentation, "Mapping Mars: Our Evolving Vision of the Big Red Planet - Part II," at Wilson Library in the Map Collection room, Rice focused on how mapping the geological surface of Mars will help researchers to find the best places for the next rover to land safely.

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Models of Mars in the Map Collection center at Wilson Library. // Photo by Chris Johansen

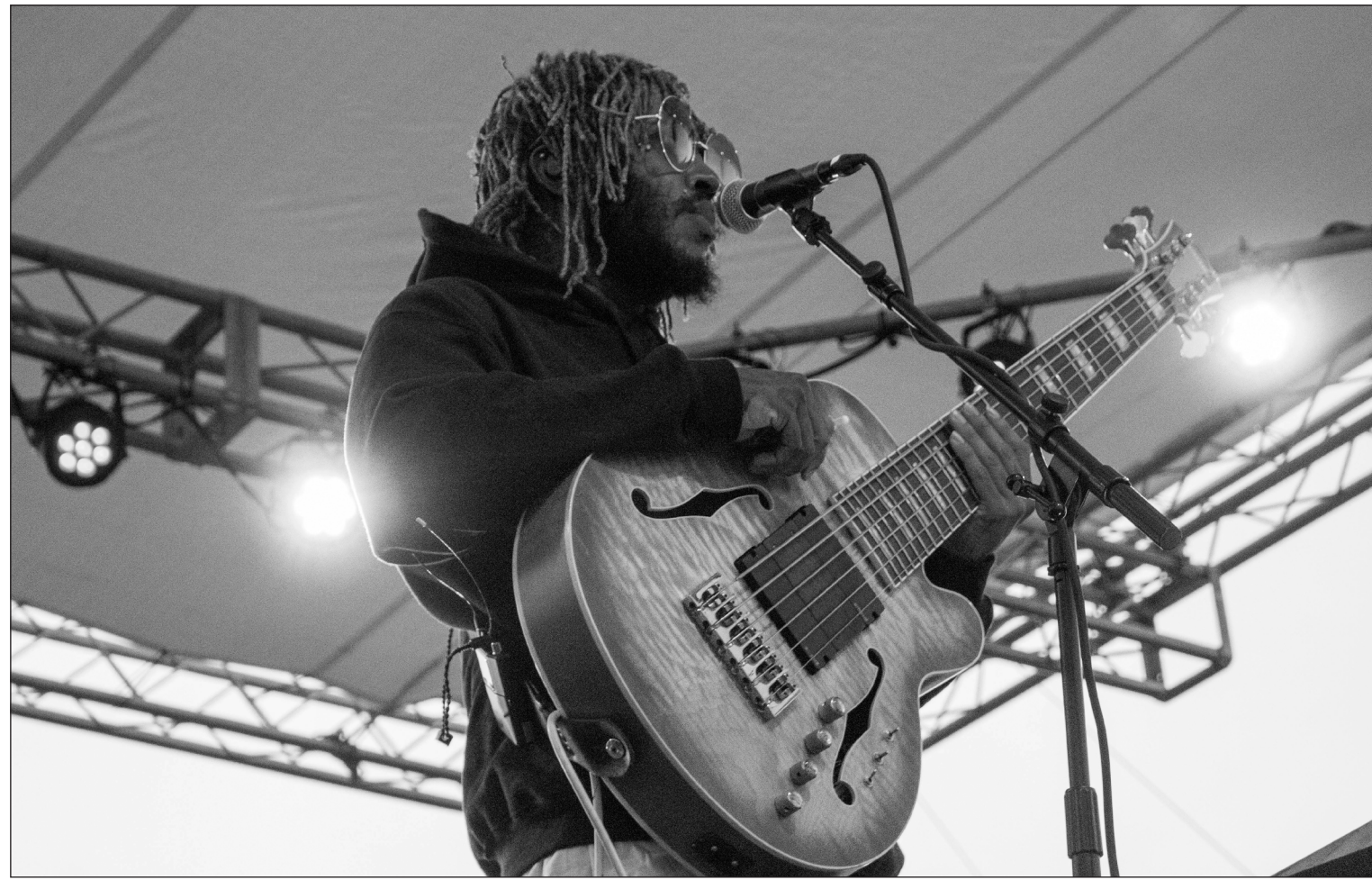
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Thundcat's frontman Stephen Lee Bruner performs at the North Bellingham Golf Course June 21, 2019. // Photo by Chris Butcher

## The Western Front

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## NASA

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Scientists believe that Mars once had large rivers and oceans, Rice said. Taking samples will give NASA a closer look at the geological and biological make-up of Mars. The journey through space to the planet will take approximately seven months, according to Rice.

The entire mission to roam, collect, retrieve and transport the samples back to Earth could take up to 20 years, Rice said.

NASA's Mars 2020 Rover mission will involve launching a rover into space to land on the red planet. A rover is similar to a car, except this car is nuclear powered and designed to take its own pictures as well as collect data from other planets, according to Rice.

There is already a fleet of spacecraft surrounding Mars, surveying its deep valleys and cloud-breaking mountains. The fleet is collecting imagery of all different types: thermal, topical and from different angles and resolutions, Rice said.

"If you were to just send a spacecraft with a rover to Mars without carefully selecting where on Mars you would like it to land, it could easily land on the side of a mountain and tumble off," Rice said.

According to Rice, the ability to explore Mars is significant, because it will allow researchers to compare the geography and minerals on Mars to those on Earth. This mission aims to uncover habitable land on Mars.

It's a sense of curiosity about science, adventure, discovery and human po-

tential that drives Rice to continue this endeavor on Mars.

"It has that stark, naked beauty of the land that the American Southwest does. A lot of our pictures from our rovers look like Ansel Adams could have taken them in Death Valley," Rice said.

Rice discovered a pas-

sion for astronomy in high school and carried that interest into her college career. Rice realized what she knew about space and stars were the equations and theoretical constructs. Sparking her curiosity about geology, Rice merged her two passions of study into the field of planetary geology. Planetary geology is a way to look at Earth's land formations in order to relate them to geological processes taking place on other planets.

Rice sought to understand her daily physical experiences with landscapes, vistas and rock formations by comparing them to geological formations on other planets.

"This glimpse of the surface of Mars has been a mystery for all of humanity and I get to be the first, if not one of very few, set of eyes on it," Rice said.

Graduate student Cory Hughes is currently studying orbital geological analysis in pursuit of his master's degree at Western. He is working under Rice to figure out if life ever existed on Mars.

"Our current understanding of life is that you

need water for life," Hughes said.

According to Hughes, data collected consistently shows that Mars is filled with craters that show evidence of interaction with water. This can be observed by comparing rocks on Earth that interact with water to rocks on Mars.

Another Western graduate student working with Rice is Katelyn Frizzell, who is pursuing her masters in the planetary sciences. Frizzell said Mars is a comparable model to Earth in some ways.

"Mars is a good analog for early Earth, and what could happen to Earth if we lost our atmosphere over time," Frizzell said.

Rice said she came to Bellingham to teach at Western not only for its beautiful scenery, but also to provide opportunities for students in the world of planetary sciences.

"I came to Western because I wanted to be at a place where I could continue to be involved with space exploration and NASA Mars rover missions, but also to bring students on board to those missions as well," she said.



A photo of the outside of the Huxley building where the environmental studies department is located taken June 26, 2019. // Photo by Mike Oh



Models of Mars in the Map Collections center at Wilson Library // Photo by Chris Johansen

## CONCERTS AND SHOWS

### THURSDAY

Zion I, High Step Society at the Wild Buffalo, doors 8 p.m., show at 9 p.m.

VLLY, Jayomi, Lucee, Neon Bloom at the Central Saloon, Seattle, 8:30 p.m.

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### FRIDAY

Low Tide at the Wild Buffalo, featuring Klose, Traffic, UGT and Benoit with Thomas Fredrichs, 9 p.m.

Free Music & Good Tymes, featuring Laughing Stock, Bobby Petite, Rain Farmer, Golden Record and Christopher Le Compte, 6 p.m. at 1502 Wilson Ave

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### SATURDAY

Bellingham Beer and Music Festival at the North Bellingham Golf Course, featuring Hott Waxx Dee Jays, Withering Blooms, Mötus and Candace, 6 p.m.

Supermissive, Devilwood, and Drown the Mountain at The Shakedown, doors 8:30 p.m., show at 9 p.m.

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### SUNDAY

Panty Hoes Drag Show at Rumors Cabaret, June 30, 9 p.m.

Dido at Showbox SoDo, Seattle, June 30, 8 p.m.

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Calendar by Chris Butcher and Julia Furukawa

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# BELLINGHAM WELCOMES FIRST EVER LONGEST DAY 10K

*Fairhaven community members pair with youth mentorship program on the Summer Solstice*

**Emily Erskine  
and Olivia Klein**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

On the longest day of the year, racers, volunteers and countless others made their way down to the streets of Fairhaven for a community 10K race, titled The Longest Day 10K, in support of Teach One to Lead One, a national youth mentoring program with a branch in Whatcom County.

The race began with a cheering crowd on June 21, the evening of the 2019 Summer Solstice. Among the onlookers were over 400 participants eager to contribute their time and money to a cause that directly benefits youth in Whatcom County. The Whatcom chapter of Teach One to Lead One was kickstarted by Bellingham resident Jacob Mack in 2018. Stemming from his compassion for children in need and his history as a foster parent, Mack said he wanted to create an environment of understanding and support for local youth.

"It's something that my wife Allison and I have been passionate about for a really long time," Mack said. "This organization is different than any organization I've ever seen in that it couples with curriculum, which is amazing."

According to their website, integrating mentorship programs into the school system directly is a major goal for Teach One to Lead One. Mack said that a lot of students don't experience the benefits of direct adult relationships in their lives.

"It's that basic stuff that kids need - social, emotional stuff, like respect and compassion, integrity with a healthy adult relationship that they can see week after week, and that's where the magic of change happens," Mack said.

The mentoring program works by allowing caring adults to provide support and guidance to at-risk youth. According to their website, this process begins with a training session, which leads to the integration of teaching and working directly with the youth.

"We just finished our sessions at Whatcom County middle schools," Mack said. "I had a kid say to me, 'I didn't even really realize things like this existed but it's the best thing that's ever happened to me. I've been struggling and I didn't even know why.'"

The Longest Day 10K was organized by race co-directors Lori Reese and Molly McKenna, with the support of Scott Hume, CEO of Salish Wealth Management.

"We started discussions in October," Reese said. "But I think I really started planning [the event] out once Scott came on board. I think that was like January or February. So, about eight months."

The race was designed for participants to give directly to the program by requiring \$30 to enter, \$10 of which goes to Teach One to Lead One.

"We want to give them [Teach One to Lead One] a platform because there's 750 different nonprofit organizations here in Whatcom County alone, so it's hard to get noticed," Reese said. "We wanted to give them opportunity for the community to get to know them."

While participants and sponsors were responsible for fundraising efforts of the mentorship program, community volunteers helped to keep the event running smoothly, staffing checkpoints and food tents at the end of the race.

Michael Jay was one such volunteer. He helped put together gift bags



Participant Stephanie Semiday celebrates as she crosses the finish line. // Photo by Mike Oh



Racers take their first strides to begin the Longest Day 10K in Fairhaven. Bryce Johnson, center, leads the pack of runners. // Photo by Zachary Jimenez



Lori Reese, Scott Hume, Jacob Mack and Molly McKenna pose for a photo after the first runners have completed the race. // Photo by Zachary Jimenez

for the participants after the race.

"I volunteered because I had a friend who was running and we're here to support him," Jay said. "I thought if we were going to show up to support him we might as well help out."

Jay was a runner for many years and said he missed it a great deal. Volunteering for this kind of event is a great opportunity for anyone uninclined or unable to run to stay engaged in their community, Jay said.

Jay said he was excited not only to support his friend and raise money for a charitable cause, but to also make new connections with other volunteers.

Jeri Delatorre, another volunteer at the event and mentor with Teach One to Lead One, echoed this sentiment.

"The awesome part of volunteering is the opportunity to meet new people," Delatorre said. "It's been fun to meet Michael and his wife and a lot of people here."

At 38 minutes and 10 seconds, the first racer, Bryce Johnson, crossed the finish line. Speakers blasted pump-up music as the announcer called his name.

Johnson came forward to receive his medal and cool down after the lengthy run. "It went great," Johnson said. "I thought it was a really cool event they put on and I'm happy to donate the money that went toward the race."

This was the inaugural Longest Day 10K race, but after receiving so many positive responses, volunteers and participants alike looked forward in anticipation for many more to come. "Get out there and do it," Jay said. "Be an active participant in your community."



Meredith LaPlante crosses the finish line with her son Joe LaPlante after their race together. // Photo by Zachary Jimenez



# 11th Hour Tea and Coffee Bar

A hidden local and family-owned organic tea and coffee bar is ready to get more exposure

**Christa Yaranon**  
The Western Front

Nestled on North State Street is the 11th Hour Tea and Coffee Bar, where customers can stop in to grab a drink and take some time to relax. Upon entering, the earthy smell of freshly brewed tea fills the shop as soft music plays in the background, slightly masked by the sound of a whirring espresso machine.

Owner Bridget Gallagher greets patrons with a warm smile. It's just another quiet day for Gallagher, but nevertheless, she shows gratitude to those who stop inside to chat and support her business.

According to Gallagher, she got her start in business in Denver, Colorado where she worked in retail. After moving to Bellingham in 2004, she put her focus on other personal goals, namely raising her two sons.

The desire to run a business started from a conversation Gallagher had with a friend about her direction in life. Gallagher's friend mentioned that the owners of a local tea shop, SAKU Tea, were looking for new ownership.

The timing could not have been better.

SAKU Tea owners, Kuros Zahedi and Sandra Loeffelmann, were seeking to sell their building space when Gallagher walked through their doors.

"I just decided to go for it and jump in," Gallagher said. "But I knew nothing about coffee or tea beforehand."

From there, Gallagher went through training to learn the art of tea-making and took over SAKU Tea in December 2018.

Under her new direction, Gallagher wanted to start with changing the name to something that was more



Employee Merrideth McDowell (left) and owner Bridget Gallagher (right). // Photo by Christa Yaranon

personal to her. The idea behind its name change was inspired by the eleventh hour, a phrase meaning "at the last moment."

"I remember thinking I just really needed to start embracing the eleventh hour, so it was kind of a twist in term," Gallagher said. "I realized that there were more blessings happening under the eleventh hour and that I had to accept it rather than be fearful of it. That's why I've taken on this endeavor. I really embraced it and put everything I had in this business."

Gallagher said she has a drive to provide a space where others can build relationships and make connections to the community.

"We have some people that come in daily who live around and come chat it up, so that was really what I wanted to focus on," she said. "Making a connection was really the heart of what I was doing prior to this business."

Bellingham local and Western alumna Constance Browne is one of the regulars who frequents the shop. She said she thinks that they

offer drinks that no other places in Bellingham offer.

"They have fun and delicious tea lattes, which is nice for someone like me who prefers tea to coffee," Browne said. "I've always been treated really nicely there and I love the atmosphere. It's clean, has a fresh feeling and it's a great space to focus on your work or chat with a friend."

11th Hour Tea and Coffee Bar offers a wide array of organic teas, coffee and pastries that are baked in-house. Another focus on the menu are superfood blends, which according to Gallagher, are common in the marketplace.

Although she has been inspired to follow in that direction, she has also put her own unique spin on the trend. One of the drinks offered at the shop is a blue chamomile tea latte, which is a butterfly pea flower that is finely ground in a similar way to matcha. In her version, the drink is blended with chamomile tea.

"That's one of our signature drinks that's entirely created by 11th Hour," Gallagher said. "It's our blue drink that everyone orders and likes to take pictures of. People can't get over the color."

Another unique product offered at the shop is a blend called Immuni Cocoa. The blend has a base of Chaga and Reishi mushrooms and has similar properties to turmeric, helping with inflammation and de-stressing.

Employee and Western student Merrideth McDowell shares a similar sentiment with Gallagher on working toward their creative vision.

"I guess the gist of what we're trying to do is more of

a developmental stage," McDowell said. "We're furthering the image as 11th Hour as its own entity."

For Gallagher, a focus on the quality of organic beverages and foods is something that is vital to her vision for the business.

"Everything that we put out has to be artisan and even creating an artisan feeling at the shop too," Gallagher said.

Watching the shop's growth for the past year, both Gallagher and McDowell expressed their ambitions to expand the business by reaching more customers.

"There's been engagement that has picked up from time to time, but it's still a process," McDowell said.

Given its location in a developing area that doesn't have many other businesses around, the shop is somewhat hidden.

"We're in an area where it's a bit of a dead zone," Gallagher said. "It's interesting because every day we'll get someone in here and go like 'How long have you guys been here?' or 'When did you open?' so I think it's just going to evolve slowly and we're building momentum slowly."

The journey of expanding 11th Hour isn't fully focused on exposure, but rather on its message.

"It's just out of compassion," Gallagher said. "So I think that's what makes us different, is that everything we do has to be done organically. From the drinks that we offer to our services, it all has to be done in an organic process with a focus on human relationships. It would be nice to have those relationships expand."

McDowell said she's ob-

served those authentic relationships firsthand.

"I feel like our customer base right now, they all just love being a part of the process and love talking to Bridget [Gallagher]," McDowell said. "We get engagement through that and people love being able to take part in this journey or know what's going on and share through word of mouth. It's just so cool to have that connection with people in the community."

Wanting to build on relationships, Gallagher hopes to partner with Western since most of her customers are students from the university. The shop has already hosted a few open mic nights for the school's Poets and Lyricists Society and Gallagher expressed she'd like to hold more similar events on a regular basis.

"I'd want to look into facilitating and hosting more groups here," Gallagher said. "Maybe even do a late Friday night or something with music -- things that would utilize the space in unique ways."

Her shop has been a place of refuge for students seeking a relaxing place to study or meet up with friends.

"What's nice about this place is the conversations," Gallagher said. "I do want to encourage more college students to come study here and just take time for themselves and others. The conversations that take place here, they're more intimate. It's kind of nice to witness."

Looking toward the future, both Gallagher and McDowell said they are happy with the business and strive to maintain the shop's intimate experience.

"I think it's a special space because the name holds up to its atmosphere, like crazy things happen here," McDowell said. "The uniqueness, the energy here and working with Bridget is special. I feel very grateful for that."

As for Gallagher, she believes that she can only progress with passion and a positive mindset.

"From this journey, I can only move forward by accepting whatever happens next and to always trust that process," she said.

11th Hour Tea and Coffee Bar is located at 833 N State St. and is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

# (Liv)ing for the love of sport

**Kayla Sousa**  
THE WESTERN FRONT

She was named to the NCAA II Championships All-Tournament Team as a first-year player on the women's soccer team. She was named a GNAC All-Academic athlete her second year. This year she played 1,503 minutes in 23 games and recorded 16 shots on goal. You might be wondering who she is. Her name is Liv Larson and she just wrapped up her third year on the Western women's soccer team.

Larson has been playing as a midfielder and forward on the team since she began attending Western in fall 2016. She has been playing soccer since she was four years old but said it feels like she has been playing forever.

"Soccer has always been an escape for me," Larson said. "I'm typically a quiet, shy person but when I'm playing soccer I feel confident and like I can speak out and take risks."

Larson said her first coach was her mom and that her mom keeps her motivated in all parts of her life.

"She's the hardest working woman I know and she gave up a lot of time and sleep to drive me to all my practices and games growing up," Larson said. "I don't know if I'd be playing soccer and getting a college education if it weren't for her."

Larson attended a recruitment camp for soccer players at Western during her first year of high school and was intrigued by Bellingham's scenery and the women's team coaching staff.

"The campus kind of sold me. Our field is surrounded by beautiful trees and how



Larson kicks the ball to attempt to make a goal during a game against the University of Washington May 2 2019 at Harrington Field. // Photo by Zach Jimenez

could I pass that up?" Larson said. "Playing soccer and being surrounded by the outdoors is a dream for me."

Before joining the women's soccer team, Larson played for a select soccer club in Everett for two years, the Rush GU18 team. She also played for Arlington High School, lettering on the varsity soccer team all four years, according to the Western Athletics roster.

"She was determined to be a great player," said coach Nathan Davis of Larson High School. "I knew she was going to be a college player in her first varsity game as a freshman."

Davis said he has known Larson since her eighth grade year when she was a

student in his wife's English class. From then on, she became a student in his class and a player on his soccer team. He said he recalls Larson being the hardest working and most competitive player he has ever coached.

"Being on the same team as Liv was probably one of my most favorite things about high school soccer," Abby Anderson, a friend and former high school teammate, said.

Anderson said she remembers meeting Larson seven years ago. As an eighth grader looking up to a ninth grader, Anderson said she was initially intimidated by Larson because of her skills in soccer and basketball. The two became friends the following year when she began playing with her in high school.

"She brought a fierce personality to the field, full of competition and drive," Anderson said. "She is the type of player where you love being on her team, but hate to be playing against her because of how tough of a competitor she is."

Anderson said she has memories of moments that made her feel like she always had Larson by her side, like their pre-game ritual of throwing up a peace sign to each other and up to her mom in the stands. "She was definitely someone that I looked up to on and off the field," Anderson said.

Larson recalls winning the NCAA II National Championships her first year on Western's team as one of her most memo-

orable soccer moments to date. She also remembers a game during the 2018 season against Concordia University as one of her favorite moments on the team.

"We were down 2-0 with four minutes left and we had this epic comeback where we scored a goal and then another goal to tie the game with three minutes left," she said. "It felt like a movie."

Larson reflected on the memories she has made alongside her teammates and coaches while traveling for games throughout the past few years.

"The memories you make on the bus or the plane and in the hotels -- nothing can beat those moments," Larson said. "It's like the goofy, in-between moments when you're not playing soccer, the down time ... I think I'll remember those moments more than actually playing."

Larson said that besides soccer, most of her other favorite hobbies are outdoor activities like biking, camping and hiking. However, her second favorite hobby next to soccer is rollerblading.

"I didn't get my [driver's] license until I came to college so I just rode my rollerblades to school in high school," she said. "I just really like it. It's really fun."

Davis said he can remember Larson often making the trip 2 miles to the soccer fields on her rollerblades.

"Throughout high school, she would rollerblade down to the local soccer fields just to shoot," Davis said. "I can remember multiple

days seeing her out shooting by herself in the rain."

Anderson also said she remembered Larson's hobby of rollerblading and that she was proud to call Larson one of her best friends and role models.

"She was the rollerblading, superstar athlete of our town," Anderson said. "A lot of my memories of Liv come from the way that she stood out from other people and how she didn't try to be like everyone else."

Larson is pursuing a degree in recreation at Western and said her dream job is to eventually become a national park ranger. After graduation, she said she is planning on travelling to play soccer abroad for a few years.

"I think it would be hard to play soccer my whole life and then just stop right away," Larson said.

Larson will begin her last season on the team in fall 2019 as she looks forward to graduation. She advises incoming and future players on the women's team to trust the process, put themselves out there, trust the coaches and give back to the team.

"I don't want it to end but I am excited for the fall, where I get to go to practice and see my teammates every day," Larson said.



Owner Bridget Gallagher about to grab a gluten-free pastry at the front counter of 11th Hour. // Photo by Christa Yaranon



Larson makes a move around an opponent during a game on May 2 2019 at Harrington Field. // Photo by Zach Jimenez



## Wade safely into summer fun

Whether swimming in Bellingham Bay or Lake Whatcom, water safety is always a necessity

**Rob Stanley**

THE WESTERN FRONT

Due to its proximity to water, Bellingham sits in a prime location for aquatic fun. Now that summer is in full swing, increased awareness of water safety is important for local water-lovers.

Whether paddling a kayak in Bellingham Bay or swimming at Lake Whatcom, knowing the risks that come aquatic activities is key to staying safe in the water.

The Arne Hanna Aquatic Center is a great place to get familiar with water before going outdoors. The multi-use facility has lap swimming, recreation programs and swimming lessons.

“As adults, if you don’t know how to swim, we have classes for every age group, and that is absolutely critical,” Jordan Soderquist, a lifeguard and recreation instructor at the aquatic center, said. “The biggest thing is knowing your own strengths.”

For those who are ready to get on the water but don’t know how to start, the Community Boating Center in Fairhaven offers classes for

kids and adults to learn basic boating skills.

Erica Reed, operations manager at the boating center, explained that one goal for the center is to prepare boaters for potentially unsafe situations by creating a safe environment where they can learn how to deal with them.

“You can’t teach anyone how to respond in every situation,” Reed said. “So we’re trying to teach our students foundational skills, a core conceptual knowledge of what they’re doing, and an ability to think critically and analyze the weather in front of them, their own selves, their tools, and make a decision.”

The currents and tidal changes of Bellingham Bay can pose a greater danger for water enthusiasts than the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center. Reed recommends that kayakers and captains of other small watercraft pay attention to the tides and currents when going out into the bay.

“You always want to know what the current is doing out there,” LFS Marine & Outdoor assistant manager Todd Mohorovich



A row boats on display at the Community Boating Center that can be rented for use on Bellingham Bay. // Photo by Rob Stanley

said. “Especially if you’re on a small paddleboard or even a kayak.”

Soderquist said in addition to the currents and tides in the bay, depth is also an important factor to take in while playing around water.

“Make sure that you know the depth of the water before diving or going headfirst, and make sure you know what’s on the bottom,” she said.

Soderquist said knowing when swimmers are in need

of rest is key to staying safe in the water. At the beach or pool, Soderquist recommends that adults who can’t tread water fully clothed for more than 10 minutes should wear a personal flotation device.

Washington state law requires a Coast Guard-approved life vest for each person on all vessels and kids 12 and under must be wearing one at all times.

“The last thing you want to be is kind of buoyant,”

Mohorovich said.

In order to combat this, he recommends using a personal flotation device with the proper buoyancy rating. According to Mohorovich, ratings around 38 PSI will be safer for offshore activities, while 28 PSI will be sufficient for activities closer to shore.

Being prepared and aware are the best ways to stay safe while taking advantage of aquatic opportunities.

## Lounge around Whatcom County

Get out and explore sunny Bellingham's parks, beaches and trails this summer

**Alex Moreno**

THE WESTERN FRONT

Hot, sunny days in Bellingham are a rarity so making the most of them is important. Bellingham has a plethora of parks and public open spaces to enjoy sunny days with a variety of amenities from beach access and waterfalls to trails and various sport facilities.

Choosing between the numerous locations can be overwhelming at times. The City of Bellingham provides a helpful map on their website that details many different



parks, trails and natural areas around town. It is a great way to seek out new locations to explore and to be sure to experience all that the city has to offer.

Located near Fairhaven, Boulevard Park is a popular location because of its close proximity to town coupled with waterfront access, walking trails and amenities. Boulevard usually has a full parking lot serving people walking the piers, slacklining, relaxing in the grass field and enjoying the beach views.

Larrabee State Park provides hiking, beach views and plenty of spots to soak up the sun. Created in 1915, Larabee is Washington’s first state park.

Located along scenic Chuckanut Drive, it feels like a distant getaway full of

Mark Hussian, 21, walks across a slackline at Boulevard Park in Bellingham, on June 23, 2019. Boulevard Park often has people slacklining and hammocking in the trees while enjoying the sun and waterfront views.

// Photo by Alex Moreno



Casey Gackle, 22, pops a front 180-shove with a two-hand grab at Locust Beach in Bellingham, on Oct. 12, 2018. // Photo by Alex Moreno

rewarding views and wildlife while only being a 15 minute drive from downtown.

Samish Overlook and Oyster Dome are hiking trails near town on Chuckanut Drive with views overlooking the Salish Sea and San Juan Islands.

Locust Beach, located in the Birchwood neighborhood, is a prime beach location for low tides. Beachgoers can

walk far out into the ocean while still in shallow waters. Reaching this beach requires a small hike down a trail and staircase, but is well worth the short hike and roughly 15 minutes from downtown.

Western’s Lakewood Boat-house on Lake Whatcom provides a number of ways to enjoy the sun, from kayaking to lounging on the grass. More information regarding

watercraft rentals and hours of operation can be found on their website, and additional links are available at [www.westernfrontonline.com](http://www.westernfrontonline.com).

Every sunny day in Bellingham has the opportunity to turn into a new adventure, especially with the variety of parks sprinkled throughout the town.