

THE WESTERN FRONT

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All 5 fall sports win GNAC title

Soccer, cross country, volleyball dominate in post-season championships

Nolan Baker

THE WESTERN FRONT

As fall quarter winds down to a close, so too does the fall sports season. This year has been one of the most dominant fall seasons in the history of Western athletics, with five teams claiming the title of Great Northwest Athletic Conference champions. Volleyball, men's soccer, women's soccer, men's cross country and women's cross country all took home GNAC title honors this season.

Women's cross country won their first conference title in program history, displacing four time defending champions University of Alaska Anchorage, a rival that won nine of the previous 10 titles coming

see *GNAC*, page 10



Drew Farnsworth (11) brings the ball up into the box, during a game against Montana State on Nov. 9. The Vikings clinched the GNAC title with a score of 1-0. // Photo by Grady Haskell

Bellingham residents urge community to keep cats inside

Ella Banken

THE WESTERN FRONT

Several cats, in varying degrees of health, have been found in dumpsters and trash cans in Bellingham neighborhoods recently, and residents are taking to the internet to raise concern of these events.

Jarret Anderson and Jennifer Karnecki created a Facebook page on Nov. 29 called "The Whatcom County Cat Killer" in hopes to alert the community of these recurring incidents. They are encouraging people to keep their cats inside and contact the police with any information.

The post received 160 likes in two days.

"We're not making it into a witch hunt page," Anderson said. Karnecki agreed, and said they didn't want to interfere with the police investigation.

Anderson's 9-year-old cat Toby had been missing for about five days when he was discovered dead in a trash can outside their residence in the Puget neighborhood on Aug. 31, Anderson said.

"Aug. 27 was the last time I saw him," he said. "It wasn't uncommon for him to sometimes not come back for an evening, but it had been about a day and a half and I started to get worried."

Anderson hung up missing cat posters all around the neighborhood when Toby hadn't been seen for a couple days, he said.

Another roommate of Anderson's found Toby in the trash outside of their house, he said. It appeared Toby had been in the trash for a while.

Jennifer Karnecki witnessed a similar event on Nov. 13 when her neighbor's 4-year-old cat Rainbow was

see *CAT*, page 4

Western's first job shadow program accepting applications

Eva Bryner

THE WESTERN FRONT

Western's first campus-wide job shadow program is being piloted by the Alumni Association, matching students with alumni in their field.

The program, Western@Work, was created by Associated Students Alumni Coordinator Samanta Baxley, Associated Students Alumni Coordinator, and has received upwards of 70 student applications.

Western@Work will continue to accept applications from both alumni and students until Dec. 16, Baxley said.

"I think it's essential for students to have the ability to see what their careers after college look like," Baxley said. "We're going in these programs and doing the schoolwork behind it, but a lot of us don't know what we're going to be doing with these degrees after we graduate."

The program will allow students to shadow alumni in their field for one day, and does not promise a job offer or pay, Baxley said.

"I think a lot of students are trying to figure out what they want to do for their careers and lives and are figuring out how to get

see *WORK*, page 5

Historic overpass removed

Now that the project is nearly complete, city makes room for future projects

Noah Harper

THE WESTERN FRONT

A swift hush fell over the crowd of onlookers as a towering crane began to hoist the Boulevard overpass off its supports and gently lower it to the ground below. The silence was broken by a wave of applause. After a long day of work, the overpass was finally laid to rest.

On Thursday, Nov. 21, the Bellingham Parks Department, alongside a contracted construction crew, removed the Boulevard pedestrian overpass that once provided the only route of access to the lower area of the park. The overpass has been out of service since 2016 after being declared unsafe for pedestrians, but still holds nostalgia to some residents of Bellingham. "I've been up and



A construction crew works to dismantle Boulevard Park's pedestrian overpass on Nov. 21. // Photo by Noah Harper

down [the overpass] many [the overpass] times," Bellingham resident John Graber said.

The overpass used to provide much needed access to the park for concerts where attendees would park on the boulevard and walk down via the overpass instead of taking a longer route,

Graber said.

Though the overpass was built in 1979, it still holds a memory of the past even for those who were in Bellingham before it was built.

"It's a memory of being a young, young girl coming here to go to college,"

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Are you addicted to your smart phone?



Jalen Green (22) dunks the ball and scoring a point for the Vikings on Saturday, Nov. 30. // Photo by Claire Ott

The Western Front

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Correction:
The Viking Voices was misattributed to Bethany Maciejewski on page 9 of the Nov. 26 issue. It was compiled by Aidan Wiess.

New \$68 million STEM building planned

With high state demand for tech programs, Western plans to build more space

Eva Bryner
THE WESTERN FRONT

A new \$68 million building will be coming to campus to serve as a home for electrical engineering, computer science, computer engineering and energy sciences.

Construction is likely to begin in 2021, with a rough deadline of completion in spring 2023, according to Manca Valum, senior director of Advancement for Strategic Initiatives.

"These are the fields that our future relies on, and it's important to get them going. So when you think about why this, why now: because we can't wait," Valum said.

The building, officially named "The Advanced Technology Engineering and Computer Science facility" promises collaborative classroom and lab spaces, study areas and event spaces, said Valum.

One goal the project holds is creating a space that integrates goals surrounding inclusive success, according to Brad Johnson, dean of the College of Science and Engineering.

"It's also one of our primary goals, especially for these two programs," Johnson said. "How do we attract and retain a broader, diverse set of students going into these fields that have typically not been terribly diverse?"

The design of the building will include classroom elements that can be shifted and changed to encourage both small group work and large classroom settings, like moveable whiteboards and desks, Johnson said.

"What will the building look like? Feel like? Act like when you're inside it?" asked Valum. "Will it be a building that invites diverse interaction, and not just in terms of culture and

gender and ethnicity, but also diversity of perspective, from a disciplinary perspective and a life experience perspective?"

Skyler Spain, a second-year student and computer science pre-major, heard about the new building and the community space it offered while looking into construction on campus.

"[Small classes] are way better if I have a question I want to ask, or want to talk something through with my professor," Spain said. "Those are definitely better for actually learning the subject matter."

Some donations made toward construction came from industry partners that hope to create relationships with students in these programs, Valum said.

"As Western's first capital campaign, it presents a really remarkable opportunity for the university to build relationships with industry

partners in a way that we've never had the chance to do before," Valum said. "The really exciting part of that is that it is forging a relationship in a really, literally, concrete way that goes forward into the future."

The state of Washington has allocated \$2 million to Western for pre-design and design of the building, and intends to allocate another \$46 million in the next financial quarter, Valum said.

Alongside these donations from the state, Western is launching a capital campaign to raise \$20 million via pledges of financial support. These pledges must be made by September 2020, but do not have to be paid in full until March of 2023, Valum said.

The first computer science course at Western was taught in 1961, a programming class taught through the math

department, according to the timeline of the computer science department.

The computer science major was first introduced in 1983 under the new computer science department, splitting from the math department, the timeline states.

Since then, the computer science major has grown tremendously, jumping from 47 degrees awarded in 2007 to 158 in 2019, according to the Western Washington University Fact Book.

To current faculty, this building is an exciting next step in inclusivity.

"I'm hoping this will open the door to a new way of doing business here at campus that's a little more broad and inclusive, generally speaking. That to me is what makes this particular project exciting is the chance to do something genuinely new at Western," Johnson said.

SAD season is coming, but counseling services are here to help

A look into services Western provides to combat negative mental health among the student body

Bethany Maciejewski
THE WESTERN FRONT

With the sun setting just after 4 p.m., it is the time of year when students are most influenced by seasonal affective disorder. For those who are affected by seasonal depression, Western offers services to aid students who are struggling.

The university offers a multitude of counseling services for students, including specialization in group therapies for alcohol and drug abuse. The counseling center specifically offers group therapy options, crisis support services and one-on-one transitory counseling that can lead to off-campus referrals.

"Any WWU student who is currently enrolled for at least six credits and has paid the health fee is eligible for services," said Anne Marie Theiler, interim director and assistant director of clinical operations.

All eligible students have the opportunity to access resources related to body image, eating disorders, grief, LGBTQIA+ support and more. Western also offers sobriety support as well as alcohol and cannabis classes that can be taken to assess substance impact on students' lives.

"We are an educational resource to assist students in gaining an understanding about the substance they are concerned about, look at options for doing things differently, and make their own informed decisions about drinking or using later, if they choose to" said Jacelyn Barham, assistant risk reduction specialist in alcohol and drug counseling.

The counseling resources for students struggling with sobriety are aimed to be used as a source of education and support. Barham takes pride in the support she is able to provide without pressure saying that she enjoys "having unique, heartfelt conversations about experiences with substances, especially when students walk away saying that they gained something meaningful from the discussion because it didn't feel punitive."

Last year, the university's counseling center saw 1,922 students, Theiler said. Over 16,000 students were enrolled as of fall 2018, meaning close to 12% of the student population accessed these resources last year.

"I feel like it's important for new students to know especially when you're just first going into college can kinda be an adjust-

ment period," third-year Katie Schreiber said. "Sometimes you need some extra help."

Outreach activities such as presentations and dissemination of information have reached over 8,000 students to put resources within the grasp of incoming students.

Services are catered toward common concerns like relationship and interpersonal problems, grief and loss, eating or body image issues, stress due to experiences with marginalization or microaggressions, academic struggles, substance use, identity issues, adjusting to university life, family issues, coping with the effects of trauma, managing emotions and self-esteem, Theiler said.

While 85% of students visiting the counseling center last year were present for one to five individual appointments, if a student is looking for long-term therapy, referrals to off-campus resources are available. The counseling center seeks to provide gateways to ease students into whatever help they are pursuing.

Crisis lines and emergency services are available under the crisis services tab on the counseling center's website.

Services offered by the university counseling center:

- Group therapy, including yoga for resilience, sobriety groups, mindfulness group and more
- One-on-one sessions, for a more comfortable and private experience
- Crisis resources and emergency service options
- Off campus referrals for longer term therapy options

The counseling center, located in Old Main 540, is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Illustration by Chloe Halbert

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CAT

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seen being tossed into a trash can.

Neighbors saw someone on a bicycle take a cat out of a backpack and toss it into the trash before riding off quickly down the alley as neighbors tried to stop him, Karnecki said. The neighbors were unable to catch up to the cyclist, but were able to pull Rainbow out of the trash.

Karnecki and her husband were called into the alley by neighbors and she immediately recognized the cat as Rainbow. He was largely unresponsive when first pulled out of the trash, but had no visible injuries.

"I've known Rainbow since he was a kitten," she said. "He used to come into my house and play with my own cats."

Karnecki contacted Rainbow's owner as soon as she recognized the cat, she said. Rainbow was treated at Maplewood Animal Hospital and recovered well, given the state he was found in.

"I presume he's just fine, which is a happy ending to this story, there's not a lot of happy endings in this story," Karnecki said.

According to Karnecki, Rainbow's owner reported the incident to the police.

Anderson reported Toby's death after reading about other cats being killed around the same time, he said.

The Bellingham Police Department sent out a press release on Sept. 5 that stated two cats were found deceased



A local cat enjoying the sun on Nov. 25. // Photo by Claire Ott

within a one week span. Their causes of death were unknown, but given the close proximity of their deaths, they would be investigated.

"I was under the assumption that maybe someone ran him over in the back alleyway and they panicked and threw him in the garbage can," Anderson said.

However, Toby didn't appear to have any visible injuries, Anderson said.

"It was a pretty traumatic thing, I just wanted to get him out of the garbage can and bury him in the backyard," he said.

Trisia Kulaas, former

roommate of Anderson had a close connection with Toby as well, she said.

"He was a sweetheart," Kulaas said. "It's pretty heart-breaking."

After her former roommates reported the incident to the police, they were told that similar events had been happening in other neighborhoods, Kulaas said.

"That is one of the things that has really caused me to jump to action, I heard after the fact that this was rampant in the city and that cats are being found all over the place dead in garbage cans," Karnecki said.

Harold, a Bellingham Herald parody page on Facebook, posted on Nov. 30 that they are offering a \$1,000 reward for "evidence leading to the arrest of the Whatcom Cat Killer."

"We need to elevate awareness," Karnecki said.

This series of incidents is frightening, Kulaas said.

"I love all the true crime podcasts like everybody does, and one of the things that freaks me out, is there's always that escalation from hurting animals to hurting people that is alarming," Kulaas said.

Animal abusers are five times more likely than non-animal abusers to commit violent crimes against people, four times more likely to commit property crimes and three times more likely to have a record for drug or disorderly conduct offenses, according to research in a project conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice.

These events are especially disturbing because Bellingham is a pet-friendly community, Kulaas noted.

"Make sure that your pets are inside at night," she said.

Laura Clark, director of the Whatcom Humane Society, agreed with this advice. The Humane Society worked with the Bellingham Police Department on the incidents included in the September press release, she said.

"The Whatcom Humane Society always encourages people to keep their cats inside or in a supervised outdoor environment for their safety," Clark said.

Karnecki started a GoFundMe page on Nov. 22 to raise money to print posters to put up around town, which has already raised \$260.

According to the GoFundMe page, the original goal was \$100 and any funds donated over \$100 will be donated to the Whatcom Feline Alliance, which is offering a cash reward for information that could lead to an arrest, according to their Facebook page.

Others are also offering monetary incentives for information about these incidents. The Bellingham

OVERPASS

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Bellingham resident Carole Hanaway, who graduated Western in 1968, said, "It's just another goodbye to a landmark and you don't like losing landmarks."

The removal of the overpass marks the beginning of the end for a long and expensive parks project, Project Engineer Gina Austin said.

"The overpass removal is part of a bigger project," Austin said. "The wood overpass was built around 1979, and it supports all of the utilities that go into the park. It's an aging structure and it was discovered that it was damaged pretty severely by just weather in the elements in 2016. So when we took a look at it, we realized that it was beyond repair. The

bigger part of the project is to take all of the utilities off of that structure."

The project started in late April and was expected to be done by September, according to a post on the City of Bellingham's website. The first part of the project, before the overpass could be dismantled, was removing the utilities and installing new ones underground. Removing the overpass itself was the last step.

"The project is now nearly complete," Austin said. "All the utilities have been online, going up, Bayview Drive for a little while now. Now they're just finishing, just dismantling the wood and getting it so that they're in a position where they're not at a certain height that things could fall on the railroad. Once that structure's gone, our project is complete.

Removing the overpass was the last part of it."

Removing the overpass was not a task that could be completed in one day. Crews arrived the day before to set up the large crane that would inevitably lift the bridge off the supports. Coordination with the rest of the city to guarantee a smooth operation with yellow tape blocking off pedestrians and car detours from the removal site.

"We've had several months of planning, permits and safety briefings with engineers and designers to figure out how we could safely brace that structure, pick it up, move it, set it down, and then dismantle it and then also coordinate with the railroad," Austin said.

With this project ending, the Parks Department is

ready to begin further repairs and upgrades to Boulevard Park, starting with the bathrooms.

"We are going to also look at maybe adding restrooms to Boulevard Park because those restrooms that were on the north end of the park are out of service for a lot of different reasons," Austin said. "We're going to look at maybe consolidating and remodeling the restrooms near Woods Coffee, just to serve the public better."

Another planned future project is replacing contaminated soil from an old coal gasification plant that used to be located in the upper area of the park by State Street.

"The size of [the coal plant] was like a mini version of the gasworks park in Seattle and had the same process where they burned coal to power

homes in Bellingham. The remnants of that plant are still there," Austin said.

The byproduct of the coal gasification plant is contamination to the soil and groundwater in the area, Austin said. Because of this, the area is listed as a state cleanup site meaning the city, the state and the polluter will work together to investigate the site and then determine the best way to clean the area.

"That work is going to go through a public process with the state's Department of Ecology. It could include capping that contamination, bringing in clean soils and creating physical separation between people and contamination. It's probably going to also include removal of a tank," Austin said.

WORK

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engaged in that work," Associate Dean for Student Engagement Eric Alexander said via email.

Five companies have confirmed they will host students, including the Lighthouse Mission, Whatcom Community Foundation and Birch Bay Health, Baxley said.

"The hope is that we match as many students as possible, and given that so many students have signed up so early we are reaching out to

more alumni, and trying to get more hosts signed up," Baxley said.

Western@Work is partnering with the Career Services Center [CSC], and students will receive a one hour training before their job shadow to prepare them and answer any questions, Baxley said.

"Our career services area and our colleges/departments do a great job, this is helping to supplement that work by connecting our invested alumni to our students while also connecting students

to meaningful experiences outside the classroom," Alexander said via email.

As of now, the program is a pilot and there is no guarantee it will happen again after this quarter. The Alumni Association will decide if the program will continue when the program has finished, Baxley said.

Western@Work will pair students with alumni on a first come, first serve basis, and if there are not alumni to pair someone with, the student will have priority in future quarters, Baxley said. Some job shadows may

require students to travel and the program encourages students shadowing the same company or person to carpool or travel together, according to the Western@Work homepage.

Matches for the program will be announced on Jan. 2, 2020, with CSC workshops available Jan. 14 or 15, 2020, and the job shadow itself on Jan. 30 or 31, 2020.

"As a student, I didn't really know what I wanted to do when I graduated," Baxley said. "I saw this as an option that other students might enjoy too."

Seventy-seven percent of Western graduates from 2017-2018 with a bachelor's degree were employed six months after graduation, according to the CSC Graduate Outcomes Report.

"Overall, [Western@Work] is about supporting the growth of Western students as they prepare for the rest of their lives," Alexander said.

Western named 2019 Innovation & Economic Prosperity designee

Jordan Van Beek
THE WESTERN FRONT

Western has been named a 2019 Innovation & Economic Prosperity (IEP) designee by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).

In order to be considered for this designation, a university completes a self-study process that looks to better understanding the existing university engagements from both those internal and external of the university, according to James McCafferty, director of the Center for Economic and Business Research.

University of Colorado

Boulder, University of Mississippi and Western Washington University are the IEP University designees for 2019.

According to the APLU website, this program recognizes institutions "that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity."

"From this process, we sought ways to improve potential future engagements to align with the university's mission, vision and values," McCafferty said. "All of this information was submitted to APLU which had multiple

people review and provide feedback on our process and information. Based on the recommendation of the reviewers, APLU awarded Western the designation."

"APLU and its Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development," according to the APLU website.

Sixty-five institutions have been named IEP designees since the program was

launched in 2012, according to Western Today's press release.

Other schools that have been given this award include Washington State University in 2013, Montana State University and Arizona State University in 2016.

"From a student's perspective, the designation should communicate a dedication by the university to look for meaningful engagements within the region that may provide the opportunity for more and enhanced applied research opportunities and the infusion of innovation principles into the campus community both within academic areas as well as non-academic areas,"

McCafferty said.

The impact of the IEP designation include testimonials from higher-ed leaders across the nation who have affirmed the value of the IEP universities program, voluntary institutional change, time well invested, access for all and value of outputs, according to APLU's website.

"Earning the designation is the first step in a journey. Like other accreditations and designations earned by Western, there is a commitment to a growth strategy and a requirement to resubmit materials to continue holding the designation," McCafferty said.

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BELLINGHAM IS A CANVAS THESE ARTISTS HAVE MADE THEIR OWN



Mural by Gretchen Leggett on Oct. 30. // Photo by Max Gleiberman

Max Gleiberman
THE WESTERN FRONT

Bellingham is known as the city of subdued excitement, but if you walk around, you'll see quite the opposite in the colorful, creative street art splashed throughout the city.

Gretchen Leggett created much of the street art around the city. She painted a colorful display of melodic lines and abstract shapes that form a scenic view of the Cascade Mountains juxtapositioning the ramshackled steel wall that runs along Cornwall Avenue.

She transformed Bellingham, turning the streets into her personal canvas. In her eight years in Bellingham, she's painted both commissioned and free art throughout the city.

"I get fulfillment out of art. It's like eating for me," Leggett said. "To feel complete I need recreation and creativity. I feel a void without them."

Leggett fell in love with art at a young age. Both her parents were visual artists who pushed her to be creative at any opportunity, she said.

"Whether it be balsa wood models in my grandfather's basement or taking charcoal out of the fire on a camping trip and drawing on rocks, I was always doing hands-on art," Leggett said.

Leggett said she lived and taught visual art for nine years at an independent school in Issaquah, Washington, as well as Gage Academy of Art in Seattle, before she moved to

Bellingham in 2011.

In between jobs, Leggett focused on simply making art for the sake of art. This time in her life was about creating on a whim, whether she needed to get something out, or to just work through whatever she was feeling at the moment.

Although, artistic freedom has changed since she turned her passion into a full-time job.

"Now that I'm a full-time artist there's definitely more constraints, there's many times I do feel like a marionette with a paint brush," Leggett said. "There are moments that I'm guided by someone else's thoughts."

She said the trick to make commissions still personal is to infuse her unique self, flare and emotion into everything she creates.

Leggett said when she moved to Bellingham there was very little street art and that it has been absolutely incredible and gratifying to transform a lot of dismal spaces into works of art.

The Cascades mural that Leggett created is the largest mural in the state of Washington, spanning two football fields.

"It was dead space, we found over 50 hypodermic needles while cleaning it up to prepare," Leggett said. "Since then, I have had strangers coming up to me frequently thanking me for making Bellingham a better place, thanking me for giving them some sense of identity. The

murals are bringing cultural and aesthetic identity to Bellingham."

Fellow street artist Shawn Cass said anyone can immediately see Leggett's talent when she paints.

"Her mountains and landscapes are amazing," Cass said. "Her style is clean, you can tell it's her own unique, signature style."

Leggett said her first mural was the exterior and interior of the Culture Café at Kombucha Town, which allowed free

artistic reign to transform the restaurant.

Patrick Mullen, who works at the brick and mortar front of Culture Café, said Leggett is an intelligent artist and her street art is a great form of storytelling and a gorgeous interpretation of the natural world.

"At base level, it improves the cosmetic beauty of the city," Mullen said. "It's safe to say it adds to the soul of the city, too."

Leggett recently finished two

projects, one in the alleyway of JJ's Market downtown and another mural at the Kona Bike shop.

She said there are struggles to every mural, from the expenses -- which she usually has to pay out of pocket -- to the structure of the wall, access to supplies, places to paint and paint chipping.

It is always intimidating at first, she said. Every single one of them is a challenge but the payoff far exceeds the struggles.



Mural by Gretchen Leggett on Nov. 5. // Photo by Max Gleiberman

"So many times new commissions that I would have never thought of took me down new rabbit holes of creative exploration that turn me on to something new. Murals were never my plan," Leggett said.

Leggett decided to start painting murals after she was asked by the owner of Kombucha Town to paint for them, especially since it pays well.

The inspiration for her murals in the alley behind JJ's was to make something beautiful, with a message of transformation, she said. Her art depicts women transforming something absent of life, the fragments of dragonflies and beetles represent blowing life into them, in the end becoming beautiful creatures flying off.

"It is conveying a message of hope, we all have the ability to control our destiny and both of those murals show that you can lift off if you persevere," Leggett said.

A side of Bellingham, Leggett said, she didn't know before doing murals was the transient homeless population. She said at first, she did not understand the homeless issue.

She said she's had a mind-blowing experience working on the streets and having open conversations with homeless people almost every day she's out painting. Speaking and engaging with the homeless has been a learning experience, she said. With the empathy and the appreciation she has gained, it has been pretty exceptional.

"Standing in an alleyway with a grown person who has a broken life, who lives on the streets and seeing them shed tears of joy because they are so moved by artwork is 10,000 times why I make art now," she said. "Having that ability to bring that much joy and impact to a place, that's the magic."



A mural by Shawn Cass that wraps around Walsh & Dry Services on Nov. 5. // Photo by Max Gleiberman

Max Gleiberman
THE WESTERN FRONT

On July 17, a fire destroyed downtown pet store Hohl Feed & Seed and also caused the destruction of bird alley. The mural survived the fire itself, but when the building was knocked down it was also destroyed.

Local street artist Shawn Cass' most iconic piece, bird alley, displayed various birds and animals with a colorful, cartoonish style. The art spans the alleyway between Railroad Avenue and North State Street off of East Holly Street.

Cass said watching the deconstruction of bird alley was sad but interesting. The building stood for over 100 years, and then suddenly, it was just gone.

Even amid tragedy, Cass has maintained a positive attitude, and said that art is not meant to be permanent. As buildings and cities change, so should the art.

"Art is always changing, it is not permanent," Cass said. "That's what I keep learning, just to keep on creating."

Cass said he would love to promote a "bird alley 2.0" and he thinks the city and community would be all for it. Some people have suggested painting another alley, but Cass feels it has to be in the same spot.

"It happened so naturally," Cass said. "I knew the lady that worked at Hohl [Feed] & Seed. She had a passion for birds just like me. They didn't pay me, just gave me permission to paint the wall, so for three years, I painted bird alley."



A portion of Bird Alley is demolished on Oct. 16. due to fire damage from the fire at Hohl Feed & Seed. // Photo by Max Gleiberman

A few other artists contributed to the alley of art, but the majority was done by Cass.

Ronnie Rodriguez, a friend of Cass', said he was there the whole time that Cass was painting.

"A big part of the community would come down there and tell Shawn [Cass] that they love the artwork, from homeless people to councilmen," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said he still has pictures from the beginnings of bird alley to its end and believes it's an important part of Bellingham history.

Scott Thorpe, an employee at nearby shop Gathering Glass Designs, remembers when

Cass first started bird alley, from when he came up with the idea to actually working on the painting. Cass pulled in friends to paint with him, as well as spray paint artists from Seattle.

"The collaborative effort that bird alley brought about was super cool. I would always send people in that direction to check it out because it was that amazing," Thorpe said.

Thorpe said bird alley was one of his favorite art pieces by Cass, that the scope of what he did was incredible.

Gathering Glass Designs has always supported spray painters, Thorpe said.

Twice a year, they have an all-star street artist walk to showcase the local art and

would always have supplies left over.

"When he was working on bird alley, once a week he would come in and ask to borrow a ladder or some paint," Thorpe said. "Then he would disappear and paint for the whole day before he came to return the paint and ladder."

Cass recently finished a new project at the Walsh and Dry Services laundromat, transforming the entire outside of the building.

The next project he will work on is a mural in a marijuana dispensary called The Joint. Cass said he will be painting an aerial view of downtown Bellingham with the harbor and bay in the background.

Local brands focus on sustainability

Fashion industry contributes 4% of world's waste each year



Reisa Newmark (right) and Erika Millage sorting stickers and jewelry at Third Planet on Tuesday, Dec. 3. // Photo by Claire Ott

MacKenzie Dexter
THE WESTERN FRONT

Fashion is a way for people to express themselves creatively, provide jobs and stay warm during the cold months, however, the fashion industry contributes to waste and overproduction in America.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), clothing contributes to over 9% of municipal waste a year. On average, this means an American throws out about 81 pounds of clothing a year.

The fashion industry contributes 4% of the world's waste each year, which equals about 92 million tons, according to Forbes. There are also ethical issues, such as the 170 million child laborers that support the fashion industry, according to the International Labour Organization.

While these facts may be jarring and make it challenging to find companies to shop at, local businesses are a place to start. Bellingham is home to multiple shops that support local artists, use sustainable products and practice ethical production and consumption.

"Cheap clothes are a fiction," said Ashley Fullenwider, owner of Nuu-Muu, a sustainable clothing business. "The earth and workers are paying the price. We need to change this model, and it's a two-way dance between business changing their intentions and customers stepping up to a new fashion model."

Fullenwider said Nuu-Muu made sustainability a staple in the business since its opening in 2008. The dresses are sewn in small batches using organic and

recycled materials. They have solar panels on their buildings, donate 1% of sales to environmental organizations and are members of the Conservation Alliance. They also have a Facebook page for those who want to buy, sell and trade dresses.

Teresa Remple, owner of Texture Clothing, said while the industry and overconsumption are complicated issues, it is important to become aware of these issues and to be conscious of purchases. She said it also means businesses need to be thoughtful of their habits and products they sell to their customers.

"I have always been in awe of the American culture of overconsumption," Remple said. "I am included in this and fight against it dearly. It is a strange phenomenon and has led to a lot of devastation in the U.S. and in developing nations who we hire to manufacture for us."

Remple said Texture Clothing has always used sustainable products, such as hemp fabric and organic cotton whenever available. She said they use "waste audits" as a way to track and better their habits. They also reuse, recycle and compost whatever they can.

"We can always do better," Remple said.

Remple said she is pleased to see more sustainable options compared to 10 years ago. She said it's great for customers to know the research and effort put into their products so they can leave feeling good about their purchases. She also said spending the money on more sustainable products will pay off because they will last longer.

"We were one of a handful of small clothing makers in



The street-view of Third Planet on Tuesday, Dec. 3. // Photo by Claire Ott

the U.S., and now there are so many people who want to purchase mindfully-made clothing," Remple said. "There is no need to be scared of competition. Let's think of each other as colleagues. Consumers have been educated about the issues and are spending their money where they see fit."

Erika Millage, manager of Third Planet, said the shop has made decisions to become more eco-friendly through supporting small business artists. Millage said Third Planet picks brands and artists to carry that are also conscious about sustainability, whether that is with packaging or

materials used in products. "People who value upcycling or reusing materials or trying to have a really low carbon footprint, that's easier to do in the gifts and the core accessories and jewelry," Millage said.

Millage said Third Planet is moving more toward sustainable practices by recycling packing materials and upcycled materials, such as newspaper and recycled plastic for wrapping.

"We're just trying every day to move as far away from things that are not sustainable as possible," Millage said. "And that's always been the motto." When asked how other

businesses and consumers can make more sustainable decisions, Millage said some easy ways are spending money at local businesses and being conscious of where people spend their money. Millage also said becoming a sustainable business is worth the cost and customers will appreciate the effort businesses put into it.

"We are entering an era when everyone and everything will need to take into account the needs of our planet — a giant shift to living more harmoniously with nature to protect, preserve and nurture this earth," Fullenwider said.

Happy holidays, where's my phone?

Can we really call it a "break" when our brains are always on?

Emily Erskine
THE WESTERN FRONT

Winter break officially begins next week. Cue the incessant scrolling, posting and liking on all social media platforms day in and day out.

I give myself milestones to look forward to in this hectic student life. I anticipate the weekends, the three-day weekends, Thanksgiving break and most importantly winter break. It comes right when I need it most. Maybe even a little too late.

Fall quarter is daunting. It drags on, it's dark, it's cold for the first time in months, and maybe I was over ambitious this time. Long story short, I am so happy it is coming to an end.

But as I always do when the long anticipated vacations arrive, I sit in

bed all day scrolling ... calling it a "break."

It almost makes me wonder, are we ever really getting time off when all most of us do with it is stare blankly into a screen for hours on end?

- 60% of U.S. college students consider themselves to have a smartphone addiction
- 35% of people think about their phones upon waking, while only 10% think of their significant other
- 71% of people sleep with (or next to) their smartphones
- 44% of 18-24-year-olds have fallen asleep with their phone in their hand
- Nearly 40% of people never disconnect from their mobile devices

Information compiled from Mission.org

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I'm responding to the article titled "Zero-waste café makes big waves with small changes" by Alina Simone.

As someone who is getting in the groove of having pro-environmental habits, this is encouraging to read about.

When I was growing up, you were considered "green" if you just recycled your plastic bottles and paper. Even if you didn't follow that and still threw away everything in the trash, it wasn't a big deal.

It wasn't until I was going to community college that I learned about composting and how serious climate change is.

It's not like I hadn't heard of climate change before, but it was the first time that it was evident to me that this isn't

fake and will catch up with us soon enough.

Since then, I have been working on myself to make environmentally safe decisions. For example, always having my reusable bags on me, switching to bar shampoo and conditioner, composting, buying the majority of my clothing from secondhand stores, always having a reusable water bottle on me and more.

Although these things are small and don't battle big contributors of climate change, it still makes a difference. Sometimes I think of all the plastic bags I haven't used in the last year and just want to give myself a pat on the back.

To have a local café that wants to help battle that is inspiring. What is

Quarter breaks should be a time of relaxation, not a time of apathy and isolation. But living in the digital age where we never have to be "bored," and all of our friends, lovers, work and assignments are in our pockets at all times, how do we achieve unplugging?

I'm looking forward to freedom from class but dreading my powerlessness to my phone. I know it's a modern day dilemma, but one that clearly affects a lot of us.

College is challenging and we all deserve a break. But an actual break, one where we take the time to do all of the things we said we wanted to do and not lay on the couch refreshing Twitter for the umpteenth time.

So, cheers to next week, the holidays and trying to stay present in a time of technological addiction.

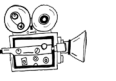
clever about their tactic is that they are not supporting the large corporations and instead spending their money locally. By keeping it local, they decide to not use their money on those corporations who dump waste into our planet without care.

So, not only is ANMLY zero-waste, they don't support those who waste a significant amount. Since everything ANMLY uses is either local or reused, they have the ultimate "green" business which should be an inspiration and goal for everyone. They set the example of what everyone should be doing to control how much is produced in this world.

Thank you for your time.

-Written by Amy Troyer

Winter movie watch-list



Home Alone (1990)
-Chris Columbus-

A cult classic, feel-good family Christmas movie that will make you laugh.



It's a Wonderful Life (1946)
-Frank Capra-

A timeless tale of family, loss and self-discovery, all in time for the holidays.



The Muppets Christmas Carol (1992)
-Brian Henson-

Take a trip down memory lane with this cheerful holiday movie.



The Holiday (2006)
-Nancy Meyers-

A winter rom-com for the hopeless romantics out there.

Want to submit a letter to the editor or a guest editorial? Email us at:

**westernfront.
opinion@**

What are you looking forward to most about winter break?



Hailey McCoy
Biology

"I'm going to Las Vegas, so I'm really excited. I'm going with a bunch of my best friends, so we're all heading on a big girl's trip to kind of get our minds off school."



Hannah Shelton
Kinesiology

"Having downtime and less stress and just kind of doing nothing, but enjoying doing nothing. And just being able to work on stuff that I haven't in a long time like hobbies. Just a reset before next quarter."



Ashley Arthur
Environmental Science

"Relaxing and tying up the quarter... Wrapping everything up and having a break to kind of lift that anxiety off your shoulders for a little bit until winter quarter comes."



Ramiro Hice
Early Education

"Time off. Going to see the family, not just for the weekend, but like a couple weeks. Pretty much a restart, quarter-wise. It might be nice to have to stress about grades."



Sophia Ketchum-Goulding
Psychology

"Seeing my family. They all live in Michigan, so I don't get to see them very much."



Lauren Shigley
Marketing

"Not being in college anymore. I have 13 days."



Kathy Hillier
Pre-Healthcare Kinesiology

"Going home to be with my family. Having this quarter be done and not having to worry about schoolwork anymore."

Compiled by Ana Soltero

GNAC

continued from page 1

into this season's championships. Five of the Vikings' runners placed in the top 15 and were separated by a mere 26 seconds once they reached the finish line.

"The whole race I ran with all my teammates," junior Jane Barr said after the Oct. 26 event at Amend Park in a snowy Billings, Montana. "Every time one of us started to get tired, one of us would surge and share the effort of working together. We all used each other and kept going."

Barr, sophomore Rebecca Lehman and senior Tracy Melville all placed within the top 10, and earned all-GNAC honors for their efforts.

The men's cross country team secured their fifth GNAC conference title, ending a ten-season drought that was also dominated by the University of Alaska Anchorage, who won eight of the last nine men's team titles since Western won in 2009.

"Our strength is pack running," senior James Jasper said. "Everything we do is about the team and no one is focusing on their individual efforts. It is all team driven and that showed."

The men had four top-10 finishes, with Jasper followed closely behind by junior Ed Kiobasa, freshman Deyago Peraza and senior Liam Cossette crossing the finish line consecutively in places 4-7. In the 88-runner field, Western had seven runners finish within the top 25.

Coach Pee Wee Halsell, who will enter his 34th season as Western's track coach next fall, was immensely proud of both his teams' performances this fall.

"To claim both team titles is something really special and we are going to celebrate this," Halsell said. "They are



The Western men's cross country team starts off the 10 km WWU Cross Country Classic at the Sudden Valley Golf Course Oct. 12. // Photo by Alex Moreno

a driven, determined team that today can call themselves all GNAC Champions."

Both teams reached the NCAA Division II tournaments, but the men topped out at 22nd place and the women reached 17th place to finish off a successful 2019 season.

Men's soccer also clinched the GNAC championship title with a 1-0 victory over Montana State University Billings on Nov. 9 at Robert S. Harrington Field. The Vikings were led all year by a dominant defense, finishing the regular season with eight shutout victories. The men's team finished the regular season with a 13-4-1 record, and only suffered one loss during the conference season.

"Everything we do is about the team and no one is focusing on their individual efforts."

James Jasper
Men's cross country senior

This was the third GNAC title in program history, and the first since 2008. With the GNAC title, the Vikings received an automatic bid into the 2019 NCAA Division II Championships, which was only the second appear-

ance in that tournament in program history. They were unfortunately defeated in the second round of the tournament in a 5-0 loss to St. Mary's University.

"This is a fantastic accomplishment for the players and I am very proud of them," head coach Greg Brisbon said. "They deserve this and earned it. This was one of our team goals, to win the league, but not our main goal."

Women's soccer is still alive in their NCAA Division II Tournament, and they will play in the West Regional Championship for the fifth consecutive season on Thursday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. at Harrington Field.

The Viking women's soccer team defeated Seattle Pacific University 2-1 in

the GNAC Women's Soccer Championships on Nov. 16 to claim their fifth conference tournament win in the eight seasons the event has existed.

"A number of players stepped up in a big way, especially our seniors, so this championship was earned by the whole team," head coach Travis Connell said after the game. "The seniors were a huge part of today, but every player was key in today's win, and that's what is special."

Western volleyball team claimed their spot on the GNAC throne on Saturday, Nov. 23 when they defeated Northwest Nazarene University.

That win cemented their third consecutive GNAC title, and their 10th in the 19-year history of the conference. The Vikings finished the regular season with a dominant 18-2 conference record and a 26-2 overall record which put them in 4th place in the NCAA Division II national standings.

Head coach Diane Flick-Williams had nothing but praise for her team.

"I am so proud of this young team winning the conference title with the huge expectations they shouldered this year. Our seniors — Joslyn [Bopray], Mae [Thungc], Kayleigh [Harper] — led this group and we are where we are because of them," Flick-Williams said.

The last time Western athletics had this much success was in the 2012-13 academic year, when volleyball, women's soccer, men's basketball, women's basketball, men's indoor track, women's golf, men's golf and men's outdoor track & field all won the GNAC title.

With five teams winning the GNAC in just the first quarter, look out for more dominance from Western athletics as the year goes on.

Dierickx defends title hopes

All-West Region goalie Natalie Dierickx continues to play key role in Vikings' success

Elizabeth Mahan
THE WESTERN FRONT

At just 4 years old, Natalie Dierickx took her first touch of a soccer ball and immediately fell in love.

After that first touch, Dierickx decided to focus on soccer and joined Crossfire Elite Clubs National League, a premier club team located in Redmond, Washington, an easy 15-minute drive from her hometown of Kirkland, Washington. The club helped her prepare for the journey after high school.

"I was at practice one night, and my coach told us that our keeper wasn't with us anymore and asked me if I wanted to try, and I ended up being good at it, so I stuck with it," Dierickx said.

The 2019 season has showed her skills as a player, on and off the field.

A total of eight goals have been scored out of the 150 shots taken on her. She has earned First Team All-GNAC (Great Northwest Athletic Conference) honors for the second consecutive season



Natalie Dierickx takes a goal kick in the Western women's soccer game against rival Seattle Pacific University on Oct. 24, 2019. // Photo by Ian Haupt

and has been added to the roster for the NCAA Division II All-West Region team.

She also has helped lead the team with a record of 22-2-0 on the season and an un-

defeated record of 12-0-0 in the GNAC.

Dierickx's collegiate journey didn't start at Western. She spent her first year playing for the Colorado State University Rams. In 2017, Dierickx transferred to Western and was put on the roster as a redshirt sophomore.

Since she became the starting goalkeeper in the 2018 season, she has played a total of 44 games and spent 3,824 minutes on the field.

"[Dierickx] is an incredibly important player on our team," head coach Travis Connell said. "She helps our attack, and her talent and ability to make saves enables us to take more risks, defensively, all over the field."

Dierickx attributes the success of the team to their close bond and teamwork.

"I never thought that I could grow so close to a group like I have with this team," Dierickx said. "It feels like a family, and that is also what makes us so successful on the field. We always remind each other to play for each other,

"I never thought that I could grow so close to a group like I have with this team."

Natalie Dierickx
Women's soccer goalkeeper

and we try to be as supportive as we can."

The team's close relationship helped them grow in their skills, keep a championship's mindset and a fighting mentality, and support one another, Dierickx said.

"This game and this team has taught me so much about teamwork, and that it is not about the individual. You can achieve so much more if you work together, and sometimes the best thing is to think about what is best for the group rather than what is

best for you," Dierickx said.

Dierickx has a lot to balance between school, soccer and her personal life. Traveling to in-state and out-of-state schools to play games puts up a little road bump, but communication between players, coaches and professors makes it manageable, Dierickx said.

"Coming to practice with a consistent attitude of wanting to get better, it makes it easier come game time to get into the zone and really focus on the goals you want to achieve during the game, which is obviously a shut-out but also just doing your best," Dierickx said.

During her free time, Dierickx said she works on homework, spends time with friends and, most importantly, sleeps.

"I try as much as possible to stay in the moment through communication, be it just direction or encouragement," Dierickx said.



Natalie Dierickx // Photo courtesy of WWU athletics



Malia Aleaga (6) serves the ball in a match against the University of Alaska Anchorage on Nov. 14. // Photo by Claire Ott

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Carbone staying home for college career

Sehome High School soccer player signs national letter of intent to play for Western

Conor Wilson
THE WESTERN FRONT

Despite the possibility of an NCAA championship for women's soccer this fall, one player cannot wait for next season.

While the Western women's soccer team prepares for its third-round NCAA tournament match-up on Dec. 5, Sehome High School soccer player Zola Carbone waits in anticipation for her time in a Western uniform.

The left-footed striker and Bellingham native will reunite with her club coaches, Travis Connell and Jamie Arthurs, as one of the seven high school players who signed national letters of intent to play for the Vikings next fall.

"Since I've lived here and grown up in Bellingham, [Western's] always been like my next-door college, and going there is so exciting," Carbone said. "I already know the town, I love coach Travis, he's my club coach right now, so to have the familiarity with the staff was really compelling."

Carbone said she considered offers from Seattle Pacific University, and several Division III schools, but said she ultimately decided on Western for the school's reputation, closeness to fam-

ily and for head coach Connell – who she said is the best coach she's ever had.

Of the seven incoming freshmen, Carbone is the lone forward of the group, but, according to Sehome High School coach Andria Fountain, versatility is one of Carbone's unique strengths.

"I'll play her at forward a little bit, especially if we need some firepower and try to get a goal," Fountain said. "My center back, every once and awhile, has a bad ankle. If she gets hurt, then I put Zola [Carbone] back there [as] the last line of defense."

Although Sehome's league does not keep track of individual goals scored, coach Fountain said Carbone is the team's leading scorer and likely the leading scorer for the league.

"When she came to my program, she was pretty much a defender, so it's been over these last four years that she's kind of transitioned more into the offense," Fountain said. "The other thing that makes her a challenge for a lot of people is she's left footed and she's got a wicked shot. It can be straight on and it's so hard and so fast that even if [goalkeepers] are waiting for it, they won't be able to get it."

In her last two seasons at Sehome, Carbone has led the

team to a 25-1-0 record in conference play, according to the Northwest Conference Athletics website – including a runner-up finish in the 2A Washington Interscholastic Activities Association state tournament her junior year.

"She has a really good work ethic. She shows up to practice every day. She's really good, but she doesn't act like she's really good, she's just very humble," Fountain said. "She takes charge and [the team] they just follow. She kind of has that personality like, 'hey we need to do this.'"

Fountain said she is not sure where Carbone will fit into the team's lineup, but both Fountain and Connell commented on Carbone's quickness and strength as contributing factors to her success.

"Zola [Carbone] uses a unique blend of speed, strength and determination to wreak havoc on defenses," Connell said in a statement to Western Athletics. "She is a fantastic ball striker that will create goal scoring chances for her and her teammates."

Although Sehome lost to Port Angeles in the round of 16 for this year's state tournament, The Lynden Tribune named Carbone the league's offensive MVP.



Photo by Harrison Amelang

"That was really cool and special because it just shows how much all my hard work has finally paid off," Carbone said. "There has been some natural ability that comes with it, but definitely a lot of hard work and going to practice every day, every week, going to all the games. It's all worked out."

With her high school career over, Carbone said she will play her final club season with Connell and the Whatcom FC Rangers before reporting for team camp in August.

"I trained with [Western], so I met a few [players] and they're all so nice, and I love being on a team like that," Carbone said. "I definitely want to make a big impact on the team, especially my first year, coming in and come in hot. It'll be big shoes to fill because the seniors are leaving, especially because a lot of them are big goal scorers."

Vikings pick up pair of wins in Chuck Randall Classic

Tyreke Wilbanks
THE WESTERN FRONT

Over the weekend the Vikings had two impressive wins competing in the Chuck Randall Classic. On Friday, Nov. 29, the Vikings beat Colorado Christian University with a 22-point victory, 91-69, on the WECU Court in Sam Carver Gymnasium. On Saturday, Nov. 30., the Vikings beat Langara College with a 39-point victory, 90-51.

Redshirt freshman point guard D'Angelo Minnis had a solid weekend, earning 21 points in the Friday game and 17 points in the Saturday game. Minnis earned tournament MVP honors averaging 19 points, 4 assists and 3 steals.

"We have had a very difficult schedule to this point, and battled through some tough injuries, so it was nice to have a successful weekend for sure leading into GNAC play," said Western head coach Tony Dominguez. "The ball movement was good tonight and that is something we have been working on ... getting everyone involved. I thought we accomplished that tonight, and reached some of our benchmarks of 20 plus assists and 10 or less turnovers."

HAPPY
Holidays
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT WECU

We wish you good luck on finals, safe travels, and a happy New Year. See you next quarter!

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