REPORTING FROM THE HEART OF CASCADIA
WHATCOM * SKAGIT * ISLAND * LOWER B.C.
02.22.12 :: #08 :: V.07 :: FREE

Fuzz Buzz, P.12 * Jazz Fest, P.20 * Brown Lantern, P.34

Cascadia Weekly

Winter Commission: Art Smarts and Divine Disasters, P.18 :: Keller Williams: Thinking Outside the Box, P.21

Demolition and Dredging: Making Way for the Waterfront, P.8
Poet Casey Fuller will share his words at “The Poet as Art” gathering Feb. 24 at the Lucia Douglas Gallery

Twelve short plays and musicals can be seen during the Bellingham One-Act Theatre Festival happening nightly through March 3 at the Bellingham Theatre Guild

WEDNESDAY [02.22.12]

ONSTAGE
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild
Vagina Memoirs: 7pm, Viking Union Multipurpose Room, WWU
The Fantasticks: 7:30pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre

DANCE
Washington’s Birthday Ball: 6-9pm, Broadway Hall

FILM
Bellingham Human Rights Film Fest: Through

THURSDAY [02.23.12]

ONSTAGE
Kenya Safari Acrobats: 10am and 12:15pm, Mount Baker Theatre
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild
Vagina Memoirs: 7pm, Viking Union Multipurpose Room, WWU
The Fantasticks: 7:30pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre

WORDS
Elizabeth George: 4pm, Academic West, WWU

MUSIC
Johnson, Miller, Dermody: 7:30pm, YWCA Ballroom
Wind Symphony Concert: 8pm, Performing Arts Center Concert Hall, WWU

WEDNESDAY [02.24.12]

ONSTAGE
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild
Vagina Memoirs: 7pm, Viking Union Multipurpose Room, WWU
Poke*Chat*Friend: 7pm, Bellingham Children’s Theatre
Once Upon a Mattress: 7pm, Judson Hall, Lynden
The Fantasticks: 7:30pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre
The Diary of Anne Frank: 7:30pm, Claire vg Thomas Theatre, Lynden
William’s Window: 7:30pm, Lincoln Theatre, Mount Vernon
Into the Woods: 7:30pm, McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon
Iron Curtain: 8pm, Anacortes Community Theatre
Space Trek: 8pm, Upfront Theatre
Tape: 8pm, iDiOM Theater
Evil Space Trek: 10pm, Upfront Theatre

MUSIC
Whatcom Chorale Fundraiser: 6pm, Bellingham Golf & Country Club
Community Gospel Choir: 7pm, Cornwall Church
Faculty Recital: 8pm, Performing Arts Center Concert Hall, WWU

WEDNESDAY [02.25.12]

ONSTAGE
The Diary of Anne Frank: 2pm, Claire vg Thomas Theatre, Lynden
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild
Vagina Memoirs: 7pm, Performing Arts Center Concert Hall, WWU
Poke*Chat*Friend: 7pm, Bellingham Children’s Theatre
Once Upon a Mattress: 7pm, Judson Hall, Lynden
The Fantasticks: 7:30pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre
William’s Window: 7:30pm, Lincoln Theatre, Mount Vernon
Into the Woods: 7:30pm, McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon
Iron Curtain: 8pm, Anacortes Community Theatre
Space Trek: 8pm, Upfront Theatre
Tape: 8pm, iDiOM Theater
Evil Space Trek: 10pm, Upfront Theatre

DANCE
Contra Dance: 7-10:30pm, Fairhaven Library
Shimmer: 7pm, Whatcom Museum’s Lightcatcher Building

GET OUT
Smelt Derby: 8am-3pm, La Conner

FOOD
Community Meal: 10am-12pm, United Church of Ferndale
Washington Beer Open House: 12-5pm, Boundary Bay Brewery, Chuckanut Brewery & Kitchen

VISUAL ARTS
Winter Commission: 7pm-2am, Spark Museum of Electrical Invention

SUNDAY [02.26.12]
ONSTAGE
The Diary of Anne Frank: 2pm, Claire vg Thomas Theatre, Lynden
The Fantasticks: 2pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre
Peke*Chat*Friend: 2pm, Bellingham Children’s Theatre
Once Upon a Mattress: 2pm, Judson Hall, Lynden
Into the Woods: 7:30pm, McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon

DANCE
Shimmer: 2pm, Whatcom Museum’s Lightcatcher Building

MUSIC
Organ Society Concert: 3pm, Mount Baker Theatre
Art of Jazz: 4:45-6:30pm, Amadeus Project

FILM
Academy Awards Party: 4-10pm, Pickford Cinema

MONDAY [02.27.12]
ONSTAGE
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild

WORDS
Open Mic: 7pm, Village Books
Poetry Night: 8:30pm, Amadeus Project

VISUAL ARTS
Whatcom Art Guild Meeting: 7pm, Fairhaven Library

TUESDAY [02.28.12]
ONSTAGE
One-Act Theatre Festival: 7pm, Bellingham Theatre Guild
The Fantasticks: 7:30pm, MBT’s Walton Theatre

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Gov. Chris Gregoire will be in Washington, D.C., this weekend for a meeting of the National Governors Association. Topics that will be discussed include the economy, job growth and ending childhood hunger. Gregoire is additionally co-chair of a presidentially appointed group of 10 governors that focuses coordination between states and the federal government on emergency response to terrorism and natural disasters. She is scheduled to meet President Barack Obama and tour the Pentagon.

**LETTERS**

Bellingham residents pay for storm water control and treatment (SWCT) in the Lake Whatcom watershed three times.

The first time is by paying a monthly stormwater utility fee. This money can be used for SWCT projects in that portion of the watershed, which is within the city limits.

The second time residents pay is another monthly fee for watershed land acquisition. Leaving land undeveloped is essentially a SWCT project, which eliminates impervious surface, and allows undisturbed vegetative growth to absorb and treat stormwater.

The third time Bellingham residents pay is through an annual property tax paid to the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District. Money collected by this district can be used for SWCT projects to protect freshwater lakes, like Lake Whatcom (see RCW 86:15). Since 1991, Bellingham residents have paid about $20 million into this district.

Whatcom County Council has known about the very serious water pollution problems in the Lake Whatcom watershed for a long time. Despite this, the County Council spends very little flood zone money to protect the drinking water supply for the county’s largest city. Bellingham residents are currently paying about $1.2 million per year into the Flood Zone District. All of this money should be used for SWCT projects in the watershed (including land acquisition).

Bellingham residents should not be asked to pay more for watershed land acquisition, until the money they are currently paying is used effectively to protect the Whatcom reservoir.

Instead of pressing city residents for more money in difficult times, the city council should be pressing the county council to use money collected in Bellingham to benefit the people of Bellingham. City residents are paying the county for stormwater control, and getting five cents of benefit for every dollar paid. The City Council should consider legal action to force the County Council to meet their obligation to stop water pollution in the watershed.

—Patrick McKee, Bellingham

**OUR WATERSHED DOLLARS**

Dept of Corrections

A letter to the editor last week misidentified a vote by Barbara Brenner on Whatcom County Council’s decision to reassign Bellingham’s Yew Street urban growth area. Brenner did not support changing the UGA from a study area to active status. We regret the error.
BAD PLACE TO BUILD
On March 12, Bellingham City Council will hold a public hearing about a rezone proposal called Padden Trails Development.

This proposal requests rezone of 113 acres between Padden Lake Park, Padden Creek, and Interstate-5. The developers propose more than doubling the allowable density.

This proposal is opposed by the Samish Neighborhood Association and all neighboring associations. It goes against the stated goal of the city to provide infill near the urban core, where infrastructure is in place. This project would overburden our stretched-thin resources.

The waterfront development is the classic example of where infill should be directed. This proposal, toward the edge of the city, would strain police and fire departments. It is an area that is steep and riddled with springs, wetlands and aquifers. Padden Creek, a recovering salmon habitat, runs through it. There is no meaningful public transportation available. It would almost certainly be financially negative for the city.

This is a classic case of us being able to support smart growth by just saying no. There is absolutely no reason to support this project, other than a quick buck for the developers. The construction jobs could go elsewhere.

Testify against this on March 12.
—Harvey Schwartz, Bellingham

‘GRACE’ EMBRACES CONTRADICTIONS
I read John Blethen’s Jan. 25 letter shortly after a walk on the Taylor pier. It was a warm, sunny winter afternoon, a good crowd was strolling, and “Grace” gleamed in the last rays of the sunset.

Thanks to Anonymous for “Grace.” Thanks for the way she embodies contradictions. Her spiraling round limbs are constructed of sharp-edged metal. She is poised in balance, beauty, and focused attention on a derelict pile of tin, wasted there with exploitive carelessness. Was the waterfront uglier in those days? Was there just so much natural abundance that using the bay as a refuse dump was common sense? “Grace” makes us think about the changes in our community and our relationship to the natural system we live in. Thanks City of Bellingham, for respecting “Grace’s” elegance and impermanence, and leaving her be.

She is a creature of the edge, facing the open west, the ultimate limit to immigrants’ quests for individual freedom and owned property. And she is subversive, an unpermitted gift to our community by a free person. Along with Occupy, she inspires me to believe there is still room in our society for the People to do more than consume. Still room to inhabit the

LETTERS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 28
FROM THE ANNALS OF CHUTZPAH: What a difference a single new, reasonable voice can make on Whatcom County Council!

Pete Kremen helped roll back a Council decision to open 280 acres in the South Fork Valley to gravel mining—a harsh, extractive industry residents say would scar their rural farming community. With his vote, the zoning change failed 3-3.

Council member Ken Mann chose to recuse himself, after the attorney for Nor’west Concrete, the Burlington company that requested the zoning change, claimed Mann and Kremen should not vote on the matter, having earlier indicated how they would vote on the quasi-judicial decision. But here’s the key takeaway: everyone had earlier indicated how they would vote on the matter when the zoning change first came before council last fall. Kremen, then county executive, found their mixed approval flawed.

Council member Ken Mann chose to recuse himself, after the attorney for Nor’west Concrete, the Burlington company that requested the zoning change, claimed Mann and Kremen should not vote on the matter, having earlier indicated how they would vote on the quasi-judicial decision. But here’s the key takeaway: everyone had earlier indicated how they would vote on the matter when the zoning change first came before council last fall. Kremen, then county executive, found their mixed approval flawed and suggested he might consider a veto. Yet gravel industry attorney Lesa Starkenburg-Kroontje asked that only those who publicly had indicated they opposed the change should recuse themselves.

Starkenburg, Mann explained, “questioned my eligibility to vote on the mineral resource land expansion. I was deeply offended by that tactic,” he said, “but her claims may have had some technical validity.

“Because I did not want to jeopardize the county by exposing us to yet another time-consuming and money-wasting lawsuit, and because I have respect for my council colleagues and the county taxpayers, I recused myself from the discussion and the vote,” Mann said, adding, “I calculated that my vote was irrelevant, they needed four affirmative votes to pass it.”

Kremen was also deeply offended by Starkenburg’s tactics, but refused to recuse himself, declaring her claims against him had no merit. He characterized her attempts to meet with him privately on the matter when he was county executive as “entrapment.”

“Never made any view known until after the completed public process,” Kremen explained. “Although a clever legal tactic, I’m not going to buy it.”

A good attorney will of course employ many clever tactics on behalf of her client, but Starkenburg has potential conflicts of interest in a class of her own. The county, after all, is also her client.

County Council authorized a payment of $40,000 to have Starkenburg help prepare a legal defense of the Rural Element of the county’s comprehensive plan when the plan went in front of the Washington Growth Management Hearings Board last summer. Council’s legal counsel, Karen Frakes, admitted Starkenburg was well qualified to craft a defense of a plan that so favored build-out that the horrified board ruled it invalid and in violation of state law.

Let’s unpack that.

In 2010, County Council met in a semi-private meeting with development attorneys, ostensibly to settle pending lawsuits. In practice, the decision meant council could make substantial wholesale revisions to the Rural Element entirely favorable to private development interests without docketing those changes in a public meeting. Framed in the context of legal settlements, most of the council’s filmmflam could be concealed in closed executive session, where they could quickly unwind work created from hundreds of hours of open testimony and process in front of previous councils and planning commission.

THE GRISTLE

OPINIONS » THE GRISTLE

TANKERS AND BULKERS THREATEN SALISH SEA

WITH THE current levels of marine vessel traffic in the Salish Sea, it’s just a matter of time before—along with salmon, orcas, fisheries and the tourist industry—face a catastrophic oil spill. Vancouver is Canada’s busiest container port and greater Seattle America’s third busiest; combined with other bulk and tanker traffic, they make the Strait of Juan de Fuca one of the busiest waterways in North America.

Now there are two proposals on the books that will increase the chance of that oil spill happening sooner. These proposals will invite more oil tankers and the world’s largest bulk carriers to come up the Strait of Juan de Fuca and turn left up the narrow passages that bracket the San Juans, Haro Strait and Rosario Strait on the east. (A marine chart is helpful. Note the shallow rocks in Rosario and the tight turn at Turn Point in Haro.)

The first proposal is to more than double the capacity of the Kinder-Morgan pipeline that currently pipes Alberta tar sands crude to Vancouver. In 2010, about 100 tankers called on Vancouver to load tar sands crude; that number is expected to nearly triple if British Columbia permits a twin to the existing pipeline. Each of those tankers transits Haro Strait, a key local residence of the endangered Southern Resident orcas (J, K, and L pods). According to the federal marine research agency NOAA, “Of all the threats posed to orca whales in the [Puget Sound] region, the threat of a major oil spill is the single greatest risk to the species. Such a spill could easily eliminate our resident orca populations.”

The second proposal you already know about: shipping 48 million tons of coal (and maybe someday 6 million tons of "other") out of a proposed new dock in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve, the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT). Would GPT’s 487 bulk carriers a year share Rosario Strait with more than 700 tankers currently transiting to Cherry Point? Or would they pop over and play international "Frogger" with Canadian traffic in Haro? No one knows.

Even scarier, bulkers have the worst safety record of any commercial vessels on the high seas. They are prone to catastrophic failure—some call it “sinking”—and are often undermanned.

Unlike tankers, bulkers are single hulled, aren’t required to have an escort tug, and are double the size of tankers allowed past Port Angeles. Worse? The big bulkers carry, right up against the hull, as much as 2 million gallons of propulsion, more than some small tankers carry as cargo. A recent study has shown that herring, the base of the food chain in the Salish Sea, are acutely sensitive to contaminants in bunker fuel, even many years after a spill.

But that’s not all. Bulkers, unlike oil tankers, arrive empty, meaning they needed to take on ballast water in the port they came from (China?).

The cost to us for one oil spill, in the state of Washington, would be $10.8 billion and 165,000 jobs impacted.

Not just a little ballast, either. The big bulkers have as much as 17 million gallons on board. While in theory they are required to exchange that ballast water offshore, the reality is they get a pass for bad weather and have very little inspection.

Why does ballast water matter? Because it’s infested with invasive species and viruses with the potential to wipe out our Salish Sea fisheries, shellfish and finfish alike.

We have a real problem on our hands already, even without more bulkers hauling coal and expansion of tar sands tanker traffic. According to the Department of Ecology, “more than 15 billion gallons of oil are shipped annually through Washington state waters…. Unlike the Gulf spill, a ma-

Matt Krogh is the North Sound Baykeeper at RE Sources for Sustainable Communities

VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF CASCADIA WEEKLY
ers, the closest thing to a back-room deal permissible by law.

Their product was an outrageously unsupportable document—scorned at by planners and planning commission- ers alike—and certainly one not protective of the public’s interest in open government and democratic process or one protective of the public’s interest in intelligent land-use planning. No, it was specifically designed to enrich cronies’ interests. To defend this ruinous mess, Frakes recommended hiring Starkenburg as a resourceful, talented legbreaker—a private practice attorney similar to the ones council had already “settled” with—to defend the indefensible and further kneecap the public’s interest. Starkenburg had spent a good portion of her career trying to poke holes in county planning; now she was hired by a council majority intent on facilitating a planning coup d'état. What private interests wrote, private interests would now defend—paid by public dollars.

Frakes (and by extension her boss, Prosecutor Dave McEachran) knew all too well this unhappy history, which is exactly why Frakes recommended employing the formidable skills of Starkenburg to unwind it. But unlike Starkenburg, these public employees do not have the luxury of operating in the intersection of public and private interests. Their duty is clear: To uphold the laws of the State of Washington and—damn it—the democratic interests of the citizens of Whatcom County. Their job is to prevent lawbreaking, not to facilitate (or even tolerate) it.

Who was present, who had standing, at County Council’s evening session to declare the conceptual opposite of Starkenburg’s complaint: That some on council had already strongly telegraphed their preferences in favor of this mineral lands designation near Acme and in this quasi-judicial decision needed, like Mann, to stand down? Who was present, who had standing, to question the conceptual opposite of Kremen’s complaint, and demand that all ex parte communications be disclosed that might indicate the favorable bias of certain council members?

Ignoring the slippery slope nonsense of disqualifying from voting all who’ve in some fashion previously disclosed their opinions in an open, representative democracy, that person would have been the council’s legal counsel, Karen Frakes, impartial representative of the public’s interest in fair outcomes. Not much helpful guidance there.

Kremen was right for scoffing at the reasoning; Mann was right for walking away from it, disarming the bomb. ☺
Mission: Demolition

EXPLOSIONS ROCKED Bellingham’s waterfront last week, but they were planned and anticipated.

The 93-foot red brick building that formerly housed bleaching operations for the Georgia-Pacific West tissue mill came crashing to the ground in sections, each peeled away by heavy machinery. The demolition was perhaps the most dramatic transformation in recent weeks of high-paced activity along Whatcom Waterway.

“We’ve gained momentum, both in the cleanup and clearing the ground for future redevelopment,” Mike Stoner said. Stoner is the director of environmental programs for the Port of Bellingham. “We have a Master Plan that is still working its way through the city and port processes, but there’s still a lot we can do while that is happening. The port and city are trying to do the work that we can while the master planning moves forward.”

The port authority intends to work with the City of Bellingham and state agencies to redevelop 220 acres of inactive industrial waterfront property. The result could be a revitalized waterfront and a centerpiece for downtown Bellingham.

Activity slowed on the waterfront as agreements between the city and port stalled. Elected officials reassessed their priorities. Work continued, however, Stoner said, as the port continued to line up its funding for environmental cleanup. The Dept. of Ecology kickstarted work, as the state environmental agency authorized several near-term actions that form the center of recent activity.

That activity has several moving parts.

One part involves the dredging of Squalicum harbor and dewatering those materials on the old Georgia-Pacific pier. Dredged materials are dried and trucked to an area south of the mill site, an area south of Cornwall Avenue that used to be a municipal landfill. Dredged soils cover contaminated soils.

A second part includes the demolition of certain buildings to prepare the waterfront...
site for eventual redevelopment. The work is being done by Scrap-It Recycling Services, a division of Parberry, a company based in Whatcom County.

A third piece is the environmental cleanup of a few areas of contained contaminants. The work is being overseen by the state Dept. of Ecology.

While all this is going on, the port has a new tenant at their shipping terminal constructing a barge. Greenberry Industrial of Corvallis, Ore., has bought a 42,000-square-foot facility in Ferndale and is in negotiations with the Port of Bellingham to lease 45,000 square feet of space on the Bellingham waterfront. The company recently landed a major contract to build modules for a safety response ship that will act as a fire engine during offshore Alaska drilling.

“There are about 50 people working on-site right now doing cleanup and building demolition,” Stoner explained. “There’s probably another 40 or 50 employed by Greenberry. Those are really terrific jobs in this economy.”

REMEDIAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

The action really began when the state Dept. of Ecology proposed several interim actions on the central waterfront.

This cleanup phase will cost about $1 million, with about half that cost reimbursed by the state. The state’s remedial action grant program helps pay to clean up publicly owned sites. The state Legislature funds the grant program with revenues from a voter-approved tax on hazardous substances known as the Mobile Toxics Control Act (MTCA). The program is similar in concept to the federal Superfund.

“We’re under consent decrees and agreed orders with the Dept. of Ecology to work on six different MTCA sites down on the waterfront,” Stoner explained. “The process takes a really long time. What we’ve been doing in the meantime is finding areas where we can carve out what Ecology calls ‘interim actions.’ If an opportunity arises or there is a reason to take early action, then we can do that under MTCA interim actions.”

The port is continuing to develop a comprehensive environmental study of the entire site, their remedial investigation, followed by an analysis of cleanup options. The work is controlled by a 2009 legal agreement, called an agreed order, between the Port of Bellingham and the Dept. of Ecology.

Of particular concern for early action were two sites with mobile materials near Whatcom Waterway. Ecology saw an opportunity to remedy those sites, according to Brian Sato, Ecology’s site manager. These actions are considered “interim” because they are limited in scope and do not involve the entire site, he explained.

Contractors for the port have completed the first phase of an interim cleanup action at the site. In December, workers removed an estimated 8,000 tons of petroleum-contaminated soil and debris from a building on Bunker C dock area.

“We’ve completed the Bunker C cleanup. It went very smoothly. We got that dug out and backfilled,” Stoner explained. “The way these kinds of bunkers were built in the ‘good old days,’ they wouldn’t seal the bottoms on Bunker C tanks because the petroleum product is so thick you have to heat it to move it. But it does move, slowly, so these days you need to go in and clean up that saturated ground.”

Stoner explained that the site was well contained.

“You’d take a bucket scoop down the side of where the tank was,” he said. “One side of the bucket would be bunker fuel product and the other side would be essentially clean sand.”

In the spring of 2012, crews will complete the second phase of work. During that phase, workers will remove an estimated 400 to 500 tons of mercury-contaminated soil and debris, and demolish a building that contains contaminated materials in what is called the caustic plume area at the west end of the site.

Georgia-Pacific used mercury to separate seawater into elements that could be used in their bleaching and other industrial processes. Elemental mercury and associated compounds would escape and be deposited in this plume area.

Cleanup of the caustic plume area may be technically challenging, Stoner predicted.

“The Bunker C cleanup is really a pretty straightforward, standard product cleanup,” he said. “It tends to be rather easy, as the product doesn’t tend to migrate very far in the soil. Whereas in the caustic plume area, we will take out the old mercury cell building. There’s a few mercury hot spots. They’re isolated, but there are areas in the ground where we have high concentrations of mercury we need to be very careful with. It has to be managed with careful procedures, with Ecology leading every step of the way.”

Sato agreed there are a few areas of particular concern.

“I would say,” he commented dryly as he explained the interim action last summer, “in one or two areas we may have concentrations of elemental mercury approaching one million parts per million.”

Stoner said the agencies expected no surprises, but were prepared.

“There are a couple of different things you run into when you do these kinds of projects,” Stoner explained. “We do a remedial investigation, really searching hard for where the legacy contamination is in the ground and groundwater. Those investigations tend to be very thorough, so no surprises when it comes to digging in contaminated ground at this point. What you do find, however, are what tend to be old buried industrial infrastructure—pipes, tanks.

“We try to map those,” Stoner said. “We have protocols in place so that when a backhoe bucket uncovers something we have procedures in place to respond to it,” he said.

DREDGING

Work began in 2011 on the port’s Gate 3 project at Squalicum Harbor. The work includes dredging approximately 40,000 cubic yards of sediment to increase the depth in an underused mooring area followed by dock and pier improvements.

Contractors are removing sediment from the harbor floor with a barge-crane equipped with a large bucket, Stoner explained. The sediment is then hauled to a staging area on the old Georgia-Pacific property, where wet material is de-watered. From there, material will then be transported to the Cornwall Avenue Landfill and placed as beneficial reuse on the cleanup site.

“Some of the material may also be used by the City of Bellingham when they begin to remediate the old RG Haley property, an area near—but distinct from—the port’s work at the Cornwall Avenue landfill.

“Both the city and the port are signed up for the agreed order on the Cornwall landfill” Stoner explained. “But by inter-local agreement the port is in the lead on that project, whereas on the RG Haley property, the city is in the lead.”

CONSTRUCTION

Unrelated to demolition and cleanup, the port’s newest tenant has additionally increased activity on the waterfront.

“Greenberry is building an oil spill response barge, a type that came on line after the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico,” Stoner explained. That spill resulted from the April, 2010, explosion and fire on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, releasing 4.9 million barrels of petroleum from the rig’s wellhead.

“For work on Alaska’s North Slope, there is a new requirement for oil spill response capability, so these guys have designed a piece of equipment that works off a barge that allows more efficient and responsive action to an offshore spill,” Stoner noted.

They’re got about 100 people working in Whatcom County, some at their Ferndale facility, some on Bellingham’s waterfront.
DEMOLITION, FROM PAGE 9

Linville said the city working with Ecology to assess the levels of cleanup necessary for the RG Haley property. At the same time, the city is working to put funding in place for the work required there, she said.

DEMOLITION

Bellingham was treated to a dramatic sight in June, when crews took down the old Georgia-Pacific steam plant and associated smokestack adjacent to Whatcom Waterway. Workers toppled the deteriorated stack with a piece of heavy equipment after securing it with cables to control its fall. Georgia-Pacific contracted the work after the City of Bellingham issued a permit for the demolition.

“When the port and city negotiated the property transaction, what we ended up negotiating who would be responsible for what buildings,” Stoner explained. “GP was responsible for taking down the entire tissue mill. They took down the steam plant and the smokestack last year.

“That was on their side of the ledger. The remaining structures on site are the port’s responsibility,” he said.

The port continued the demolition inland. The port intends to leave two large tiled tanks on the site in what the agency refers to as “robust industrial icons,” Stoner said. Other artifacts of the city’s long history as a milltown may also remain, he said.

“What you’re seeing right now is the demolition and removal of three separate buildings that are all loosely connected,” Stoner said. “Many people perceive there’s just one unbroken wall of buildings. Those buildings were the pulp screening room, and the pulp storage building. Building being taken down this week is the bleach plant.”

Contractors with Scrap-It have been carefully taking apart these buildings, many of which are made of potentially valuable materials that may see reuse.

“In our initial environmental impact statement, we did an assessment of each of these buildings, looking for opportunities for adaptive reuse,” Stoner said. “We took a serious look at the remaining buildings. Unfortunately, very few of them are the kinds of buildings that readily lend themselves to adaptive reuse. They’re not like an old Carnegie library or school.”

The tallest building remaining on the site is GP’s old digester, used for pulping operations. The port plans to save some portion of that to offset the old tanks.

“We’re hoping to preserve some of the history of the site by keeping some of those tanks and structures,” Stoner explained.

“What we’re proposing right now is that we take most of the digester down but we preserve some of the eye-catching pieces of it that are inside,” he said. “Inside that structure is a big steel armature where they hung equipment. Within that armature are nine tall vertical tanks, which were the digester tanks. Some have old 1930s Flash Gordon kind of riveting.

“There’s a round steel acid tank that we’ve saved as well,” Stoner continued. “What we’re proposing is to take down the building but leave that steel armature and two or three of those big tanks to complement the tiled tanks within what we call the ‘commercial green,’ the public park planned to go through the center of the site.”

WHERE’S THE MASTER PLAN?

Despite the flurry of cleaning and site preparation, important agreements remain unsigned between the Port of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham, including a master plan that will lay out where work should begin and how it should proceed. The master plan and development agreements have been slow to emerge and remain unsigned, a delay Mayor Linville has pledged she will end.

“The port and the city have goals to take important steps this year,” she said.

Some erosion of energy had occurred as the city and port differed on the scale and staging of early action projects, particularly on Bellingham’s Central Avenue. The roadway over the waterway must be reinforced for heavy equipment, but city officials were reluctant to approve the improvements without formal agreements between the city and port authority.

“The project team has always been on the same page on improvements to Central Avenue,” Stoner explained. “To us it always made sense that the city would move forward and rebuild Central Avenue on that existing pier because we need it, initially, as a heavy-haul truck access. It was ultimately planned to afterward be converted to a public access walkway after permanent roads are constructed elsewhere on the site.”

Several City Council members want to better understand the broad agreements between the city and port before committing to action.

“This has taken a lot longer than we’d hoped,” Stoner admitted. The port had expected these agreements would come before the Bellingham Planning Commission this year.

Mayor Linville said she and Port Executive Director Charlie Sheldon have agreed to hold a joint meeting between City Council and the Bellingham Port Commission “to bring the whole group up to speed prior to giving those documents to the planning commission.”

“That will also give the citizens an opportunity to know how they can weigh in and understand what we are starting with,” Linville said.

“We are working together, the port and the city. We are reviewing the documents. We will brief the council, and then we will get that subarea plan to the planning commission,” she added, expressing her hope they might come before the planning commission as early as this summer.

“The master plan is a big, complicated proposal,” Stoner agreed. “What we found is we put forward the draft plan and reviewed it with the Waterfront Advisory Group. It was the second round of documents that have turned into much more of a grind than we anticipated.”

One of them, he said, is a planned action ordinance, which is a way of doing a more comprehensive environmental review up front rather than project-by-project.

“It’s been done in a number of communities throughout the state, but Bellingham has never done it. So this is something the city wanted to take a careful look at,” Stoner said, noting that the mayor’s office had hired a consultant who had managed similar planned action ordinances in Seattle.

“The expectation is that later on this spring we will have the full package of documents ready to go forward,” Stoner said. Some documents go to the planning commission, some are provided to them for perspective. The planning commission’s main focus will be on the actual master plan document that we published with the city back in September 2010.”

Following that, Stoner said he expects a few preliminary planning sessions between Port of Bellingham commissioners and Bellingham City Council members, culminating in final binding agreements.

“I think people are ready,” Linville said. “Going to the planning commission is the first step, not the last step. I am interested in moving forward, but we are not going to push anything forward without adequate discussion. We need to agree, and put our agreements right up front. And then we can start doing something exciting.”
02.14.12 TUESDAY

Whatcom County Council changes direction and rejects a plan to open rural lands to gravel mining. The zoning change would have created a mineral resource lands designation on 280 acres in the South Fork Valley. Council voted three in favor, three against. Ken Mann abstained.

All seven school districts in the county pass their levies in the special election. Bellingham, Mount Baker, and Nooksack Valley voters approved two levies each for their school districts that would cover maintenance and operations, technology and education programs. Ferndale, Lynden and Meridian also got voter approval for maintenance and operations levies. Voters also approve a $3 million bond for Blaine School District, in part to remodel the high school science building.

Generous voters also pass a sales tax increase in Ferndale for road improvements. Ferndale's sales tax increase of 0.2 percent for road repairs will add 20 cents to the cost of a $100 purchase and collect an estimated $300,000 per year over 10 years.

02.19.12 SUNDAY

Two days after a dramatic blaze at the BP Cherry Point Refinery, an explosion and fire rocks Lynden's Darigold Milk Plant. The Bellingham Herald reports firefighters rescue a worker surrounded by flames at the top of a silo at the facility. He was treated for smoke inhalation. A smaller fire in a milk dryer earlier in the week may have sparked the larger blaze.

Fire crews contain a dramatic blaze that broke out Friday at the BP Cherry Point refinery near Blaine. The blaze began at the state's largest oil refinery, sending up towering flames and creating a thick plume of black smoke visible for miles. No one was injured in the fire. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

02.20.12 MONDAY

Flotsam from a tsunami in Japan last March may have finally reached Washington's shores. The Peninsula Daily News reports a black float about the size of a barrel found near Neah Bay was confirmed by Japanese authorities as a type used at oyster farms in Japan. While the object's origins cannot be confirmed scientists say tons of wreckage is circulating in the Pacific, edging toward the West Coast.

02.21.12 TUESDAY

An ardent coal opponent is out at RE Sources. Board members say Bob Ferris left the organization as executive director to pursue other opportunities. Crina Hoyer will take on the environmental advocacy group's management and leadership responsibilities. ©
CUCKOO FOR COCOA PUFFS
On Feb. 13, lawyers debated whether a woman charged with aggravated murder should have access to Cocoa Puffs and other snacks while awaiting trial in the county jail in Everett. A two-hour hearing was held on motions filed by lawyers for the woman, who is denied access to the jail commissary because of serious charges against her and her male partner in a possible death penalty case involving multiple homicides in two states.

FACEBOOK FUGITIVE
On Feb. 17, the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office placed a notice on the WCSO Facebook page that they were seeking information on a fugitive with a history of violence. Deputies sought information on the fugitive but warned readers not to approach him. A few minutes later, an amateur armchair detective and Facebook fan announced he'd located him, already in custody, on the Snohomish County jail roster, an online resource deputies admitted they might've checked earlier.

SNAKE BITES BEAVER
On Feb. 16, Bellingham Police arrested a 21-year-old man after he exposed his private parts through the overlarge window of the new Beaver Inn to all employees and patrons. On Feb. 15, Bellingham Police spoke to a man who'd photographed himself standing nude on the side of the road near Bellingham Christian School.

BITING THE HAND THAT RENDERS AID
On Feb. 12, two Bellingham Police officers were assaulted when they responded to a domestic disturbance in York neighborhood. Police received a report a man was violating a no-contact order, and arrived to hear sounds of a quarrel. A woman told the officers the man had gone, but police insisted they needed to check the residence. They found the man hiding in a closet. The 23-year-old resisted arrest, prompting police to taser him. As they did so, the woman leaped at the officers, biting and slapping one, injuring the head and neck of the other. Both the man and woman were booked into Whatcom County Jail.

On Feb. 2, a woman became enraged because she was charged a $2 fee for an oversized package. “She was so disruptive and vile that the fee was waived and she was ordered to leave the business and never return,” Blaine Police reported. “An officer contacted the woman by phone to make certain she understood that she had been permanently trespassed from the premises by management.”

SPOOK LIGHTS
On Jan. 24, a Mount Vernon resident reported seeing an ultra-bright flash of light similar to one reported in Bellingham a week previously. “I had stepped outside, sometime between 10 and 11pm, because my dogs were barking and I thought it might be coyotes near my house again,” the observer reported. “I suddenly saw a very rapid, ultra-bright flash to the immediate south of my house. The flash did not appear to be lightning, but I waited for over half an hour for the sound of thunder, as would follow had it actually been, and never heard a thing,” the observer reported. “I was going to keep this incident to myself until I realized I wasn’t alone in such a sighting.”

BUZZKILL
On Feb. 2, a Blaine homeowner called police for assistance in locating a persistent and obnoxious buzzing noise inside her house. “Together they were able to narrow the list of potential culprits down to a single misbehaving appliance,” police reported. “Once again it turned out that the guilty party was the normally quiet one that you least suspect.”

On Feb. 10, a Blaine patrol officer found a note taped to the back door of the police station from a citizen, reporting suspicious noises occurring at her residence. “A couple of mornings later the resident dropped by with another letter asking for an investigation, reporting that the noises were loudest about 3am,” police reported. “Two officers responded to the complainant’s home with her. Though they listened very carefully, the officers were not able to hear the booming and buzzing sounds to which the victim was listening. She advised she would continue to watch and listen for the malicious criminals who are broadcasting the noise to her.”

REST IN PEACE
On Feb. 9, a small boy found a mock tombstone lying on the ground near Shuksan Middle School. The boy brought the placard home to his mother. His mother called police, who learned the placard had been stolen from Greenacres Funeral Home. The placard was returned to Greenacres.
YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER never had a smartphone.

Great-grandma probably never had a microwave, either. At some point in life, she washed her clothes outside and hung them on the line, which took all day. She grew her own food, sewed her own clothes and learned how to fix things around the house—or she hired someone who could do it for her—all while managing to raise a family.

And you can barely muster the energy to fix dinner.

So how did your ancestors do it? What could you learn from someone who’s been down the road that stretches before you? Read *30 Lessons for Living* by Karl Pillemer, Ph.D., and find out.

One of the more popular spots in many bookstores is the self-help section. We love to get advice on our love lives, our health and ourselves. But opinion magazines and TV shows attract, but opposing values generally mean trouble.

So how did your ancestors do it? What could you learn from someone who’s been down the road that stretches before you? Read *30 Lessons for Living* by Karl Pillemer, Ph.D., and find out.

Get it

**WHAT:** *30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans,* by Karl Pillemer

**WHERE:** Hudson Street Press

**HOW:** 30 years or older. He asked them for the best advice they could offer on love, relationships, health, family and more.

How, for instance, did people manage to stay married for decades?

Marry someone a lot like you, Pillemer was told. Opposites attract, but opposing values generally mean trouble. If you’re miserable in a job, find another one. Take a pay cut if you have to; it’s worth it to love your job.

On the other hand, don’t put your work ahead of your children. Spend time with them, and never allow a rift. Be honest. Be open to opportunity. Choose happiness. Don’t wait.

And know that being old is much better than you think. Imagine the outrage if one of this country’s best-loved treasures suddenly disappeared, never to be retrieved. That’s what will happen to a bit of our history when our oldest citizens are gone, but *30 Lessons in Living* helps in the preservation.

Through interviews with “experts” in life, author Karl Pillemer presents a twofold gift to readers. First of all, there’s useable real-world advice that comes from the perspective of those who have survived, endured and thrived. Secondly, there are stories of how those experts got to be where they are: tales of hardship, loneliness, risks and love. Together, those two facets make this one book a pure delight.

And because of that, I highly recommend it for anyone who craves words of wisdom and comfort. If age is just a number, 30 Lessons for Living is number one.
The Shape of Things
DESPERATELY SEEKING MY THIGHS

THE LAST time I was thin, I achieved my prized size-four status through a clever combination of starvation and excessive exercise.

I’m still not sure how I managed to even make it up the stairs on the limited number of calories I was consuming on a daily basis, but I do know that what I was doing was, in the long run, more harmful than beneficial to my body.

Fast forward a number of years, and you’ll find it’s no surprise that I’ve gained back all the weight I initially lost—plus a whole lot more.

I’m not looking to attain supermodel status, but I’ve reached an age where my extra weight and lack of regular exercise is becoming an issue. In other words, I don’t want to be skinny, I just want to be able to keep up on hikes with my boyfriend, not rely on pants with elastic waistbands and overall,

feel better about myself and my health.

I don’t have the best track record when it comes to slipping on spandex and hitting the gym—and am reluctant, at least initially, to pony up the cash when I know I’d rather exercise away from the glare of a room full of people who are in better shape than I am—so I recently queried my Facebook family about the best way to get fit on the cheap in Bellingham.

The answers I got surprised me, as it turns out many of my friends and acquaintances have put a lot more thought into the long-term benefits of

Most importantly, you have to pick stuff to do that is fun for you, and you need to have intrinsic motivation. What will really hold your feet to the fire when you feel like flaking?

One advisor—a man I’ve seen transform into a lean, mean marathon machine over the years— noted the outings Fairhaven Runners organizes throughout the week from their headquarters are free, and pointed out that, once I start getting more fit, I can sign up for circuit-training classes every Tuesday and Thursday at Taylor Street Dock and Boulevard Park.

Throughout the day, suggestions kept coming in. For example, it was pointed out that the Interurban Trail comes without a tollbooth. It was also noted that running up and down the stairs (even at home) is great aerobic exercise, and that there are plenty of programs on YouTube and hulu that offer up fitness routines without a fee.

“Most importantly, you have to pick stuff to do that is fun for you, and you need to have intrinsic motivation,” one fit friend advised. “What will really hold your feet to the fire when you feel like flaking?”

While I don’t have the precise answer to that question yet, I do have plenty of offers to help me figure out what it is that will keep me interested. I’ve been invited to sign up for a 30-and-over ladies soccer team, “drag my ass” up a mountain, sign up with a friend on www.myfitnesspal.com, carry my cast-laden coworker around town and attend water aerobics.

I’ve already started watching what I eat, so I figure the next step—or, according the pedometer I’ve been advised to purchase, the next 10,000 steps—is simply getting myself out the door and moving in a way that quickens my heart rate, makes me sweat more than a little bit and doesn’t make me want to head back inside before my goals are reached. Wish me luck! ☺

BY AMY KEPFERLE
Do it

THURS., FEB. 23
RECREATION PHOTOS: Dylan Hart and Patrick Kennedy will helm a winter recreation photo-video show at 6pm at REI, 400 16th St. Register in advance for the free event.
647-8955 OR WWW.REI.COM

AVAILANCe AWARENESS: The Northwest Avalanche Center offers up an Avalanche Awareness Clinic at 7:30pm at Backcountry Essentials, 214 W. Holly St. Entry is free.
843-5678

ADVENTURE FILMS: View Working Triumph (a workingman’s ski and snowboard feature) and FreeRider (featuring split board mountainer Kyle Miller) at 7pm at WWU’s Fraser Hall 4. Entry is free.
WWW.AS.WWU.EDU

FITNESS FORUM: Hiking guidebook author and outdoorsman Craig Romano leads a “Northwest on the Run” hiking and split board mountaineering clinic at 7:30pm at REI, 400 36th St. Register in advance.
543-5678 OR WWW.REI.COM

MON., FEB. 27
HELMET CAM TIPS: “Tips, Tricks and Video Clips” will be the focus of a free clinic focusing on getting the most from your helmet cam at 6pm at REI, 400 16th St. Home-town pro athlete Nick Ennen will lead the way. Register in advance.
547-8955 OR WWW.REI.COM

TUES., FEB. 28
SOCIAL RIDE: Join the Mt. Baker Bike Club for a Social Ride every Tuesday starting at 6:30pm at Kulshan Cycles, 100 E. Chestnut St. Entry is free.
WWW.MTBAKERBIKECLUB.ORG

FRI., FEB. 24
NATURE BABIES: Kids, adults and adventurers can join Wild Whatcom Walks for Nature Babies excursions from 9:30-11am every Friday in February on the Interurban Trail. Suggested donation is $5.
WWW.WILDWHATCOM.ORG

SAT., FEB. 25
DONUT RIDE: At 7:30am every Saturday throughout February, meet with members of the Mt. Baker Bike Club for a “Donut Ride” of anywhere from 25 to 45 miles leaving from Kulshan Cycles, 100 E. Chestnut St.
WWW.MTBAKERBIKECLUB.ORG

BAY TO BAKER: Fairhaven Runners staff will lead a run or walk along newly established and renovated sections of the Bay to Baker Trail, Squalicum Creek Park, and Little Squalicum Park starting at 9am at Birchwood Park (on Cedarwood Ave.). Entry is free.
WWW.FAIRHAVENRUNNERS.COM

SMELT RUN: As part of its annual Smelt Derby, attend the 15th annual La Conner Smelt Run starting at 10am at the La Conner Middle School. A two-mile Family Walk or Kids Dash is also available.
WWW.LACONNERCHAMBER.COM

FIELD TRIP: Join the Surfrider Foundation and the WWU Western Action Coalition from 1-3pm for an “Explore the Shore” field trip to Cherry Point. The event is meant to help people learn more about the area that could become the site of North America’s largest coal export facility.
WWW.RE-SOURCES.ORG

WONDERS OF WHATCOM: As part of the Wonders of Whatcom series, show up for a virtual “Tour of Lake Pad-den Park” at 2:30pm at the Fairhaven Library, 1127 12th St. Entry is free.
778-7188

SUN., FEB. 26
WALKING SEATTLE: Clark Humphrey shares tips and tales from his book Walking Seattle: 36 Tours of the Jet City’s Parks, Landmarks, Neighborhoods and Scenic Views at 2pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.
WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

MON., FEB. 27
HELMET CAM TIPS: “Tips, Tricks and Video Clips” will be the focus of a free clinic focusing on getting the most from your helmet cam at 6pm at REI, 400 16th St. Home-town pro athlete Nick Ennen will lead the way. Register in advance.
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WWW.MTBAKERBIKECLUB.ORG

THURS., MARCH 1
SNOW & SPIRE: John Scurlock shares photos from his recently published book, Snow & Spire: Flights to Winter in the North Cascade Range, at 12:30pm at the Whatcom Museum, 121 Prospect St. Suggested donation is $3.
WWW.WHATCOMMUSEUM.ORG

MONGOLIA TRAVELOGUE: Local traveler Dave Courter leads “A Memorable Journey in Mongolia: Gobi Desert, Hospitable Nomads, Golden Eagle Festival” presentation from 7-9pm at the Whatcom Museum, 121 Prospect St. Suggested donation is $3.
WWW.WHATCOMMUSEUM.ORG
Inside the Internet

OF TECHNOLOGY AND THEATER

POKING FRIENDS is easy on Facebook. All it requires is a simple click of a mouse, and without leaving the sanctity of your office, bedroom, kitchen nook or coffee-shop enclave, you can let that special someone know you’re thinking about them.

In fact, for those looking to communicate in a nonverbal manner, Facebook is the place to be. With more than 500 million active users, there’s a good chance at least one or more of your real-world friends are hunched over their computers—or slid up to their oh-so-intelligent cell phones—at any given moment, just waiting for a missive that will let them know someone’s thinking about them.

But for others, such as Bellingham Children’s Theatre founder Drue Robinson, Facebook isn’t so much a necessity as it is a curiosity. As a playwright and director who still remembers producing plays on a typewriter with wadded-up first drafts piling up behind her, she says although she’s grateful for the many advances in modern technology, she gets frustrated with having to constantly relearn things as computer programs get upgraded and cell phones get progressively brainier.

With her new play, Poke•Chat•Friend, Robinson and her Viewpoints Theatre Ensemble troupe are exploring the good, bad and ugly sides of interacting on the Internet.

“Ever since Facebook came into being, I have grown more and more curious about the state of people’s personal interactions with one another,” Robinson says. “I gathered together ensemble members who wanted to approach the subject of technology and how it has affected our interpersonal relationships, and we began digging up statistics, asking friends about their technological experiences and researching the upside and downside of online connection.”

Using her Viewpoints training—a process she says is akin to “brain-storming with your body”—Robinson and her theatrical cohorts started researching the phenomena last October. After putting the project on hold while the Bellingham Children’s Theatre produced The Nutcracker last December, they’ve been rehearsing since January and already have a weekend of performances under their belts.

“Many audience members have said that we give a pretty balanced perspective on the amazing wonderful things brought about by technology, as well as illustrating some of the horrors that can occur,” Robinson says. “The show has a quirky, smart, personal melange of statistics and personal stories. We’ve had more than a few people tell us that they’ve come away from the show reassessing their own relationships to their technological devices.”

Basically, Robinson says, Poke•Chat•Friend is asking viewers whether they own—or are owned by—their various technological devices. The answers, she says, might surprise you. 😊
SPACE TREK: The completely improvised space adventure show known as “Space Trek” plays at 8pm every Fri.-Sat. through February at the Upfront Theatre, 1208 Bay St. At 10pm, attendees can check out “Evil Space Trek.” Tickets are $5-$10.

FEB. 24-26
ONCE UPON A MATTRESS: Lynden High School students present showings of the fairytale musical known as Once Upon a Mattress at 7pm Fri.-Sat., and 2pm Sun. at Judson Hall, 516 Main St. Tickets are $6-$8 and additional showings occur March 3-6.

MARCH 1-3
WEST SIDE STORY: See the Jets and the Sharks go at it when West Side Story opens this week with showings at 7pm Thurs.-Sat. at the Ferndale High School Auditorium, 5830 Golden Eagle Dr. Tickets are $7-$50 and additional showings take place through March 10.

THURS., FEB. 23
FOLK DANCE: Learn Balkan, Israeli, Romani and Greek dancing with the Fourth Corner Folk Dancers from 7-10pm every Thursday at the Fairhaven Library, 1117 12th St. Suggested donation is $8-$10.

SAT., FEB. 25
CONTRA DANCE: Bellingham’s Brad n’ Steve Band will provide live music at tonight’s Contra Dance from 7-10:30pm at the Fairhaven Library, 1117 12th St. Suggested donation is $8-$10.

FEB. 25-26
SHIMMER: Kuntz and Company, in collaboration with the Whatcom Museum, present “Shimmer” at the Upfront Theatre, 1208 Bay St. At 10pm, attendees can check out “Evil Space Trek.” Tickets are $5-$10.

FEB. 24-25
WILLIAM’S WINDOW: Shakespeare Northwest and META Performing Arts team up to present “William’s Window” at 7:30pm Fri.-Sat. at Mount Vernon’s Lincoln Theatre, 712 S. First St. The show—an introduction to the Bard’s work—can also be seen March 3-4. Tickets are $5-$10.

March 1-3
DANCE
DANCE
WED., FEB. 22
BIRTHDAY BALL: A “Washington’s Birthday Ball” for singles ages 55 and older will take place from 6-9pm at Broadway Hall, 1300 Broadway. Cost is $30 per single or $40 per couple and includes music by the Swing Connection, food and drinks.

DANCE
DANCE
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CONTRA DANCE: Bellingham’s Brad n’ Steve Band will provide live music at tonight’s Contra Dance from 7-10:30pm at the Fairhaven Library, 1117 12th St. Suggested donation is $8-$10.

FEB. 25-26
SHIMMER: Kuntz and Company, in collaboration with the Whatcom Museum, present “Shimmer” performances at 7pm Saturday and 2pm Sunday in the Lesley Dill exhibition gallery at the Lightcatcher Building, 250 Flora St. The performance, which features both pro dancers and community members, relates to Dill’s exhibition of the same name. Tickets are $4-$10.
Winter Commission

A DISASTER OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

DURING THE winter months, hibernation is an acceptable way of living. But as we edge closer to spring, a cadre of creative cohorts are, once again, coming out of their dark dens and into the muted light. We caught up with Winter Commission organizer Marie Biondolillo to find out what this seasonal offering is all about.

CW: What’s the overall aim of this artsy extravaganza?
MB: The goal of Winter Commission is always celebration and collaboration. Between the 40 or so artists, the people involved in the films, the bands, the MCs, the DJs and the volunteers, we’ve probably got more than 100 people involved.

CW: How did the first Winter Commission come about?
MB: We started Winter Commission because we wanted to stay busy during the winter—to give ourselves a project to focus on, with a deadline, that would keep us working on art and interacting with each other, instead of moldering inside and drinking warm beverages.

CW: What’s up with the “Disaster” theme?
MB: 2012 is supposed to be the year the world ends, so we thought a disaster theme would be a cheeky way to acknowledge that. In addition, between all the natural, economic and political disaster afoot, this year has a very apocalyptic feel.

CW: Will there really be people dressed as St. Bernards and a fire-themed photo booth?
MB: Gillian Myers sewed a St. Bernard costume for Steeb Russell, and he’s going to go around offering people free hot chocolate from a cask around his neck. Jubal Sather and Brittany Beug made a photo booth that looks like a house on fire, and people will be able to pose for Polaroid photos in it.

CW: What else?
MB: We’ve also got a collage station where kids can create their own disaster art (don’t worry, no scissors!). We’re going to have a bomb shelter area as well, where people can recuperate. At periodic intervals, poets Elissa Ball and Kate Lebo will call on bullhorns for an emergency dance break, and everybody will have to drop what they’re doing and dance furiously for at least a minute.

CW: Will the art be for sale? Will it all be disaster-related?
MB: The art at Winter Commission will definitely be for sale, and it’s all disaster-related. The organizers came up with a list of historical disasters and some of the artists chose to do pieces based on these. We’ve got a mini-exhibition within the art show depicting artists’ interpretations of these disasters, which range from elephant stampedes to devastating fires.

CW: Is everything created specifically for Winter Commission, then?
MB: Yes! Virtually all the art made for this year’s Winter Commission is tailored to our disaster theme. All the visual art is new, and the singer-songwriters wrote historical disaster songs just for this show. There were bands formed just for Winter Commission, as well. The films were all made specifically for Winter Commission, too.

CW: What do you enjoy about being part of the Winter Commission?
MB: Winter Commission is sort of like Art Christmas, New Year’s Eve, and Easter all in one—you’re celebrating your own and others’ work together, you’re discovering what your friends have been working on all winter for the first time.

CW: Is there anything different about this year’s Winter Commission?
MB: We’re bigger and fancier than ever. The disaster theme is going to give the whole night a more dramatic tone. I’m not worried, though—if it gets too intense, you can always go lie down in the bomb shelter and have Steeb minister to you with hot chocolate.
CASCADIA WEEKLY #08.02.22

**MAIL 4 VIEWS 6 CURRENTS 8 WORDS 13 GET OUT 14 STAGE 16 ART 18 MUSIC 20 FILM 24 B-BOARD 28 FOOD 34 ARTS & LIFESTYLE 36 \*

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CASCADIA WEEKLY #08.02.22

**MAIL 4 VIEWS 6 CURRENTS 8 WORDS 13 GET OUT 14 STAGE 16 ART 18 MUSIC 20 FILM 24 B-BOARD 28 FOOD 34 ARTS & LIFESTYLE 36 \*
Midwinter Jazz Festival
TRYING IT ON

I WILL be the first person to admit that, when it comes to jazz music, I’m a little out of my depth. This is not for want of trying—I’ve been attempting to figure out what the deal is with jazz for many years. I have (thanks in large part to Ken Burns) learned enough about the subject to have an endless fascination with and deep respect for the culture and tradition of jazz and its practitioners. And I can understand and appreciate the push-pull of trying to preserve and protect those traditions in what is an ever-evolving and forward-thinking musical medium.

All that, I get. It’s the music itself that leaves me stymied. But, much like other things I’m pretty sure I should love but don’t understand (jazz, ketchup, The Big Lebowski), I’ll keep trying it on with the hope that one day it will fit.

One of the things that keeps jazz—especially the homegrown variety—firmly on my radar is my long acquaintance with people who make jazz their business, both personally and professionally. One of those people is, of course, the Jazz Project’s Jud Sherwood. And the other is drummer Julian MacDonough.

Over the years, I have learned that if Julian isn’t currently playing with someone, he has in the past or probably plans to in the future. And when someone worthy comes along that he can’t/won’t/doesn’t share a stage with, there’s a decent chance he’ll be talking about them. So, by keeping tabs on Julian’s whatdoings, I can actually keep tabs on much of Bellingham’s current jazz scene. This is why when he seeks me out to tell me about an event, I tend to pay attention.

Which is how we’ve now arrived at the Midwinter Jazz Festival, which will take place from Tues., Feb. 28- Thurs., March 1 at the Blue Horse Gallery. The purpose of the festival is twofold: 1. to help mitigate those winter blues with some world-class jazz and 2. to help benefit the Bellingham Youth Jazz Band, which is a program that has been part of the Jazz Project for nearly 15 years (see how this all comes full circle?). As for the aforementioned “world-class jazz,”
Keller Williams

HARDCORE TRoubADOUR

LOVE HIM or hate him, it's probably safe to say at some point you have found yourself confounded by Keller Williams.

It's not just that he's a multi-instrumentalist and versatile singer/songwriter. It's also not just the fact that he thinks outside the box or he's taken the road less traveled or even that he's marching to the beat of his own drum (loop). It's more that Williams seems to be affected with some kind of musical ADHD, which can see him embodying his persona as "one-man jam band" one minute, transforming himself into a bluegrass musician the next, or choosing to focus on just playing bass the next.

Over the years, many have wondered how Williams has been able to maintain such a high level of musical autonomy, seemingly free to follow his artistic whims wherever they take him. It's the kind of unfettered free will many musicians would love to enjoy, but somehow the demands of fans, record labels and other outside forces won't allow it.

So how does Williams get away with it?

Simply put: He doesn't listen to those outside forces. Instead, he charts his own musical destiny, and follows a muse of his own making. So, if the prolific artist wants to record with Bela Fleck, he makes it happen. If he's interested in writing songs for kids, he does. When he wanted to record an album that would be a mash-up of reggae, dub, funk and jazz—the one where the only instrument he'd play would be bass—he did that too. And, after all that, if he's got a bluegrass itch that needs to be scratched again, his hesitation to do so is nonexistent.

Given the sporadic nature of his artistic output and the fact that he's not shy when it comes to putting out albums, alienating fans would be a real possibility for just about anyone. But, as he's proven time and again, Williams isn't exactly anyone. He's a good enough musician with a strong enough sensibility for what will resonate with his audiences that where he goes on his musical journey, his fans will follow. Music produces its fair share of pied pipers, but few roam with the abandon of Keller Williams.

THURS., FEB. 23

JOHNSON, MILLER, DERMODY: Attend a CD release party for Johnson, Miller & Dermody's album, We Heard the Voice of a Porkchop, at 7:30pm at the YWCA Ballroom, 1026 N. Forest St. Admission is $15.

(206) 817-8785

WIND SYMPHONY: The Wind Symphony of Western Washington University will perform at a free concert at 8pm at the school's Performing Arts Center Concert Hall.

650-3310

FRI., FEB. 24

CHORALE FUNDRAISER: "Service by Night: A Musical Tour Aboard the Orient Express" will be the theme of the Bellingham Chamber Chorale's annual fundraising gala and auction starting at 6pm at the Bellingham Golf & Country Club, 3729 Meridian St. Tickets are $65 and include musical entertainment, dinner, wine and auctions.

WWW.BELLINGHAMCHAMBERCHORALE.ORG

GOSPEL CHOIR: The Bellingham Community Gospel Choir presents its annual Black History Month concert, "We Won't Turn Back," at 7pm at Cornwall Church, 4518 Northwest Dr. Instead of money, bring backpacks, blankets and tents for SALT on the Street.

232-8000

FACULTY RECITAL: Western Washington University music faculty Eric Kean (viola) and Judith Widrig (piano) combine their talents for a free classical music recital from 8-10pm at the school's Performing Arts Center Concert Hall.

650-3310

SAT., FEB. 25

FUN FOURSOEUR: Local musicians and friends Richard Schulz, Flip Breskin, Laura Smith, and Janet Peterson will share spontaneous tunes with a variety of instruments and voices from 6-8pm at the Old World Deli, 1228 N. State St.

WWW.OLDWORLDELLI.COM

SUN., FEB. 26

BUF CHOIR: The Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship's choir will sing an African national anthem, "Shosholoza," at 9:15am and 11:15am at 1207 Ellsworth St. They'll be accompanied on wooden-key xylophones by Ruvara Marimba.

WWW.BUF.ORG

ORGAN SOCIETY: The Mount Baker Theatre Organ Society presents a double-header with performances by Stormy Sea, the Gales, Dorothy Watson, and Vernon Greenstreet at 3pm at the Mount Baker Theatre, 104 N. Commercial St. Suggested donation is $10.

734-6080 OR WWW.MOUNTBAKERTHEATRE.COM

FLUTE RECITAL: WWU students of Lisa McCarty will perform a Flute Studio Recital from 4-6pm at the Performing Arts Center Concert Hall. Entry is free and open to the public.

650-3310

ART OF JAZZ: The Jud Sherwood Trio will perform at the first Art of Jazz concert of the season from 4-6:30pm at the Amadeus Project, 1209 Cornwall Ave. Cost is $15 general and free for members.

WWW.JAZZPROJECT.ORG

WED., FEB. 29

MUSIC CIRCLE: Meet fellow musicians and learn new songs a Music Circle at 7:30pm at the Roeder Home, 2600 Sunset Dr. Bring an instrument, or just show up and sing.

671-4515

35 Tours of the Jet City's Parks, Landmarks, Neighborhoods, and Scenic Views

Specially designed urban treks that are good exercise and a great way to soak up the city's history, culture, parks, and vibe.

FREE CONSULTATION

(360) 734-6677

www.andrewsubin.com
### Music Venues

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**Blue Horse Gallery**
301 W. Holly St. • 671-2305 | **Boundary Bay Brewing Co.**
1107 Railroad Ave • 647-5593 | **Brown Lantern Ale House**
412 Commercial Ave., Anacortes • (360) 293-2544 | **The Business**
402 Commercial Ave., Anacortes • (360) 293-9788 | **Cabin Tavern**
307 W. Holly St. • 733-9685 | **Conway Muse**
Chuckanut Brewery
601 W Holly St. • 752-3377 | **Commodore Ballroom**
868 Granville St., Vancouver • (604) 739-4550

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### Free Breakfast Buffet Every Saturday At Midnight!

Wrap up your Saturday night with a **FREE breakfast buffet**, from midnight to 1am every Saturday in February! Must be a Winners Club Member!

### Free Canucks Swag!

Come watch the Canucks play the Red Wings on Thursday, February 23, and get a chance to win free Canucks merchandise, and cash up to $300! Game starts at 4:30, with $100 cash drawings at the start of each period, merchandise drawings throughout the game, and a $300 drawing after the game. Go Canucks!

---

### A Match Made In Heaven!

**YOU AND YOUR NEW KIA**

Winners Club Members get a **FREE daily entry** for our Soul giveaway every Saturday night at 10pm! If your name is called, you drive away in a **2012 Kia Soul**!
Your entries will also qualify you for cash drawings every Friday and Saturday in February: **$250 at 7pm, $500 at 8pm, $750 at 9pm, and Kia giveaway at 10pm on Saturdays.**

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**WWW.NOOKSACKCASINOS.COM**
9750 NORTHWOOD ROAD • LYNDEN WA
877.777.9847
### Music Venues

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See below for venue addresses and phone numbers

Common Ground Coffeehouse 351 Pease Road, Burlington • (360) 757-1015 | Conway Muse 18444 Spruce/Main St., Conway (360) 445-3000 | Edison Inn 5829 Cains Ct., Edison • (360) 766-6266 | Glow 202 E. Holly St. • 734-3309 | Fairhaven Pub & Martini Bar 1114 Fairhaven Ave. • (360) 671-8745 | Graham’s Restaurant 9988 Mount Baker Hwy., Glacier • (360) 599-1984 | Green Frog Cafe Acoustic Tavern 902 N State St. • 756-1213 | Honey Moon 1053 N State St. • 754-0728 | Jinx Art Space 306 Forda St. • 389-3569 | Main Street Bar & Grill 2006 Main St., Ferndale • (360) 384-2082 | Moonshack Silver Casino 5048 Mt. Baker Hwy., Deming • (360) 354-7428 | Poppo’s 116 Lakeway Dr. • 671-1011 | The Ridge Wine Bar 1017 N State St. • 920-3425 | Rockfish Grill 320 Commercial Ave., Anacortes • (360) 588-1720 | The Royal 208 E. Holly St. • 738-3701 | Rumors Cabaret 1119 Railroad Ave. • 671-1849 | Semiahmoo Resort 9565 Semiahmoo Pkwy., Blaine • (800) 770-7992 | The Shakedown 1212 N. State St. • www.shakedownsunderhamburg.com Silver Reef Casino 4876 Haxton Way, Ferndale • (360) 383-0777 | Skagit Valley Casino Resort 5894 N. Dark Lane, Bow • (360) 724-7777 | Skylark’s Hidden Cafe 1300 11th St. • 715-3642 | Swiminish Casino 12885 Casino Dr., Anacortes • (888) 288-8883 | Temple Bar 306 W. Champion St. • 676-8660 | Three Trees Coffeehouse 118 W. Holly St. • 392-0289 | Underground Coffeehouse Viking Union 3rd Floor, WWU | Village Inn Pub 3020 Northwest Ave. • 734-2409 | Watertown Pub 314 Commercial Ave., Anacortes • (360) 269-3687 | Wild Buffalo 208 Holly St. • www.wildbuffalo.net | To get your live music listings included in this esteemed insertprint, send info to clubs@casadiaweekly.com. Deadlines are always at 5pm Friday.
IT’S TIME TO TALK OSCAR

WHILE THE Academy Awards are a venerated tradition rife with history and artistry, painted in broad strokes, it’s the night of the year when Hollywood dons its most expensive finery and struts, strolls or sashays its way down the red carpet in order to spend several hours celebrating its love affair with itself. As such, it is only fitting that the two films that garnered the most nominations—The Artist and Hugo, with 10 and 11 nods respectively—have at their heart a deep love of cinema and all the magic that goes into making all those movies we love.

Per usual, half of the fun of this big night comes long before the ceremony itself, with the nomination announcement. From the moment the nominees are made public right up until the doors to the Kodak Theater swing open Sun., Feb. 26, everyone with a vested interest and an opinion has formulated their own list of winners and losers.

Never one to be left out of a critical confab, I, too, have weighed evidence, conjecture and speculation to come up with my own Oscar predictions. As in years past, my guesses in each category are separated into the subsections of “Will Win” and “Should Win.” However, in light of this year’s more-infuriating-than-ever Oscar snubs, I’ve also added a paragraph for “Should Have Been Nominated,” in which I will undoubtedly vent some of my many frustrations with the esteemed Academy. So, without further ado…

Best Picture


WILL WIN: While this category ostensibly pits the two big nomination earners—The Artist and Hugo—against each other, this contest isn’t really a contest at all. Both films are unlikely in their own way—The Artist is a black-and-white, mostly silent film and Hugo is a family-friendly film made by Martin Scorsese of all people—and both detail in feel-good fashion a reverence for cinema that is heartwarmingly sentimental. However, anyone betting against The Artist in this category either hasn’t been paying attention or is a fool. In short, this critical darling and awards-season juggernaut is heading straight for the biggest Oscar landslide since Slumdog Millionaire.

SHOULD WIN: The Artist. It’s a black-and-white, almost totally silent film that relies on all that is familiar about old Hollywood to create something innovative and new. This is one cinematic gamble that deserves a golden payout.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: Anyone who knows me, knows what’s coming next: What the hell did Drive ever do to you, Academy? With only eight out of a possible 10 films nominated in this category, the omission of what was considered by many (including me) to be 2011’s best film is mind-boggling. Ditto the sentiment and apply it to Shame, Melancholia, or even Harry Potter.

Best Director

NOMINEES: Woody Allen (Midnight in Paris), Michel Hazanavicius (The Artist), Terrence Malick (The Tree of Life), Alexander Payne (The Descendants), Martin Scorsese (Hugo)

WILL WIN: In another year, under another set of circumstances, Terrence Malick’s sprawling Tree of Life, which was as visionary as it was divisive, might have stood a fighting chance. So would Alexander Payne’s The Descendants, which put all of the writer/director’s strengths front and center. But, as the Best Picture award goes, so does Best Director, and with a win at the Directors Guild of America awards (an impeccable Oscar predictor), The Artist’s Michel Hazanavicius has this one pretty well sewn up.

SHOULD WIN: If Oscars were given for grand vision rather than the execution thereof, there’s no doubt this award would belong to Malick. And if Drive (cue the broken record) director Nicholas Winding Refn had earned the nod he so richly deserved for taking a pretty typical action flick and turning it into something so fearlessly and perfectly styl-
ized, I’d make a strong case for him. Barring those things, Hazanavicius more than deserves the award for effortlessly helming what could have been a difficult project.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: See above. And chalk up the snub of Nicholas Winding Refn for Drive as yet another of the Academy’s crimes against the interests it professes it serve.

Best Actor

NOMINEES: Demian Bechir (A Better Life), George Clooney (The Descendants), Jean Dujardin (The Artist), Gary Oldman Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy), Brad Pitt (Moneyball)

WILL WIN: Without a doubt, this is the toughest category to call. Early predictions skew toward George Clooney’s turn in The Descendants, which is another impeccably nuanced performance by an actor who rarely makes a misstep. However, given The Artist’s awards-season momentum, it would seem Jean Dujardin is now the actor to beat. So, who will actually win? Flip a coin.

SHOULD WIN: Just give the gold guy to Viola. If nothing else, I’m guessing the actress will make an acceptance speech that won’t leave a dry eye in the house.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: While Ryan Gosling may seem like a shoo-in for this non-accolade—and his not being nominated was a snub indeed—even more inexplicable was the Academy’s slighting of Michael Fassbender for Shame. If possible, Fassbender was the only person to have a bigger year than Gosling, and before the nominees were announced, he was the assumed front-runner in the Best Actor category. Did you have the same year at the movies as we did, Academy?

Best Actress

NOMINEES: Glenn Close (Albert Nobbs), Viola Davis (The Help), Rooney Mara (The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo), Meryl Streep (The Iron Lady), Michelle Williams (My Week with Marilyn)

WILL WIN: In the weeks leading up to Oscar night, the race has come down to two actresses: Viola Davis and Meryl Streep. Streep is perceived by many to be the frontrunner, and with 17 Oscar nods to her credit (more than any other actor in history), she is maybe Hollywood’s greatest living actress. As such, she’s a threat anytime she garners a nod, but although her performance as Margaret Thatcher in The Iron Lady was strong, the film itself was considerably weaker. Which leaves us with Davis, who starred in the enormously popular adaptation of The Help, and imbued that film with a much-needed dose of gravity and humanity.

SHOULD WIN: Just give the gold guy to Viola. If nothing else, I’m guessing the actress will make an acceptance speech that won’t leave a dry eye in the house.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: While We Need to Talk About Kevin has yet to make its way to our neck of the woods, word of Tilda Swinton’s searing performance has not been as slow to filter in. It’s the kind of difficult role in the kind of difficult story at which Swinton excels—and when she excels, few other actresses (up to and possibly including Streep) can touch this intelligent, fascinating actress.

Best Supporting Actor

NOMINEES: Kenneth Branagh (My Week with Marilyn), Best Actor and Best Actress, Brad Pitt (Moneyball), Philip Seymour Hoffman (The Master), Albert Finney (Albert Nobbs)

WILL WIN: Without a doubt, this is the toughest category to call. Early predictions skew toward George Clooney’s turn in The Descendants, which is another impeccably nuanced performance by an actor who rarely makes a misstep. However, given The Artist’s awards-season momentum, it would seem Jean Dujardin is now the actor to beat. So, who will actually win? Flip a coin.

SHOULD WIN: As an actor and all-around hunk, I can generally take or leave Brad Pitt. Don’t get me wrong: he’s an exceedingly fine actor, he’s just not one who typically flips my pancakes. But every now and again, to borrow a baseball metaphor, he takes a part and sways for the fences (think Inglourious Basterds), and his presence onscreen becomes positively magnetic. Such is the case with his portrayal of Oakland A’s manager Billy Beane in Moneyball. Never has a movie about baseball statistics been so darn good, and Pitt is, in large part, responsible for that.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: While Ryan Gosling may seem like a shoo-in for this non-accolade—and his not being nominated was a snub indeed—even more inexplicable was the Academy’s slighting of Michael Fassbender for Shame. If possible, Fassbender was the only person to have a bigger year than Gosling, and before the nominees were announced, he was the assumed front-runner in the Best Actor category. Did you have the same year at the movies as we did, Academy?
NOW SHOWING Feb 24 - Mar 1

T1 BEER & WINE ALLOWED IN THEATRE 1: 21 & OVER ONLY

Join us for Our Annual Social Awards Party! Ticket Sales Available: $40/$50 or $100/$125 VIP www.pickfordevents.com for more info! Oscar Sunday: 4:00 PM

NOMINATED FOR 10 ACADEMY AWARDS
The Artist (PG-13) 35mm/100m. All ages screenings return in March. “Drama, comedy, action and romance are intertwined in this gorgously photographed and brilliantly directed film.” USA Today Fri: (1:20), (3:45), 6:15, 8:35 Sat: (1:20), 3:45, 6:15, 8:35 Sun: (11:00 AM), (1:20) Mon - Thu: (1:20), (3:45), 6:15, 8:35

Opening 3/2: Oscar Nominee A Separation

Iron Lady (PG-13) 35mm/105m. “The sharp economy of Lloyd’s direction allows the incontestably great Streep to take impressionistic snatches of a life and build a woman in full. Acting of the highest order.” RS Fri: (2:00), 6:30; Sat: (1:00), 5:30; Sun: (1:30) Mon: (4:00), 6:25; Tue: (3:00); Wed: (2:00), 6:30 Thu: (3:30)

Pariah (R) 35mm/86m. “Rees presents this vivid, hidden culture with raw honesty.” EW Fri: (4:25), 9:00; Sat: (3:25), 8:00 Sun: (11:25 AM); Mon: (1:45), 8:50; Tue: 8:15 Wed: (4:25), 9:00; Thu: 9:00 + More Than a Month (NR) DVD/60m - Tue: 5:30 PM + The Pipedreams Project/White Water Black Gold (NR) DVD/120m - Thu: 6:00 PM

NEW PICKFORD FILM CENTER: 1318 Bay St | 360.738.0735 | PickfordFilmCenter.org

Open 1pm-Close Mon-Fri & 30 Min Before First Showtime on Sat-Sun Join us for a drink before your movie! Mary’s Happy Hour: 4-6pm, M-F $2 Beer/$3 Wine

NOW SHOWING Feb 24 - Mar 1 at PFC’s Limelight Cinema at 1416 Cornwall Check out our old theater’s revamped new space!

CASCADIA WEEKLY 08.12.12

OSCARS, FROM PAGE 25

with Marilyn), Jonah Hill (Moneyball), Nick Nolte (Warrior), Christopher Plummer (Beginners), Max Von Sydow (Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close)

WILL WIN: Endlessly elegant, exceedingly gifted and with the kind of filmography that would make any actor of any age jealous, Christopher Plummer is one of Hollywood’s most curiously underappreciated actors. Indeed, until 2009’s Last Station, Plummer had never before received an Oscar nod of any kind. And, as the Academy often likes to make up for such things by granting awards that seem more about the appreciation of an entire career (see Martin Scorsese’s win for The Departed) rather than a singular project, this will likely be Plummer’s year. Of course, it doesn’t hurt that his performance in Beginners is yet another of his faultlessly wrought dramatic accomplishments.

SHOULD WIN: If anyone other than Christopher Plummer takes home this Oscar, it will be a tragedy of cinematic proportions.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: Yes, this is another Drive-related snubbing. Albert Brooks, known for being pretty jovial onscreen, takes a turn for the decidingly dark in playing one of Drive’s villains—and does so in both shocking and utterly convincing fashion. The performance is easily a career best for Brooks, and his nomination should have been a sure thing.

Best Supporting Actress

SHOULD WIN: If anyone other than Christopher Plummer takes home this Oscar, it will be a tragedy of cinematic proportions.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: Yes, this is another Drive-related snubbing. Albert Brooks, known for being pretty jovial onscreen, takes a turn for the decidingly dark in playing one of Drive’s villains—and does so in both shocking and utterly convincing fashion. The performance is easily a career best for Brooks, and his nomination should have been a sure thing.

Best Supporting Actress

NOMINEES: Berenice Bejo (The Artist), Jessica Chastain (The Help), Melissa McCarthy (Bridesmaids), Janet McTeer (Albert Nobbs), Octavia Spencer (The Help)

WILL WIN: If Viola Davis gave The Help a much-needed dose of humanity, it was Octavia Spencer who gave it its spice and sass. Together, the two were responsible for much of the success of this movie, and if Davis is deserving of a Best Actress award, Spencer should certainly be granted this accolade, as her performance is the definition of “supporting.” Plus, she’s scooped up a number of pre-Oscar awards, and such things are typically a pretty fair predictor of success come the big night.

SHOULD WIN: The Academy has proven itself to be far too Serious and Important to waste any time on comedies, which is why Melissa McCarthy’s nomination for her side-splitting and fearless turn in Bridesmaids comes as such a shock. It looks like even the staid folks who make up the voting bloc could not deny the insane hilarity brought to bear by the actress, and perhaps they’ll award her breakout performance accordingly.

SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED: It’s gotta be tough to share screen time with George Clooney. Even playing a sad sack as he did in The Descendants, Clooney could not hide his irrepressible charisma. But there was one person who was able to hold her own against Hollywood’s own force of nature and that was Shailene Woodley. At just 19 years old and with no big-screen experience, Woodley was as poised and perfect an onscreen counterpart to Clooney as any seasoned Hollywood veteran.
FILM SHORTS

2012 Oscar Shorts: Animated & Live Action:
For those of you who watch the Oscars and think the films in the various shorts categories all look to be so cool, this is your chance to see them on the big screen. (Please note: the Animated and Live Action shorts are two separate offerings.) ★★★★★
(Unrated • 1 hr. 20 min.)
PFC’s Limelight See www.pickfordfilmcenter.com for showtimes.

Act of Valor: Ever since SEAL Team 6 killed Osama Bin Laden, Navy SEALs are the hottest commodity going. So why not give them their own movie? No, this is not a dramatized account of their raid on Bin Laden, rather an action movie with the "action" part of the equation provided by actual Navy SEALs. Because when we are very busy decimating the enemy in order to fight multiple wars, what we really want our armed forces to do is make movies. Hollywood + the Navy = FAIL. ★ (R • 1 hr. 41 min.)
Bellis Fair 1:10 | 3:40 | 7:20 | 9:30

The Artist: Ten Oscar nominations for a black-and-white silent film? If you think Oscar is trying to hit you over the head with how good this movie is, you’d be right. (21 and older only.) ★★★★★
(PG-13 • 1 hr. 40 min.)
Pickford Film Center See www.pickfordfilmcenter.com for showtimes.

Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance 3D: I’ve said it before, and I’ll no doubt say it again: just because you can with regard to the use of 3D, doesn’t mean you should. ★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 36 min.)
Sehome 1:15 | 1:45 | 7:25 | 9:25

Chronicles: They’re attractive teenagers with rapidly developing superpowers and no guidance as to how to use them. What could possibly go wrong? ★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 24 min.)
Sunset Square 1:00 | 3:30 | 6:45 | 9:15

Crazy Horse: Paris’ Crazy Horse cabaret is the most famous nude dance show in the world—and as much a must-see for tourists as the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre. This documentary takes you inside this storied house of skin. ★★★★★
(Unrated • 2 hrs. 14 min.)
PFC’s Limelight See www.pickfordfilmcenter.com for showtimes.

The Descendants: Director Alexander Payne teams up with George Clooney and a whole lot of dark humor in what has to be an effort to win every Oscar on Earth this year. They’ve got my vote. ★★★ (R • 1 hr. 55 min.)
Bellis Fair 12:30 | 3:10 | 6:40 | 9:20

Three Views: My father tells me about a movie he wants to see, that movie is going to be bad. And my father wants to see this movie. Conclude what you will from that. ★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 36 min.)
Sehome 4:35 | 10:00

See how two opposing groups are actually more alike than different, as each embraces an ethos of sustainability and stewardship. ★★★★★
(Unrated • 1 hr. 15 min.)
Pickford Film Center Feb. 23 @ 8:00

Safe House: I want to poke fun at this movie on the premise that I’m convinced a quality film and Ryan Reynolds cannot exist in the same place at the same time, but I’m a little afraid his costar, Benzel Washington, would find me and kick my ass. He does not suffer fools. Except, maybe, for Ryan Reynolds. ★★★ (R • 1 hr. 55 min.)
Sehome 1:30 | 4:15 | 7:00 | 9:45

The Secret World of Arrietty: You like the Borrowers? You like the animation work of Studio Ghibli (Princess Mononoke, Spirited Away, Howls Moving Castle)? Well, this is a Borrowers movie brought to you by Studio Ghibli. What’s not to like? ★★★★★
(G • 1 hr. 34 min.)
Bellis Fair 1:00 | 3:20 | 7:00 | 9:30

Star Wars: Episode II—The Phantom Menace: Dear George Lucas, We are all trying to forget this movie exists. Instead of tinkering with it and foisting it upon us again, how about you release the original theatrical versions of Star Wars, Empire, and Jedi? And, yes, I am indeed one of those geeks. Deal with it. ★★★ (PG • 2 hrs. 13 min.)
Sunset Square 11:45am | 2:45 | 6:30 | 9:55

This Means War: It’s Chris Pine vs. Tom Hardy in this spy vs. spy comedy/action caper. They’re jousting for the heart of Reese Witherspoon. Which one will she choose? Oh, Reese, you and your First World problems. ★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 37 min.)
Sunset Square 11:30am | 2:15 | 4:25 | 7:00 | 9:35

The Vow: For the love of all that is holy, Rachel McAdams. Was it not bad enough that you inflicted The Notebook on all of us? You have to commit this crime against cinema too? You are a fine actress. Make better choices. ★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 44 min.)
Bellis Fair 1:20 | 3:40 | 7:30 | 10:00

Wanderlust: I’m aware that legions of folks have little or no use for Jennifer Aniston as an actress. But I am not one of those people. This movie appears to be terrible, but it has Aniston and perennially funny Paul Rudd as its stars, so its got at least two redeeming qualities. ★★★ (R • 1 hr. 38 min.)
Bellis Fair 12:50 | 3:30 | 6:50 | 9:40

The Woman in Black: Recently, we found out that Harry Potter goes to work drunk and has a thing for Ryan Gosling (get in line, buddy). Just in time for the release of his first movie not intended for tweens. I guess he wants us to know he’s all grown up now? ★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 35 min.)
Sunset Square 12:15 | 2:30 | 5:15 | 7:45 | 10:20

Ghost Rider 2: Spirit of Vengeance: I have said it before, and I’ll say it again: just because you can with regard to the use of 3D, doesn’t mean you should. ★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 36 min.)
Sehome 1:15 | 1:45 | 7:25 | 9:25

Gone: As per my mother, "I like that Amanda Seyfried. What’s she doing in this movie?" ★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 35 min.)
Sunset Square 12:00 | 2:15 | 4:45 | 7:20 | 10:10

The Grey: This movie pits Liam Neeson against a pack of bloodthirsty, man-eating wolves. I don’t know who you’re rooting for, but smart money’s on the wolves. ★★★ (R • 1 hr. 57 min.)
Sunset Square 1:30 | 4:15 | 7:10 | 10:00

Hugo: I didn’t see it coming, but with its 11 Oscar nods, this is the film to beat at this year’s Academy Awards. While this year’s Oscar crop ranges from maddening to inexplicable, this is one film that deserves the nominations. All 11 of them. ★★★★★
(PG • 2 hrs. 6 min.)
Sunset Square 3:45 | 6:35

The Iron Lady: Meryl Streep makes for such an uncanny Margaret Thatcher that it earned the actress her 17th Oscar nod. And that’s 17 more times than Thacher was nominated for an Oscar, so Streep must be pretty good. ★★★★ (PG-13 • 1 hr. 45 min.)
Pickford Film Center See www.pickfordfilmcenter.com for showtimes.

Journey 2: The Mysterious Island: The Rock in 3D. Oh, goody. ★ (PG • 1 hr. 34 min.)
Bellis Fair 3:00

Journey 2: The Mysterious Island 3D: The Rock in 3D. Oh, goody. ★ (PG • 1 hr. 34 min.)
Bellis Fair 12:40 | 6:30 | 9:30

More than a Month: Filmmaker Shukree Hassan sets off on a cross-country campaign to end Black History Month. His tongue-in-cheek journey explores the complexity and contradictions of re-aggregating an entire group’s history to one month in a so-called “post-racial” America. ★★★★★
(Unrated • 55 min.)
Pickford Film Center Feb. 28 @ 5:30

Pariah: A critically lauded story about an African-American girl who is coming of age and coming out as a lesbian at the same time. ★★★★★
(R • 1 hr. 24 min.)
Pickford Film Center See www.pickfordfilmcenter.com for showtimes.
Pedal Driven: This documentary details the clash between freighters and the U.S. Forest Service over bike trails on Forest Service lands near Leavenworth.
A Beginners’ Yoga Series takes place from 9-10:45am every Saturday through March 17 at La Conner’s Crescent Moon Yoga. The course is for those new to yoga, those returning after time off or an injury, and seasoned students who want to review the ABCs of yoga. Cost is $60. More info: (360) 466-3891 or www.blissdogyoga.com

Attend a Family Yoga Workshop from 11:30am-12pm, March 3 at 3 Oms Yoga 1210 Bay Street, suite 810.

Aurvedic Abhyanga Massage 27 at the Skagit Valley Co-op. Local practitioners will be offering services for health, including presentations every half-hour in room 320. In-store, there will be raffles, demos and samples of products and good food. More info: www.skagitfoodcoop.com

“Exploring and Healing with Families” will be the focus of a workshop with Verne Giebles at 6:30pm Tuesday, Feb. 28 at Mount Vernon’s Skagit Valley Co-op.

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SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY In re the Adoption of Infant F., a minor child
No. 12-5-00023-8
SUMMONS AND NOTICE OF HEARING
TERMINATION OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP
Any and all persons claiming a parental interest in the above-named child:
A Petition for Reconciliation and Termination of Parent-Child Relationships and for Adoption, which includes a request for termination of parent-child relationship between the child and any person claiming a parental interest in the child has been filed in the above-entitled court. The Petitioners are asking the court for an order permanently terminating the parent-child relationship between you and the child, permanently terminating all of your rights to the child, and for a Decree of Adoption declaring the Petitioners to be the legal parents of the child.

The child was born on January 27, 2012, in Bellingham, Washington. The name of the child was formerly Jayden Payad. In order to defend against the Petition by stating your defense in writing and by serving a copy upon Joyce S. Schwensen (the attorney for the Petitioners) at the address below within thirty days after date this Summons is served upon you, or an order setting a hearing on the termination of your parent-child relationship with the child by default will be entered. A default order is where the Petitioners are entitled to what they ask for because you have not responded. If you serve a notice of appearance on Joyce S. Schwensen (the attorney for the Petitioners) at the address below, you are entitled to notice before a default order may be entered.

One method of serving a copy of your response on the Petitioners is to send it by certified mail with return receipt requested. If service is made by mail, the service shall be deemed completed upon the third day following the day upon which the response is placed in the mail, unless the third day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, in which event service shall be deemed completed on the first day after the third day.

For a right to be represented by an attorney. If you are indigent and request an attorney, an attorney will be appointed for you. You have a right to file a claim of paternity under chapter 26.26 of the Revised Code of Washington. Your failure to file a claim of paternity under chapter 26.26 of the Revised Code of Washington or to respond to the Petition for Reconciliation and Termination of Parent-Child Relationships and for Adoption which has been filed herein on or before the thirty days of the date this Summons is served upon you is grounds to terminate your parent-child relationship with the child.

If the child is an Indian child as defined by the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq., and if you acknowledge paternity of the child or if your paternity is established prior to the termination of the parent-child relationship, your parental rights may not be terminated unless you give written consent to the termination of your parent-child relationship.

The court hearing on the termination of your parental rights shall be on March 21, 2012, at 1:30 p.m. in Department A, 2nd Floor of the Snohomish County Courthouse, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue, Everett, Washington 98201.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR AT THIS HEARING OR RESULT IN A DEFAULT ORDER PERMANENTLY TERMINATING ALL OF YOUR RIGHTS TO THE ABOVE-NAMED CHILD.

Dated this 9th day of February, 2012 at Everett, Washington.

Joyce S. Schwensen
Attorney for Petitioners
WSBA Number: 14520

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I think, therefore, I am astounded to see the Crusade-like rekindling of the fires of former crimes, and refuse to judge politicians on their leanings on a perceived moral similarity to be enslaved by a corporate dominated system, and refuse to utilize to guide their political decisions. I think, therefore, a woman I left the Catholic church years ago and would never support a political party (GOP) that has such an impoverished imagination.

Think about it, the poverty, the home foreclosures, the educational needs, the millions without healthcare, the need for job creation, and the GOP’s main focus is on. How Catholic is that?

Teresa DIX, Mount Vernon

I am deeply troubled by the reluctance of a significant portion of our populace to educate themselves on fact, while being blinded by a belief system that they utilize to guide their political decisions. As we as individuals base their political leanings on a perceived moral similarity and refuse to judge politicians on their actions and behavior, we will all continue to be enslaved by a corporate dominated government of greed that only serves the richest among us.

We need to rely on our own analysis based on the massive factual material available, rather than rely merely on a narrative driven by partisan politics and corporate interests because it’s easy and readily available. What happened to free thought and critical analysis?

Jason Rinne, Ferndale
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The Bellingham Shambhala Meditation Center hosts an open house and introductory talk at 7pm most Mondays at its digs on the third floor of the Masonic Hall, 1181 N. State St. More info: www.bellingham.shambhala.org

Attorney Alex Ransom
(360) 671-8500  aransom@tariolaw.com
FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

ARIES (March 21-April 19): I invite you to identify all the things in your life that you really don’t need any more: gadgets that have become outdated, clothes that no longer feel like you, once-exciting music and books and art works that no longer mean what they once did. Don’t stop there. Pinpoint the people who have let you down, the places that lower your vitality, and the activities that have become boring and unfashionable. Aries, figure out the traditions that no longer move you, the behavior patterns that no longer serve you, and the compulsive thoughts that have a freaking life of their own. Get all that? Dump at least some of them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): If you’re a woman, you could go to the perfume section of the department store and buy fragrances that would cause you to smell like Jennifer Lopez, Britney Spears, Eva Longoria, or Paris Hilton. If you’re a man, an hour from now you could be basking in an aura that makes you resemble a celebrity like Antonio Banderas, Usher, David Beckham, or Keith Urban. You could even mix and match, wearing the Eva Longoria scent on your manly body or Usher on your female form. But I don’t recommend that you do any of the above. More than ever before you need to be yourself, your whole self, and nothing but yourself. Trying to act like or be like anyone else should be a taboo of the first degree.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): “I try to take one day at a time,” says Ashleigh Brilliant, “but sometimes several days attack me all at once.” I think you may soon be able to say words to that effect, Gemini—and that’s a good thing. Life will seem more concentrated and meaningful than usual. Events will flow faster and your awareness will be extra intense. As a result, you should have exceptional power to unleash transformations that could create ripples lasting for months. Would you like each day to be the equivalent of nine days? Or would four be enough for you?

CANCER (June 21-July 22): When actor Ashton Kutcher is working on the set of his TV show Two and a Half Men, he enjoys spacious digs. His trailer is two stories high and has two bathrooms as well as a full kitchen. Seven 60-inch TVs are available for his viewing pleasure. As you journey on the far side of reality, Cancerian, it might be tempting for you to try to match that level of comfort. But what’s more important than material luxury will be psychological and spiritual aids that help keep you attuned to your deepest understandings about life. Be sure you’re well-stocked with influences that keep your imagination vital and upbeat. Favorite symbols? Uplifting books? Photos of mentors? Magic objects?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Veterans of war who’ve been wounded by shrapnel often find that years later, some of the metal fragments eventually migrate to the surface and pop out of their skin. The moral of the story: The body may take a long time to purify itself of toxins. The same is true about your psyche. It might not be as easy and quickly get rid of the poisons it has absorbed, but you should never give up hoping it will find a way. Judging by the astrological omens, I think you are very close to such a climactic cleansing and catharsis, Leo.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Distilled water is a poor conductor of electricity, for H2O to have electrodenductivity, it must contain impurities in the form of dissolved salts. I see a timely lesson in this for you, Virgo. If you focus too hard on being utterly clean and clear, some of life’s rather chaotic but fertile and invigorating energy may not be able to flow through you. That’s why I suggest you experiment with being at least a little impure and imperfect. Don’t just tolerate the messiness. Learn from it; thrive on it; even exult in it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): According to my reading of the astrological omens, you are neither in a red-alert situation nor are you headed for one. A pink alert may be in effect, however. Thankfully, there’s no danger or emergency in the works. Shouting and bolting and leaping won’t be necessary. Rather, you may simply be called upon to come up with unexpected responses to unpredictable circumstances. Unscripted plot twists could prompt you to take actions you haven’t rehearsed. It actually might be kind of fun as long as you play with the perspective Shakespeare articulated in As You Like It: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): “Dear Rob: For months I’ve had a recurring dream in which I own a pet snake. Here’s the problem: The only cage I have to keep the snake in is sadly inadequate. It has widely spaced bars that the snake just slips right through. In the dream I am constantly struggling to keep the snake in its cage, which is exhausting, since it’s impossible. Just this morning, after having the dream for the billionth time, I finally asked myself, what’s so terrible about letting the snake out of its cage? So I gratefully wrote myself this permission note: ‘It is hereby allowed and perfectly acceptable to let my dreamsnake out of its cage to wander freely.’ - Scorpio Devotee.” Dear Devotee: You have provided all your fellow Scorpios with an excellent teaching story for the upcoming weeks. Thank you!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): For millions of years, black kite nest-builders made their nests with leaves, twigs, grass, mud, fur and feathers. In recent centuries they have also borrowed materials from humans, like cloth, string and paper. And in the last few decades, a new element has become quite popular. Eighty-two percent of all black kite nest-builders now use white plastic as decoration. I suggest you take inspiration from these adaptable creatures, Sagittarius. It’s an excellent time for you to add some wrinkles to the way you shape your home base. Departing from tradition could add significantly to your levels of domestic bliss.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): There are many examples of highly accomplished people whose early education was problematical. Thomas Edison’s first teacher called him “addled,” and thereafter he was homeschooled by his mother. Winston Churchill did so poorly in school he was punished. Benjamin Franklin had just two years of formal education. As for Einstein, he told his biographer, “my parents were merely players.” As You Like It perspective Shakespeare articulated in As You Like It: “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.”

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Nigeria has been in the news a lot, but the majority of Nigerians, over 70 percent, live on less than a dollar a day. Where does the money go? Aquarius, you may soon be able to say words to that effect, most likely with being at least a little impure and imperfect. Something that has widely spaced bars that the snake just slips right through. In the dream I am constantly struggling to keep the snake in its cage, which is exhausting, since it’s impossible. Just this morning, after having the dream for the billionth time, I finally asked myself, what’s so terrible about letting the snake out of its cage? So I gratefully wrote myself this permission note: ‘It is hereby allowed and perfectly acceptable to let my dreamsnake out of its cage to wander freely.’ - Scorpio Devotee.” Dear Devotee: You have provided all your fellow Scorpios with an excellent teaching story for the upcoming weeks. Thank you!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Gawker.com notes that American politician John McCain tends to repeat himself—a lot. Researchers discovered that he has told the same joke at least 27 times in five years. (And it’s such a feeble joke, it’s not worth re-telling.) In the coming week, Pisces, please please please avoid any behavior that resembles this repetitious, habit-bound laziness. You simply cannot afford to be imitating who you used to be and what you used to do. As much as possible, reinvent yourself from scratch—and have maximum fun doing it.
Across
1 Stations in some labs
4 “Mama’s Gun” singer Erykah
8 U.S. Surgeon General under Reagan
12 “Play something better!”
13 Prized cards, to collectors
14 Polite refusal
15 Tip collector
16 Spoiler in a familiar saying
18 “Oh 7, why’d you have to go and eat 9? And 6, did you help 7 out of fear? I’m shocked!”
20 Swamp beast
21 National chain of “bakery-cafes”
22 Caprice
23 Big cheese in Holland
27 Bodily sac
28 “I can see you on a cold day and you’re like a cloud...I’m impressed...”
32 Twisted, like a smile
33 Falls on many honeymoon trips
34 Rum ___ Tugger (47-down character)
37 “Hmmm...I’m stumped as to how you landed a role on ‘The Addams Family...’
39 Without leaves
42 Those ladies, in Tijuana
43 Radio choices
44 GM service
47 Chaz’s mother
48 “Oh yeah, like I’d ever see a guy with a ruffled shirt and heaving chest in real life...”
53 Ad line spoken while grabbing a box of cereal back
54 ___ Lingus (Irish airline)
56 Year, to Yvette
57 1970s model Cheryl
58 Wu-Tang Clan member
59 Suffix after Brooklyn
60 Lat. and Lith., once
61 Drops in a field

Down
1 Simple sammich
2 One of a pair of newscasters
3 Group of sisters
4 ___ mi (Vietnamese sandwich)
5 Vicinity
6 Red ink
7 Mil. branch at Lackland
8 It’ll floor ya
9 Hawk relative
10 Canadian NHL team
11 Test in H.S.
12 Campus recruiting org.
13 Serpent deity group, in Hinduism (in RUN AGAINST)
14 Polite refusal
15 Tip collector
16 Spoiler in a familiar saying
17 Quick swim
19 Grave marker
22 Dir. opposite ESE
23 Do some video production
24 Early info-sorting program
25 Mythical giant with 100 eyes
26 Ben Stiller’s mom Anne ___
27 Bodily sac
28 “I can see you on a cold day and you’re like a cloud...I’m impressed...”
29 “Would You Like to Buy ___?” (“Sesame Street” song)
30 Greek war god
31 Body art, for short
34 It’s swiped to check in
35 Command in some games of tag
36 “North by Northwest” film studio
37 Stinging herbs
38 Mayor of Los Angeles, 2001-2005
39 Meticulously-trimmed tree
40 Name
41 They’re given in the “Wheel of Fortune” bonus round
45 “Ellen” actor ___ Gross
46 Czech play where the word “robot” came from
47 It left Broadway on Sept. 10, 2000
49 Has dinner
50 Diamondback stats
51 Host Ken of MTV’s “Remote Control”
52 Russian fighter jets
55 Like some sugar

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LOOKING FOR THE GAIA NEXT DOOR

I'm an Occupy girl, age 45, into eco-shamanism and planetary consciousness stuff. I've mostly dated engineers with a playful side who initially seemed open to my interests but quickly became resentful of them. My boyfriend of two years is different—easy-going and willing to expand his horizons. He actually reads the articles I post on Facebook and discusses them with me. We laugh effortlessly and are very giving to each other, but I can't shake the feeling that I should look for somebody more my type (more artistically, politically and spiritually inclined). I fantasize about meeting an artistic shamanic guy who is gorgeous and open and shares my sense of purpose, but the truth is, guys in my social milieu can be very competitive, neurotic and immature. I guess my question is: If you can imagine a better partner, does that mean you should break up?

—Restless

These guys you dated probably believed they were open-minded... until they were invited by their eco-shamanistic girlfriend to something like the "Embrace of the Earth" rite, in which participants spend the night in a grave they dig themselves. As refreshing as you may find it to "tap into the earth's restorative energies," their first thought probably went something like "Thanks, I'll take the night on the 800-thread-count, slave-labor-made sheets. Could you turn on my electric blanket, please, before you go?"

If a guy thinks a girl's hot, he'll buy into whatever her trip is for as long as he can. My steak-loving boyfriend once dated a militant vegan. (He'd hit the Burger King drive-through on his way home.) Obviously, it's a problem if you go out with some engineer dude, tell him you're an "Occupy girl," and he says, "Wow, my company designs the water cannons the police use to spray you people." But, your current restlessness may stem from the notion that it's a great big drum circle out there with a lot of chakra healer-boys and past-life counselors in it.

Having a lot of choice sounds great, but research by social psychologist Dr. Sheena Iyengar suggests that most people get overwhelmed when they have more than a handful of options. Essentially, when it seems the sky's the limit, we're prone to keep looking skyward. We end up not choosing at all, or we choose poorly and end up dissatisfied. A solution for this is "satisficing," a strategy from economist Herbert Simon of committing to the "good-enough" choice—instead of marching off on a never-ending search for spiritually evolved, Burning Man-certified perfection.

Sure, you can probably find your eco-shamanistic cloneboy—a guy who'll take the initiative in signing you both up for "soul retrieval training" when you worry that you forgot yours at Macy's in a past life. But then maybe he'll go all hateful on you on the way home about whether to save the whales or go to the movies. The longer your list of must-haves in a man, the more you shrink your pool of potential partners. Your own appeal is also a factor, and it's probably narrowed by things like not being 22 and your plumpitude, if any. Consider whether it's possible to have friends be your spiritual colleagues and have that be enough. You can wish for the gorgeous, artistic, shamanic perfect man—along with world peace and all the hemp bacon you can eat. But, maybe the realistic man is your sweet spiritual trainee who is fun and giving, dutifully rinses off his used foil, and smiles and pulls the Prius over when you tell him that your spirit animal needs to pee.

SPERM LIMITS

I'm a 32-year-old woman who doesn't particularly like kids. I told my last boyfriend I didn't want kids, but three years in, he said he wanted a family and left. He said he thought I'd eventually change my mind. How do I keep this from happening again?

—Nobody's Mom

You can't just sit down on the first date and ask a man if his semen has a lifeplan. But, let a kid-wanting man get attached (even second-date attached) and he'll want to believe you'll eventually mommy up. So right on date one, you need to drop into conversation that you aren't a "kid person." Make sure a guy responds like he's gotten the bottom-line message: His sperm, your egg, they ain't gonna party. Now, some guys might not have fully considered the issue of kids, so you might weave the subject in on subsequent dates for reinforcement. If you're 22, a major compatibility issue is, "Eeuw, you like Coldplay?" At 32, you really need to know up front if one of you is musing, "I wonder what we'll name the twins" and the other's thinking "Whatever they called them at the pound is fine by me." 

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Sudoku

HOW TO SUDOKU: Arrange the digits 1-9 in such a way that each digit occurs only once in each row, only once in each column, and only once in each box. Try it!

```plaintext
8 7 1 5 6
2 4 3 9 7
1 5 9 8 2
6 7 4 1 3
7 3 2 1 8
5 1 4 7 6
9 2 3 7 6
3 7 1 4 2
6 8 7 1 5
```
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Brown Lantern
BRUNCH, BURGERS AND BOOZE

THE BROWN Lantern is not your typical brunch establishment.
A bar in downtown Anacortes that has been in business since Prohibition (and looks like it), it definitely isn’t a frilly-curtains-and-placemats sort of place. The room has a classic pub ambience—lots of dark wood, sports paraphernalia on the walls and ceiling, painting of a naked lady behind the bar and an inflatable shark wearing a sombrero (doesn’t every bar need one of these?).

There are television screens in a few spots, and if a big game is going on you may hear shrieks and bellows from various corners of the room, but it’s not overwhelmingly a sports bar, and you can ignore the TVs if you like. During the rest of the week they have trivia and game nights and live music, and it can be hard to find a seat when the place is hopping. But then there’s Sunday morning.

Despite living in Skagit County for nearly 15 years, my husband and I only recently started going to the Brown Lantern (what can I say, we’re slow). But one Sunday after a rather wet hike in the Anacortes Forestlands, we felt the need of a burger and a beer and wandered in. It wasn’t too busy, with a few locals at the bar. We sat in the window looking across Commercial Avenue and immediately felt right at home.

When the Sunday Brunch menu was put in front of us, we were amazed. The regular lunch menu looked promising, but we hadn’t realized that the pub also serves breakfast on Sundays, beginning at 10am, and their selection is exciting: a burrito stuffed with bacon and tater tots ($9), huevos rancheros ($9), a breakfast burger ($9.50), and—what caught my eye immediately—breakfast mac and cheese ($10). I didn’t order it that visit, but I have since rectified that. Several times.

So, what’s in breakfast mac and cheese, you ask? Macaroni noodles, of course, and cheese sauce, which some days is quite soupy and other days more stiff (I like it when it needs to be eaten with a soup spoon). It has spinach, tomato and onions, so you can say you ate vegetables, pieces of bacon, and two fried eggs right on top.

When you cut up the eggs and stir everything together in a big gloppy pile with a splash of Tabasco it becomes a transcendent experience. If you’re feeling at all fragile from your Saturday night, it has the effect of soothing and uplifting. If you’re just hungry, it will definitely take care of that. Don’t get it if you’re only a bit peckish, though, because if you’re like me you will eat too much of it and need to go take a long nap. Well, you may want to do that anyway. Especially if you have a beer with it.

The pub has a good range of beers on tap, including several Georgetown Brewery selections, and a decently stocked bar. We haven’t tried ordering anything too adventurous, but the bartenders know their way around the basics. Their Bloody Mary is well built, and they offer mimosas by the pint. Cocktail prices are very reasonable, making it a great place for a little hair of the dog on a Sunday morning. Getting a beer with breakfast will not raise any eyebrows here, I promise.

All of the food we’ve had at the Brown Lantern has been good. I really enjoy their Reuben ($11, served with horseradish sauce), and the lamb burger ($15) is surprisingly perky, with its topping of feta and mango chutney. Sweet potato fries are excellent, crinkle cut and sprinkled with cheese and parsley. Their biscuits and gravy ($6) are hot with pepper and they don’t stint on the rich sausage gravy, and the regular Lantern breakfast ($8) is a very reasonably sized assortment of toast, tater tots, eggs and bacon.

Unfortunately, a recent visit with friends involved some severely undercooked bacon, but my friend assured me that the tater tots were of very high quality. All of it is good, but I personally just have trouble ordering anything except the mac and cheese. And maybe, someday, that tater tot burrito.
WED., FEB. 22
SEAFOOD EXCHANGE: A one-day Wild Seafood Exchange conference aimed at the independent commercial fisherman who want to learn about marketing to restaurants, retailers, brokers and seafood buyers takes place throughout the day at the Lakeyard Inn Conference Center. Entry is $90-$110.

GLUTEN-FREE BREAKFAST: Jean Layton, ND, leads a “Breakfast: Quick and Gluten-Free” course from 6-8:30pm at the Cordata Community Food Co-op. Cost is $35.

GLUTEN-FREE BAKING: Lindsay Kastelic from the Baker’s Cousin leads a “Gluten-Free Baking” class at 6:30pm at Ciao Thyme, 207 Unity St. Entry is $40.

THURS., FEB. 23
SISTER CITIES POTLUCK: Bring a dish to share among the Bellingham Sister Cities Association at 6:30pm at Fairhaven’s cafeteria at the Bellingham Technical College, 3028 Lindbergh Ave.

APPLES TO WHEAT: Skagit County’s WSU extension hosts a video screening focusing on “Skagit County Agriculture: Apples to Wheat” at 7pm at Mount Vernon’s Lincoln Theatre, 712 S. First St. Admission is free and includes musical accompaniment by Smokewagon.

VEGGIE GARDENING: Learn more about “Basic Veggie Gardening in Whatcom County” at 11am at the Bakersview Nursery, 945 E. Bakersview Rd. At 1pm, there’ll be a “Seed Starting Basics” clinic. Both events are free, but you should reserve a space in advance.

BEER OPEN HOUSES: As part of the statewide Washington Beer Open House, attend ale-related celebrations from 12-5pm at Bellingham’s Boundary Bay Brewery (1107 Railroad Ave.) and Chuckanut Brewery & Kitchen (601 W. Holly St). Expect tours, tastings and more.

SUN., FEB. 26
BIG WHITE BRUNCH: The Big White Bean offers up a Sunday Brunch starting at 10:30am at Ciao Thyme’s In the Kitchen, 207 Unity St. Entry is $35 and includes four comforting courses, tea, coffee and beer served plain, red or beer-mosa style.

MON., FEB. 27
SLOW FOOD: Gigi Berardi leads a “Slow Food and Nourishing Traditions” presentation at 6:30pm at the Community Food Co-op’s Connection Building, 1220 N. Forest St. Entry is $10-$15.

TUES., FEB. 28
WINE TASTING 101: Food and wine expert Laurent Martel leads a “Wine Tasting 101” course starting at 7pm tonight and continuing March 6 and 13 at the Cordata Community Food Co-op. Cost to develop confidence in your palate is $85.

WED., FEB. 29
MAN PIE PRIMER: Man Pies owner and chef Bryce Sharpe will team up with Robert Fang for a “Three Winners” course at 6pm at the Cordata Community Food Co-op. The $39 course will feature three Bite of Bellingham winners created by Man Pies.

DIPS, SPREADS, ETC.: Sign up in advance for a free “Dips, Spreads, and Pates” course with Carol Roberge at 6:30pm at Mount Vernon’s Skagit Valley Food Co-op.

SAT., FEB. 25
COMMUNITY MEAL: All are welcome at the free, bimonthly Community Meal from 10am-1pm at the United Church of Ferndale, 2034 Washington St.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPE: Get a primer on “Designing and Planning an Edible Landscape” at 10:30am at Everson’s Cloud Mountain Farm, 6906 Goodwin Rd. Entry is free.

doit

Learn more about “hospitality versus entertaining” when authors from Fraser Valley and King County share stories and recipes from their popular blog and book, Mennonite Girls Can Cook, Feb. 24 at the Blaine Public Library.
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