

WEEKLY

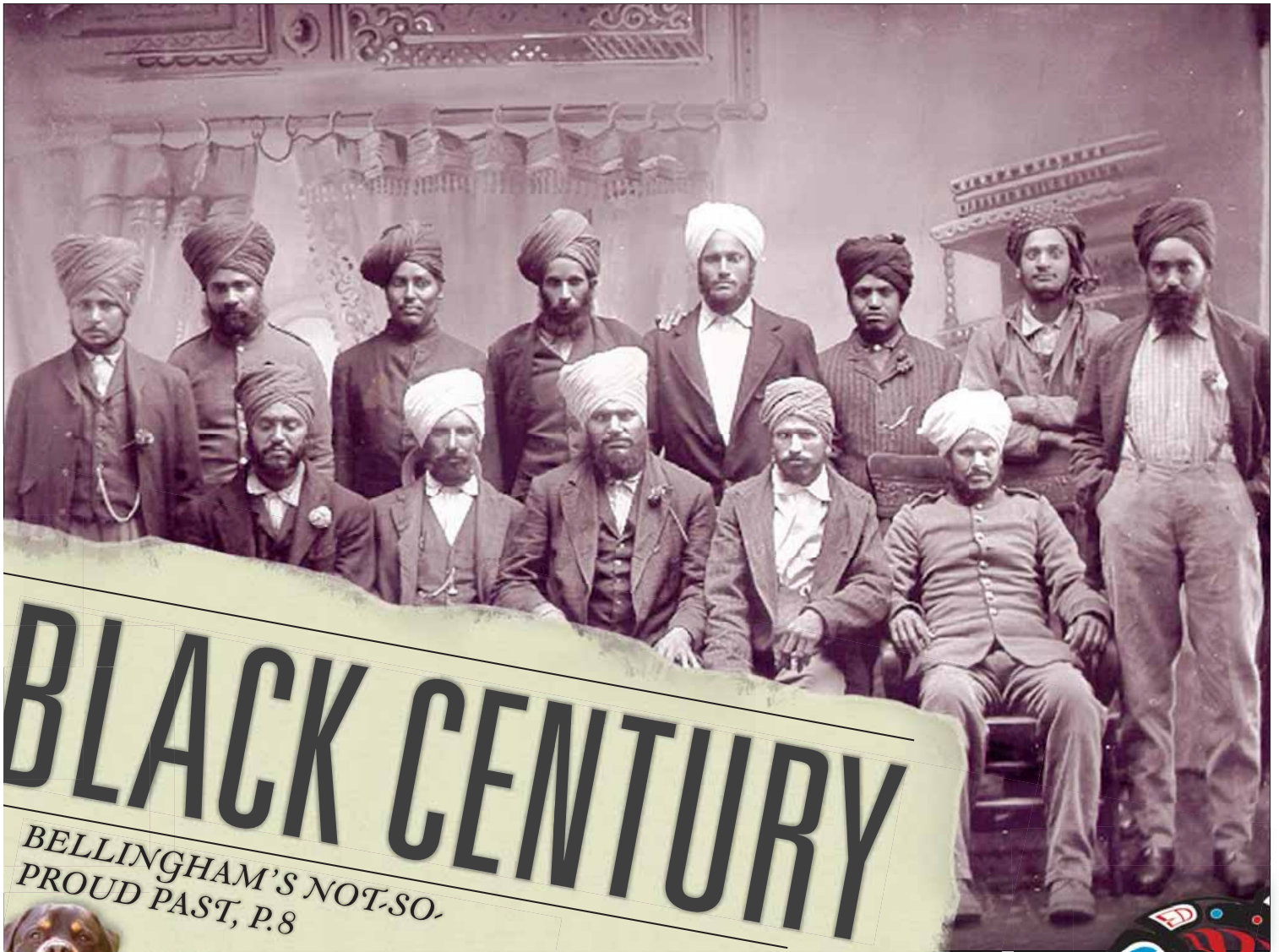
REPORTING FROM THE
HEART OF CASCADIA

08/29/07 :: 02.35 :: FREE

TORTURED TENURE, P. 6

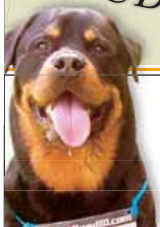
KASEY ANDERSON, P. 20

GLOBAL WARNING, P. 24



BLACK CENTURY

BELLINGHAM'S NOT-SO-
PROUD PAST, P. 8



**HOUND
HOEDOWN:** DOG
DAYS OF SUMMER, P. 16

JAZZ FESTIVAL:
AURAL ACUMEN IN
ANACORTES, P. 21

**BELLINGHAM
TRAVERSE:**
SIMULATING THE SALMON, P. 17





visual

GALLERIES ◊ OPENINGS ◊ PROFILES



BY JORY M. MICKELSON

Balancing Act

A temporary fusion of stone

LAST SPRING, a clerk at the Bellingham Public Market was ringing up my bell peppers and carrots when I saw them: the rocks. By the front windows, beyond the check stand, stood piles of stones that appeared to defy gravity. The rocks were stacked, one on top of the other, seemingly at odds with the laws of physics.

I asked the checker about the display. "Oh, those," she replied. "Pretty amazing, aren't they?" On closer inspection, I could see the rocks were not attached with glue, metal rods or wire. The sign explained that these stones used gravity and balancing to hold them together. (It also cautioned touching the stones would cause them to topple.)

The stacked rocks were the work of Bellingham resident Shane Hart, who began to defy the laws of nature 12 years ago at San Diego's Seaport Village. He says he doesn't have an art degree and taught himself how to balance stones.

"The first time a rock clicked into place, I was hooked," Hart says on



his website. The act of balancing stones requires patience and exploration. The only tools Hart uses are gloves to protect his hands.

Balanced stone towers are startling to see, but not a new phenomenon. Several cultures, especially Buddhists, have practiced this type of art as a lesson in impermanence. Hart terms his style of balancing Upala Yoga. The two words are taken from Sanskrit: "Upala" means stone and "Yoga" translates as union: Stone Union.

Hart began balancing stones at Boulevard Park in January of 2007. A crowd gathered and began asking him questions. Since then, Hart has spent as many as 12 hours some Saturdays creating rock sculptures on the park's beach. He says this kind of "performing" is new to him.

Since his first foray at Boulevard Park, Hart says he always gathers an audience when he works. After the Public Market displayed his work last May, the interest in his balancing act has steadily increased. People have offered to buy his art, but do not understand the sculptures are only temporary.

"Impermanence is actually an important lesson," Hart says. He creates stone art as a metaphor for life's ephemerality and notes onlookers are amazed he spends so much time working on something that won't last.

Most of the sculptures average five feet in height, yet each is unique and can take up to an hour to build. Hart uses rocks he finds in the areas that he works. All his creations at Boulevard Park use stones from the beach and no two are ever alike.

A strong breeze or a heavy footstep can cause Hart's sculptures to tumble, but he says he likes making art he's not tied to. "When I'm done, I take it down and I am free." ☺

DO IT

EVENTS

THURS., AUG. 30

OPEN STUDIO: An open studio on figure study will be held from 7-9pm at BellinghamART, 1701 Ellis St., suite 209. Bring your own drawing and/or painting materials. Cost is \$8-\$10. For more info: 738-8379.

SAT., SEPT. 1

ART, ANTIQUES: Head to Whidbey Island from 5-8pm for the Coupeville Art and Antique Walk. The free tour is self-guided. For more info: 678-9200.

SEPT. 1 - 2

STUDIO TOUR: From 10am-6pm, catch the *Whatcom Chief* for the semiannual Lummi Island Artists Studio Tour. A bevy of art mediums will be featured at 20 locations throughout the island. Maps will be available at each venue or at the Islander store. For more info: 758-7121 or lummi-island.com.

SEPT. 1 - 3

GLACIER SHOW: What is being dubbed "the first art show in Glacier" happens daily from 10am-5pm at Milano's, 9990 Mt. Baker Hwy. Skip Hicks, Phil Hanson, Kristina Abernathy, Dan Ryan, Heather and Jesse Biermann, and Bob Lee will be the participating artists. For more info: 599-2096.

SUN., SEPT. 2

ARTIST SALON: An Artist Salon and potluck happens from 6-8pm at the Center for Expressive Arts, 1317 Commercial St., suite 201. The event is open to the public. For more info: 920-2292 or maryburwell@gmail.com.

ONGOING EXHIBITS

ALLIED ARTS: "Construction/Deconstruction" and "Elusive Designs" by photographer Tore Oftness and painter Susan Rotondo can be seen through Sept. 15 at Allied Arts, 1418 Cornwall Ave. For more info: 676-8548.

BLUE HORSE: Peruse "A Celebration of Stone Sculpture" through Sept. 29 at the Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W. Holly St. For more info: 671-2305.

BOUNDARY BAY: View works by pop artist Andrea Heimer through Aug. 31 at Boundary Bay Brewery, 1107 Railroad Ave. For more info: andreaheimer.com.

CENTER FOR EXPRESSIVE ARTS: Peruse the "Artist Salon Members Show" through Sept. 2 at the Center for Expressive Arts, 1317 Commercial St. For more info: 920-2292.

COLOPHON CAFÉ: "The Way of Light," an abstract spiritual art exhibit by Sherman R. Buck, shows through August at the Colophon Café, 1208 11th St. For more info: 647-0092.

HISTORICAL MUSEUM: "Harvesting the Light: Images of Contemporary Farm Life" shows through November at La Conner's Skagit County Historical Museum, 501 4th St. For more info: (360) 466-3365.

LUCKY DUMPSTER: View an exhibit by installation artist Sheila Klein through Aug. 31 at the Lucky Dumpster and dear edison gallery, 14011 MacTaggart Ave. For more info: (360) 766-4049.

MINDPORT EXHIBITS: Edmund Lowe's "Paris" exhibit features photos of the City of Lights through Sept. 5 at Mindport Exhibits, 210 W. Holly St. For more info: 647-5614 or mindport.org.

MONA: "Affect/Effect: Adventures in Image, Light and Glass" is on display through Oct. 7 at La Conner's Museum of Northwest Art, 121 S. First St. For more info: (360) 466-4446 or museumofnwart.org.

SHOP CURATOR: See paper cuts and tiles by the late Northwest artist Helmi Juvonen at an exhibit titled "Pearl of the Northwest" from 11am-6pm, Wed.-Sun, through Sept. 1 at Shop Curator in Edison. For more info: (360) 483-9105.

SMITH & VALLEE: Sarah Ruth-Vergin's farming-based exhibit, "The Humanity of Land," can be viewed from 11am-6pm every Fri.-Sun. until Sept. 9 at Smith & Vallee Gallery, 5472 Gilkey Ave., Edison. For more info: (360) 305-4892.

WHATCOM MUSEUM: "American Abstraction," "Site Specific," and "Teaching Learning—Learning Teaching" are currently on display at the Whatcom Museum, 121 Prospect St. For more info: 676-6981 or whatcommuseum.org.