

**Weather:**  
Partly cloudy  
High, 69  
Low, 48

**Sky Diving:**  
Evergreen photographer dips in the air

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# The Summer Evergreen

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SINCE 1895

## Butch stirs controversy

By Alan Bloss

The Summer Evergreen

Butch the Cougar, the official mascot of Washington State University, created a great deal of controversy after participating in Seattle's Gay Pride Parade last month.

After a picture of the mascot at the parade appeared in the July 9 issue of The Summer Evergreen, several alumni who wrote in felt it was inappropriate for Butch to be associated with such an event.

Athletic department officials said they are required to lend the costume to any official school group which requests it.

The outfit was worn by a member of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Allies Program who is also a lesbian and WSU alumna.

"I think it was a show by WSU that Butch really is for all the students," said the female who wore the costume but wishes to remain anonymous. "Butch was representing a large portion of WSU."

"I think the Gay Pride Parade is an apolitical function," she said. "I don't think (Butch) should be restricted to sports, he should be restricted to groups associated

with ASWSU."

The use of the costume by the GLBA has prompted school officials to consider creating a formal policy for how the three costumes are lent out, but only to help prioritize who should get one during busy times, Gibson said.

"This is a sanctioned, accepted organization within WSU -- they're part of our family," associate athletic director Harold Gibson said in a related Associated Press article. "So they're going to be treated like anyone else."

In last Tuesday's issue of The Summer Evergreen, Opinions Editor Doug Hughes stated: "Butch should not be allowed at political events of any kind. Our friendly mascot should be reserved for university-wide, universally supported events only."

Wes Taylor, a WSU alumnus who stated his complaints in a letter to the editor, said in an interview Wednesday: "I'm more concerned about the way the university is being portrayed. It puts a bad light on (the university)."

"I want our university to be more above reproach and have a

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Courtesy photo

Butch, entertains crowds at the June 30 Seattle Gay Pride Parade. The presence of Butch at the march stirred controversy after some people voiced opposition to Butch being at the parade.

## Fewer students drop out

By Alice Thomas

The Summer Evergreen

Contrary to popular belief, a healthy economy means fewer students in college.

Improving economic conditions mean more jobs, which can lure students away, David Merkowitz, spokesman for the American Council on Education, told the Associated Press.

"They (students) are more likely to go to school in a bad economy," Merkowitz said.

A national survey of 2,564 schools showed more than a quarter of all college students drop out after their first year.

The latest information available from WSU indicated an 18 percent freshman dropout rate for the 1994-1995 school year, said Terry Flynn, WSU admissions director. Data provided by WSU Institutional Research indicated a 2 percent increase in the freshman dropout rate from the 1989-1990 school year.

Institutional Research data also showed the male dropout rate up 5 percent and the female rate down 1 percent in the five-year span.

More high school students are going to college, but rising tuitions mean some cannot afford to stay in school, Merkowitz said.

"It's taking students a lot longer to

graduate," Merkowitz said. "We could be seeing a lot of stop-outs, not dropouts."

Flynn agreed, saying people drop out for reasons other than academics.

"There are a variety of things going on with them," Flynn said. She mentioned economic conditions and the stop-out students.

The rural location of Pullman also contributes to dropout rates lower than the national average, Flynn said. In bigger cities, people are more likely to quit school to earn money and then return to school, she said.

"Sometimes, some university statis-

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## Pullman future to be discussed

By Laura Shireman

The Summer Evergreen

Groups from Pullman and the general Palouse area will meet to discuss the future of the city Thursday at 7 p.m. at Reaney Park.

The meeting will be in a festival format in which Pullman citizens including WSU students can walk from booth to booth to discuss their ideas and concerns with the several different groups represented there.

"This affair is to introduce people to different planning efforts that are going on," said Fritz Knorr, from the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, one of the two main groups sponsoring the event.

He said PCEI is a non-profit public service organization that deals with community improvement projects. Knorr coordinates the Community Watch project which deals with obtaining "grassroots" input in community planning, he said.

The other organization sponsoring the meeting, the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team steering committee, will try to rally public support for their program which would bring a team of professional architects to Pullman for a weekend to give ideas on developing a community pedestrian

and vehicular transportation plan, said Sandy Satterlee, coordinator of the effort to bring the team to Pullman. The American Institute of Architects would send the team.

"The AIA wants to see very broad-based support," Satterlee said. "We will be asking for people's input (at the Thursday meeting)."

Knorr said other planning groups such as the city of Pullman, WSU, Pullman Civic Trusts, the Greystone Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee will attend the meeting.

"The format is more like a fair than a meeting," he said. Free ice cream will be available.

"This is not a meeting where you sit in a chair and listen to people talk. You can have a dialogue on a one-on-one basis about your concerns."

Knorr became involved with the Thursday meeting because he felt people seldom followed through with their plans for community improvement, he said.

"Our interest is in maintaining contact and keeping people in line with values people have expressed," he said.

For more information, call PCEI at 882-1444.

