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Wednesday, July 21, 2004 - Welcome , NWV

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**News**

**New in the Neighborhood**

by Lauren Ward, Northwest Voice Editor



Northwest residents are waking up and tapping into the wakeboarding trend faster than a pro can demonstrate a new trick. Which means Westside Wakeboard School, which opened in March, has arrived in the neighborhood - and at the lake -- at the perfect time.

"This sport is growing like crazy, and I'm sure a lot of people in the Northwest -- from children to adults, wouldn't mind bettering themselves as beginning, intermediate or advanced riders," said owner Brandon Poser.

The 27-year-old Seattle native and his wife, Alicia, have been wanting to start a school for wakeboarding — a form of waterskiing where both feet are attached to a board — for years. "This business is a first for this town," said Alicia. "There are a few other schools like it in California but not in Bakersfield or even Kern County. Very seldom are there ski boats on the lakes anymore, wakeboarding is certainly the new craze."

The school is operated on Buena Vista Lake, but the Posers are willing to travel to give lessons. All ages can participate, although Brandon prefers working with individuals age 10 and up. Private lessons and group lessons are available, with three to four students typically in the boat at one time.

Lessons vary depending on the individual needs of the student. Beginners will learn the basics such as body position, handle position, edging and pressure. Once these are mastered, the student can experiment with jumping, grabbing, spinning and inverts.

While students can bring their own gear, all equipment is provided by WWS, including wakeboards and bindings from CWB and Skiwarm, ropes and handles from Proline and Accurate and the WWS boat, which is dialed in with a tower, ballast tanks, Wedge and sound system.

Depending on the amount of time spent at the lake, cost varies from \$50

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to \$425 per person. The Posers are willing to work around clients' schedules, including offering weekend lessons with appointments. "And really, the less you know, the better your chances of advancing quickly," said Poser, who is backed by sponsors and can't wait to share his passion with others.

health testing and a no-obligation laser vision correction consultation.

Westside Wakeboard School is currently accepting reservations. For more information, call 587-9199 or 747-0559, or e-mail [Brandon@westsidewakeboard.com](mailto:Brandon@westsidewakeboard.com)

Are you itching to finally ask out your high school's homecoming queen or tell the whole class how you invented Post-its? Thanks to Northwest resident Hao Hoang Ngo, you can now do so for less than it cost to pay off that senior bully.

"One day in 1999, I came across a Web site called classmates.com, which touted itself as a place to find lost friends from high school," said Ngo, who quickly signed up only to find that he had to pay \$29.99 a year for the privilege of contacting any registered user listed on the Web site. "I thought, 'What a ripoff!'" he said.

Ngo began writing code for the home of southhighalumni.net, his alma matter, and tafthighalumni.com, his partner Michael Lowe's alma matter. Over time, the two talked about expanding the Web sites to encompass all local schools as the user-base increased.

Ngo and Lowe's kernalumni.com opened its doors two weeks ago and already has more than 1,800 registered users. They say their free sites have many of the same features, if not more, than other alumni sites — and with a local touch. Features include e-mailing users, personal messaging, photo galleries, community calendars, arcade games and more.

"If you're looking for a fun place to find lost friends from your high school or other high schools, I'd like to invite you to check out kernalumni.com," said Ngo.

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