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# WEEKLY

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REPORTING FROM  
THE HEART OF CASCADIA

WHATCOM \* SKAGIT \* ISLAND COUNTIES

{05.13.15} {#19} {V.10} {FREE}



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# Welding Rodeo

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# visual

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BY AMY KEPFERLE

## Welding Rodeo

WRANGLING SCRAP INTO SCULPTURE

**T**ypically, rodeos focus on the domination of one species over another—whether it's cowboys wrangling half-ton steers or bucking broncos successfully upending the two-legged *homo sapiens* who are trying to stay put in their saddles.

At the Bellingham Technical College's (BTC) annual "Welding Rodeo," however, it's strictly human versus metal.

While it's true that some of the concepts are similar—for example, both types of rodeos are designed to test the skill and speed of their competitors, each requires a certain amount of protective gear, and prizes are bestowed upon the victors—the end results of each hoedown soon make it clear that these events couldn't be more different.

Creativity is the key to what separates one from the other. Over the past 14 years, as the "Welding Rodeo" has morphed from a small event designed to highlight BTC's welding program and the campus itself into a two-day artistic extravaganza, the gathering has grown in both size and focus.

This year's event, which takes place May 15-16 on the BTC campus, may be its most ambitious yet.

The action begins early Friday morning, when the blowing of a loud horn signals to the four-person teams of competitors from Bellingham and around Washington state that it's time to sprint to an enormous pile of donated

scrap metal and choose the materials that will complete their visions for the chosen "Fire and Ice" theme. For the next eight hours—with amateurs on Friday, and pros on Saturday—the teams will toil in their dedicated outdoor work stations to transform the hunks of steel into finished works of art that will be sold to the highest bidders at two separate auctions.

The "Fire and Ice" element of the creative competition is crucial. If the participants don't actively incorporate the theme—and find something interesting to do with the 300-pound blocks of ice each team will be asked to use—they won't qualify.

Seeing how these sculptures come together is the biggest draw for the members of the public who come to the "Welding Rodeo" to watch the welders wrangle their visions into being, but more and more activities have been added over the years that make the experience an interactive one, as well.

Among those offerings are an individual skills challenge for welders of all ages and skill levels; a chance for high school students to perform one free skill (additional skills are \$5, and pre-registration is encouraged); and a public hands-on welding booth that will feature experienced student welders guiding you through the process of creating your own weld.

But that's not all—not by a long shot. In addition to providing information about other Bellingham Technical College programs and professional opportunities in related industries, there'll also be wood-carving demos by Whidbey Island artist Jessi Stack, blacksmith demos by Bob Thomas of Sunset Forge and other trade professionals, and a chance to watch an American Culinary Federation-sanctioned "Culinary Competition" taking place during the same time as the "Welding Rodeo."

To go along with the aforementioned "Fire and Ice" theme, the food-focused event will also include an ice-carving competition—so instead of watching sparks fly, you'll be watching carvers create original works of art with blocks of frozen water. Any way you look at it, it won't be your typical day at the rodeo. ☺



### ATTEND

**WHAT:** 14th annual Welding Rodeo  
**WHEN:** 8am-5pm Fri., May 15 and 8am-5:30pm Sat., May 16  
**WHERE:** Bellingham Technical College, 3028 Lindbergh Ave.  
**COST:** Entry is free  
**INFO:** [www.btc.ctc.edu](http://www.btc.ctc.edu)

## doit

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### THURS., MAY 14

**SHERWOOD WALK-THROUGH:** Join the Whatcom Museum Advocates for a walk-through of Bellingham artists Tom Sherwood's "A Golden Perspective" exhibit at noon at the Lightcatcher Building, 250 Flora St. Tom Wood, Sherwood's longtime friend and an integral organizer of the exhibition, will discuss with Sherwood their insights into the exhibition. Entry is free.

📍 [WWW.WHATCOMMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.WHATCOMMUSEUM.ORG)

#### SAT., MAY 16

**BRICK & TOY FAIR:** Bellingham ComiCon hosts a "Brick & Toy Fair" from 10am-6pm at the Ferndale Events Center, 5715 Barrett Rd. Entry is \$8.

📍 [WWW.BRICKANDTOYFAIR.COM](http://WWW.BRICKANDTOYFAIR.COM)

**ANIME CONVENTION:** A timed art contest, meet-ups, Artist Alley, cosplay creation and game industry panels, karaoke, special guests, a dance party and much more will be part of the sixth annual Bellingham Anime Convention (BA~Con) from 11am-7pm at the Syre Center at Whatcom Community College, 237 W. Kellogg Rd. All ages are welcome; attendees under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

📍 [WWW.BELLINGHAMANIMECON.COM](http://WWW.BELLINGHAMANIMECON.COM)

**FISHBOY SPRING SHOW:** Peruse and purchase the works of folk artist R.R. Clark at a Spring Show taking place from 2-9pm at FishBoy Gallery, 617 Virginia St. (in the Sunnyland neighborhood). Entry is free.

📍 [WWW.FISHBOYGALLERY.COM](http://WWW.FISHBOYGALLERY.COM)

#### MAY 16-17

**CAMANO STUDIO TOUR:** Check out a variety of creative spaces as part of the encore weekend of the Camano Island Studio Tour taking place from 10am—5pm Saturday and Sunday through the lovely land mass. Entry to the self-guided tour is free.

📍 [WWW.CAMANOARTS.ORG](http://WWW.CAMANOARTS.ORG)

#### SUN., MAY 17

**HIVE GRAND OPENING:** Attend a Grand Opening Party from 2-8pm at the Hive, 1208 Bay St #102 (in the alley behind the Upfront Theatre). Activities at Bellingham's newest makerspace will include live music, food from Kurley's fries, onsite T-shirt printing courtesy of Red Boots Design, a membership raffle and more.

📍 [WWW.MAKEDOLEARN.ORG](http://WWW.MAKEDOLEARN.ORG)

### ONGOING EXHIBITS

**ALLIED ARTS:** In honor of Arts Education Month, view professional work by Allied Arts Teaching Artists in Whatcom County through May at Allied Arts, 1418 Cornwall Ave.

📍 [WWW.ALLIEDARTS.ORG](http://WWW.ALLIEDARTS.ORG)

**ART IN THE CITY:** Works by Sarah Denby, Francis X Donovan, Peter Rand, Samuel Eisenmeyers, Jeremy and Ron McManmon and more can be seen at Art in the City through June 14 at 1213 Cornwall Ave.

📍 (503) 415-1642

**ARTWOOD:** Mirrors, art pieces for the walls and small tables by Ray deVries will be highlighted through May at Artwood Gallery, 1000 Harris Ave.

📍 [WWW.ARTWOODGALLERY.COM](http://WWW.ARTWOODGALLERY.COM)

**FISHBOY GALLERY:** Check out the contemporary folk art of RR Clark from 1:30-5pm