

# Striking a chord together



photo by P.W. Braunberger / reporter

**LCC's Lane Chamber Choir** practices "The Road Home" which they sang in a concert on Feb. 13. The concert featured songs from Cuba, Estonia, the Philippines and the United States.



## Lane chamber choir shares stage with premier vocal ensemble

P.W. BRAUNBERGER  
REPORTER

LCC's Lane Chamber Choir returned Feb. 13 from a two-day tour where they performed with Cantus, a choir that the classical music magazine *Fanfare* called "the premier men's vocal ensemble in the United States."

According to Matthew Svoboda, director of the Lane Chamber Choir, Cantus is one of the two professional choirs in the United States that works full-time.

"They were amazing," Lane Chamber Choir member Dalton Dodson said. "To be able to perform with them

was just an insane honor."

Cantus also provided the chamber choir with workshops.

"I got a lot out of their teaching about especially just how the voice works," Dodson said. "It was incredible."

In addition to a joint concert with Cantus and vocal ensembles from Reed College and Marylhurst University, the Lane Chamber Choir performed at one high school in Salem and two in Portland. According to Svoboda, any performance the choir gives at high schools is "a great recruiting opportunity" for LCC.

"That's one of the main ways people discover us," Svoboda said. "And I always talk about our scholarships, our wonderful music program, our student to faculty ratios, the dedication of every teacher here."

Svoboda noted that music scholarships are available to students who take leadership roles in the choir, not just music majors.

According to Svoboda, participation in the performing arts helps students succeed because "it's incredible training for life, for social interaction, for trusting oneself, for using their full faculties."

The choir's soloist, Charlotte Coons, noted that singing helped her overcome social anxiety. Coons claimed that one term she did not participate in the choir was her worst at Lane, both academically and socially.

At the end of the term, the choir will hold a joint concert with the Lane Concert Choir, LCC's beginner choir, and Churchill High School's concert choir.

"That's another way that we engage and reach out to our community and recruit students to our program and to Lane Community College," Svoboda said.

This concert is scheduled for March 5 at 7:30 p.m. in Ragazzino Hall on LCC's main campus. Entrance is available for a suggested donation of \$3-10. All donations support student scholarships.

## Sexual assault reported at Lane



### What to do in the event of an attack on campus

FIONA W. CORRIGAN  
REPORTER

A woman was groped on the Lane Community College main campus on Feb. 9.

Students were sent a Lane Alert through text and email with information about the crime. According to the alert, the person who committed the assault was a white male. He had cropped dark brown hair, a medium build, green eyes and blue track shoes. He approached the student outside of Building 5 and assaulted her. After the victim slapped him, he became verbally aggressive with her before leaving.

"I don't think it's right at all that somebody can't feel safe where they're going to school," Sabrena Saggaf, a student in the GED program at LCC, said.

Students can file a report of sexual assault or harassment with any LCC employee. If uncomfortable reporting an incident with Lane staff, students can make a report online through the mySafety section of the MyLane home page.

Someone who is looking for information and support about an incident but who is not ready to report it can contact a confidential resource, who will not share information with anyone without written consent from the person filing the report. Michelle Barber in Building 19 is a Confidential Resource, and others can be found upon request in the Health Center and the Counseling Center.

Students are encouraged to use LCC's resources regarding sexual assault to help create a safer campus.

## All-ages, all the time



### Two student-run co-ops continue to carry the torch for local music

MAREK BELKA  
REPORTER

Sandwiched between a gleaming sorority house and a Mormon church on Alder Street stand two imposing brick houses. Their yards are strewn with sculptures made from recycled materials. The house on the left has a long veranda covered in chalk graffiti and ringed with weathered couches and armchairs. The one on the right has a "Black Lives Matter" banner draped across its five-story spire and a small flower garden just beginning to bloom during an unseasonably warm February. Many of the windows on the two houses are wide open, inhaling the rare sunshine and exhaling a din of distorted guitar. From the street, the houses may look disheveled to a casual observer, but the insides are coated with layers of murals and adorned with avant-garde art made by residents past and present.

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## NEWS

## theTorch

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STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF  
LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## CONTACT

theTorch  
Lane Community College  
4000 E. 30th Ave.  
Eugene, OR 97405  
(541) 463-5655



@lcctorch



facebook.com/LCCTheTorch

## Emails:

editor@lcctorch.com  
letters@lcctorch.com  
advertising@lcctorch.com  
tips@lcctorch.com



**Gabe Casteel** works on the fascia of an incomplete tiny house. Casteel is a part of a group of community members helping create alternative community living spaces for the homeless.

photos by Anna C.K. Smith / photojournalist

## Eugene plans big for tiny homes

Public-private partnership  
seeks solution to  
homelessness

**CHARLENE  
VENETTE**  
REPORTER

The City of Eugene's 2016 plan to create 600 new dwellings in the next five years to help the people who are without shelter is under way. In the 2017 Eugene Point in Time count, a one-night census of the homeless, there were over 1,500 homeless people. Of those 1,003 were without shelter and many of them were families with children.

The dwellings will be divided between a variety of apartment complexes for various individuals and include tiny house villages. According to Eugene Housing and Community Service Agency Director Jacob Fox, "The goal of creating 600 units is part of Lane County's Poverty and Homelessness Board's Strategic Plan."

Eugene, like Portland and Clackamas, is one of the many cities in the U.S. with tiny house villages designated for temporarily and chronically homeless individuals and families. The villages are an offshoot of the Housing First model, which addresses homelessness by prioritizing the independence of its residents. The idea is to provide housing first and offer services later.

Lane County has one completed project called Opportunity Village, one in the works called Emerald Village and plans for another in Cottage Grove called Cottage Village.

All of the villages are projects of Square One, a nonprofit organization that creates self-managed communities of low-cost tiny homes. Emerald is a permanent village whereas Opportunity Village is for temporary residents with 29 units that can

host as many as 35 people at one time.

Gibb Hayes, a retired hairstylist, is one of the four residents living in the Emerald community. Before living there, Hayes lived in an RV without heat and before that at Opportunity Village.

"It's been wonderful, I love it," Hayes said about his time at Emerald.

Plans for the village include a community garden, a building with a community kitchen and meeting area, a bike corral and an outdoor movie screen.

"It will be good for the community to come together to watch movies," Hayes said.

Julian Reese and Samantha Rehder are the village caretakers. Rehder, a 2016 graduate of Lane Community College, had once been homeless. After her time at Lane, both she and Julian lived in a tent community prior to moving into Emerald.

"Living here has increased our feeling of self-worth, our self-esteem and taken away the stigma of being homeless," Reese said. "Being the caretakers has helped us feel trusted and useful again."

There will be 22 total homes each with a living and sleeping area, kitchenette

and bathroom.

"The selection process is quite extensive including a series of questions that are geared to evaluate personality and character. Then there is a 90-day probation period," Rehder said.

The homes range in price from \$250 to \$350 per month all inclusive and \$50 of that goes towards the share they will have in the community co-op. Each resident is also expected to help keep the area clean and work in the community 10 hours a month.

The funds for the village were donated by a variety of organizations and individuals, and many people from around the area have volunteered to work on the homes.

"If anyone would like to volunteer they can sign up on the Square One website," Project Manager Andrew Heben said.

Emerald Village is set to be completed in the spring or summer of 2018. "With so much volunteer labor and donated design and construction it is hard to know the exact time the build teams will be done," Square One's Project Coordinator Alicia Ginsberg said. "We are hoping to have an opening in the late spring or early summer."



**One tiny house** in the new Railroad Street community has a view overlooking the entire community from a second story deck. The deck also serves as the overhang for the front door and is accessible through a large window



# NEWS

## A glimmer of hope for salmon runs



**Fisheries still concerned about low steelhead spawns**

**MCKENZY GAUSNELL**  
REPORTER

After historically low steelhead runs in 2017, Oregon is hoping that numbers improve this year.

So far this winter season, Willamette Falls has recorded 596 steelhead on their migration upriver to spawn. Even though the steelhead numbers appear to be bouncing back from last year's shortage, the Pacific Northwest has experienced a large decrease of salmon and steelhead populations in the past decade.

In 2017, the population dropped to a historic low. According to the Willamette Falls Annual Fish Passage Counts, only 822 steelhead returned for their winter spawn, down from the average 5,778. The extreme shortage has added to the local community's fear that Willamette steelhead could be going extinct. Currently, Upper Willamette River steelhead are on the federal threatened species list. The steelhead population only fills a fraction of the first recorded 26,647 winter run in 1971.

This issue isn't exclusive to the Willamette Valley area but is part of a regional environmental crisis. On their website, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife report they have tried to address the steelhead issue since 1997. That year, they established the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds to decrease the gap between current and historical population averages.

"Many populations of chinook, coho, chum and steelhead were at a tiny fraction of their historic levels," the website states. "At the same time, 13,326 miles of Oregon's streams and rivers and 30 lakes did not meet the water quality standards that supported drinking water, recreation and fisheries."

The steelhead are suffering from harsh ocean conditions, drought and habitat loss, according to a Statesman Journal



Illustration by Rachel Unger / graphic designer

article published on their website in Aug. 2017. One of the leading problems for Willamette steelhead are the sea lions that reside in the Willamette Falls area. According to the same Statesman Journal article, the sea lion population wiped out one-fourth of the steelhead population in 2016.

The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed states, "Many factors combined to reduce the number of anadromous fish returning to Oregon streams to spawn. Factors that resulted from lack of understanding of how human activities affect salmonids included harvest, hatcheries, hydropower, and habitat changes. Natural factors, like predators and ocean conditions, also affect fish populations."

The Oregon rivers have supplied local residents with employment, food and recreation. Many communities rely on steelhead, salmon and other fish populations to bring in business. ODFW has acknowledged this and is working toward resolving the issue.

The Recreation Fishing Report for the Northwest Zone

on the ODFW website states that "the Willamette winter steelhead fishery has yet to get going in earnest, but improving conditions should give anglers the break they've needed to effectively go after those winter fish."

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife News Bulletin posted the events of a public meeting where Laurie Weitkamp of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center explains, "If you look at forecasts, we're getting back to more normal conditions, although there is still some warm water to the north. In 2018, the cooler coastal waters should be good for salmon entering the ocean."

After a year of uncertainty, the actions taken to prevent the local steelhead population may be paying off. The steelhead numbers are starting to creep back up to the historical averages, but they aren't out of rough water yet. There are still several weeks left in the winter season before any final conclusions can be made about the current run.

## Crossroads of cultures



**Annual celebration held at the Lane Events Center**

**JANELLE DUTTON**  
REPORTER

The 33rd Annual Oregon Asian Celebration came together this year on Feb. 17 and 18 to celebrate the year of the dog. The theme for the weekend was "Bark to the Future." From taiko drumming to a traditional Chinese Lion Dance, visitors filled the Lane Events Center with a buzz of excitement.

"The Asian Celebration really is our once-a-year family reunion where we all get together and give hugs and kisses and say hello and chit-chat and catch up," said David Yuen Tam, director of the Celebration.

People got together over steamed buns, bubble tea and an array of other foods to celebrate the variety of Asian cultures. A constant display of martial arts could be seen on the main stage where the food was being served. There were also music performances, dances, fashion shows and traditional art displays.

One of the featured art displays was by Melissa "Mimi" Nollado, a Eugene photographer and digital artist. Nollado showcased a series of photographic essays that told the many stories of what it's like being an immigrant in America from community members.

"My goal is that through these photographic essays, we may build bridges of hope, strength and courage to inspire the people around us to see that despite our differences, we are connected and similar in so many other ways," Nollado said in a statement ahead of the event.

"It's a good time to meet people," said Larry Kikuta, a member of the Japanese community in Eugene. "This [celebration] shows the non-Asian community the variety of Asian groups that we have in Eugene. It's evolved over the last few years and it's nice to see people having a good time here."



photo by Anna C.K. Smith / photojournalist

**Kyler Evanson** plays the Gu Zhuang, a traditional Chinese instrument that's been around for more than 2500 years. The 21-stringed instrument, which sounds similar to the hammer dulcimer, is 64 inches long.



## NEWS

## ALL



*Two student-run co-ops continue wto  
carry the torch for local music*

MAREK BELKA  
REPORTER

...continued from front page

The Campbell Club and Lorax Manner are two of the longest-running student co-operatives in Eugene. For over fifty years, they've been stalwarts of the city's underground music and art scenes. During the week, the houses host events from radical film showings to D.I.Y. workshops; almost every weekend, one or both houses will host shows with local and regional bands and artists. Every event is all-ages, donation-based and open to the public.

### The Campbell Club: Leather and Denim

The Campbell Club is the larger and more well-known of the Alder Street houses. Since 1962, when it first became a co-op, generation after generation has left their own unique mark on the walls. Every room in the house is covered in scribbled messages and spray-painted murals, creating a kind of living memorial to past house members. A long table in the foyer is covered in activist propaganda and hand-printed flyers advertising upcoming events. Rarely a weekend goes by without the Campbell Club hosting a show; as one of the few remaining all-ages venues in Eugene, this comes with its own challenges.

"Every day, I wake up to three or four messages from bands who want to play here," Sapphire Rosenblatt, who manages events at the Campbell Club, said. "It's normally pretty simple stuff, but putting together shows can get pretty difficult because we try to maintain a safer space here."

The Campbell Club's commitment to safety and inclusivity for members and show-goers, according to Rosenblatt, means doing plenty of research before the shows even get planned.

"I have to look up the bands, listen for any controversial lyrics, check their Facebook pages, because there have been times where a band's music sounds alright but they'll share really anti-Semitic stuff on their personal pages."

Eugene's underground has responded by coming out in droves to support the bands playing at the Campbell Club. A show on Feb. 9 featuring Portland post-punk band Hollow Sidewalks and local punks Boomchick and Nuclear Family had over 50 people pack into the cavernous main room. They represented a diverse cross-section of races, genders, ages and sexualities, frenetically bouncing off one another in a swirling mosh pit.

Cece Holst, Lane Community College student, Campbell Club resident and drummer in Nuclear Family, highlighted the joys of living in a creative space.

"My favorite part is being able to build myself in a space that I know is accepting," Holst said. "I come from a town where that isn't the case, so moving into the Campbell Club was definitely a breath of fresh air."

**"My favorite part is being able to build myself in a space that I know is accepting."**

-Cece Holst

### The Lorax Manner: Speaking for the Trees

The Lorax Manner shares many of the same philosophies as their more raucous next-door neighbors, but with an environmentalist approach. The house adheres to veganism and has a small vegetable garden tended by house members. The Cascadia Forest Defenders even hold regular tree-climbing lessons in a towering oak in front of the house. However, the Lorax lacks the name recognition of the Campbell Club, despite being right next door.

Maddy McInturf, one of two social coordinators at the house, attributes this to a long lapse in hosting shows.

"We had to stop doing shows for a while because the police came and raided," McInturf said. "But then we hosted an anti-Valentine's Day show last year and a ton of people showed up, which kicked off us doing shows again."

With Eugene facing a rash of venue closures — most notably the loss of local mainstay Black Forest and all-ages collective The Boreal last year — do-it-yourself spaces like the

## AGE

...All the ti



Eugene indie band Connor & My Friends play to a packed room at the Lorax Manner on Feb. 10. The Lorax, one of two student-led co-ops on Alder Street, hosts all-ages shows almost every other weekend during the school year

Lorax strive to be an accessible space for Eugene's music community. Though they don't host shows as frequently as their neighbors, their events still attract a healthy following. A show at the house on Feb. 10 saw another lively crowd of over 50 dance and mosh as local acts Connor and his Friends, Subman and Tresente performed.

Members of both houses take this do-it-yourself ethos to heart. Frankie Kerner, another social coordinator at the Lorax, said she became "obsessed" with booking bands at the co-op when she first moved in.

"I'm 19, so I know what it's like to not be able to go to a show you really want to see because it's 21 and up," Kerner said. "It's really important to us to have spaces like this [so] everyone can come and enjoy some music."

### Duty Now for the Future

Although both co-ops have run into difficult periods in the past that threatened their operations — whether prolonged drops in membership, police interference or offers from developers to buy the houses — the houses have a storied history of community support to fall back on.

"I'll get emails or posts on Facebook all the time from people who used to live here," McInturf said. "They even have reunions! People never forget the time they spent here."

Lane alumnus Tom Asherton echoed that sentiment as he stepped outside for a cigarette during Nuclear Family's set at the Campbell Club.

"I've been going to shows here for 20-odd years, and it's amazing to watch new generations pick it up when old-school guys like me run out of gas," Asherton said.

Both the Campbell Club and the Lorax Manner are accepting applications through the Student Co-Operative Association for new members and host shows and events throughout the week.



# NEWS



photos by Nathan S. Calkins / photojournalist



**Sam Mendoza**, bassist of Connor and My Friends, grooves during a set at the Lorax Manner at Feb. 10. The Lorax and their neighbors the Campbell Club strive to be a safe and accessible community space for people of all ages



**Cece Holst**, Lane student and resident of the Campbell Club, dances during Portland band Hollow Sidewalk's show on Feb. 9. The co-op hosts all-ages concerts and art events almost every weekend



## FEATURES



## Pinball Wizards

Jamie Blair watches and supports teammate Conley Phelps during a Flash Gordon pinball game at Blairally Vintage Arcade. Blair and Phelps have been teammates on the all-woman pinball team Belles and Chimes for the last six months.

photo by Nathan S. Calkins / photojournalist



### All-female pinball league tilts expectations

MAREK BELKA  
REPORTER

Since 2015, the Belles and Chimes pinball league has lit up the scoreboards at Blairally Vintage Arcade. They're a gathering of 12 female pinball aficionados, united by a friendly spirit of competition, retro gaming nostalgia and black hoodies with the league name emblazoned in red on the back.

On the second and fourth Tuesdays during their seasons, the Belles meet for tournaments at Blairally, a vintage arcade and bar in the Whittaker neighborhood. Using a randomized group knockout format, the women compete against each other until only one remains, the winner then earns points toward the season's championship. At the end of the season, the top three women take home prizes paid for by league dues.

Despite the competitive nature of league play, Belles and Chimes organizer Katie Sheehan explained that it's much more than just a way to compete.

"Really, this just gives us a space to

be girls," Sheehan said. "We're really not that competitive, we're here to spend time together and have some fun."

That feeling of sisterhood has been the main draw for many women getting recruited to the league. Jamie Blair, one of the newer league members, was recruited into the Belles just by hanging out at Blairally.

"When I first moved here, I was so socially uncomfortable, so I just came here and played pinball," Blair said. "Then, Katie [Sheehan] kept coming up and watching my scores and then said 'You know, you should come on Tuesdays.'"

The predecessors to what are now known as pinball games first came around in the mid-19th century, but modern electric pinball machines first became popular around the American Midwest in the 1950s. Until the coin-operated video game craze of the 1980s, pinball machines were a staple in arcades, bars and drugstores throughout the United States, with people of all ages sinking millions of dollars into the machines one quarter at a time.

As gaming went digital and moved into the American home, pinball games faded from mainstream consciousness. However, pinball machines (and vintage games in general) have roared back into fashion in the past few years, with "barcades" like Blairally and Level Up Arcade fostering a

new interest in vintage gaming. According to the International Flipper Pinball Association, over 4,800 pinball tournaments were held in 2017, compared to just 487 in 2009. Pinball leagues like Belles and Chimes are an extension of that nostalgia, with league members often bonding over the pinball machines they grew up with.

**"Playing a [pinball] machine is not unlike reading your favorite book—the ride that it takes you on. The ins, the outs, the ups and downs, the strategies, you know, they become like a friend."**

- Conley Phelps, LCC student

Conley Phelps, a Lane Community College student who finished third in the most recent Belles and Chimes season, reminisced about her own memories of pinball growing up in the Chicago area.

"I've been passionate about pinball since I was tall enough to reach the machine," Phelps said. "For me, [pinball] has been a

whole thing connected to my development and emotional growth, and I just get lost in pinball games."

Teamwork is a big theme among members of the Belles. Though they don't offer much help to one another on tournament nights, during practice weeks, league members will trade tips and tricks with one another on achieving the highest scores on different machines.

"During a tournament, I won't tell anyone how I did anything on the machine," Sheehan said. "But at the next practice, I'll tell you everything I know."

Even with the tips and tricks under their belt, the Belles explained that practice is the most crucial part of achieving unbeatable high scores on pinball machines. Blair and Phelps will stand in front of one machine and play it "over and over and over again" until they learn the machine's ways. Once they learn a machine, that knowledge sticks.

"Playing a machine is not unlike reading your favorite book, the ride that it takes you on," Phelps said. "The ins, the outs, the ups and downs, the strategies, you know, they become like a friend."

A new Belles and Chimes season begins "sometime in March," according to Sheehan. All are welcome to play and watch alongside the Belles, but official league play is open only to women who pay the \$15 league dues.



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# OPINION

## Coping with loss in seven scenes



*Short plays provide glimpse into theater arts program*

DONNY MORRISON  
REPORTER

Before the lights dimmed and the audience silenced their whispers, Brian Haimbach, faculty instructor for Lane Community College's music, dance and theater arts programs, spoke to the small room. Holding back tears, he warned of a potentially sensitive topic discussed in "Hell is a Place on Earth," one of seven plays that make up 2018's Winter Shorts, written, directed and performed by Lane theater arts students.

"In one of the plays, there is discussion of a school shooting," Haimbach said. "I understand if you need to excuse yourself before the intermission."

On Feb. 14, less than 24 hours before I attended the plays, a 19-year-old gunman and former student, walked into a Florida high school and killed 17 people. Like fast food or student debt, school shootings have come to be known as a uniquely American experience. As a student in a campus theater, surrounded by other students expressing themselves through theater, it was hard to imagine feeling unsafe. Yet, the mood felt ominous and foreboding. It hung in the air like a slight breeze, only noticeable within the silence between plays.

"Hell is a Place on Earth" is written by Rebecca Blanchard, and directed by Brianne Orloski. It centers around a drag queen, played by Aiden Christensen, having a conversation with God, played by Sarah Winston. They discuss the daily news cycle with decidedly different ways of interpreting the information. The drag queen, in a deadpan voice and seemingly unphased, tells God about a mass shooting that had just occurred. God, acting as if she knows the dead personally, seems devastated. While there isn't exactly a "correct" way to respond to tragedy, the polarization between the two characters is the most interesting aspect of the play.

The play asks us to confront the different ways we express empathy in a society that's becoming increasingly desensitized to random acts of violence. What's the correct response upon hearing news of a far-away shooting that left a stranger lifeless and a community shaken? Is that stranger not a student like you? An American like me? Should I cry for our similarities, or continue dejectedly swiping upwards on my phone, consuming more news than ever before, yet feeling none of it? At a time when technology has allowed us to be connected like never before, I find myself displaying a certain brand of apathy that becomes an exercise in loneliness. This dynamic is reflected in Christensen's character, whose disconnected cynicism reveals itself as misery by the end of the play. Being unable to feel and connect with other people robs us of the reward of a truly functional relationship. This vulnerability is required in order to love and be loved in return. Aside from a few clichés, such as a reading from the Christian Bible halfway through, I found this play to be the most thought-provoking in ways the others weren't.

"Baby Steps" featured by far the best acting of the 7 plays shown. Actors Ashley Johansson and Bella Knoles took less than 10 minutes to introduce fully fleshed-out characters with a wide range of emotion and grief. If the script, written by Adam Nealy, hadn't been handled with such subtlety and confidence, I may have lost interest before finding out who had died. This is a perfect example of a well-written short story. While many of the other plays felt like small slices of a larger narrative, the neatly packaged and ambiguous nature of "Baby Steps" only added to its charm.

Collectively, the Winter Shorts performances explore themes of mortality and death, whether it was the death of a family member, the death of parents or the death of complete strangers. These are heavy topics that the various writers tackle with elegance and



photo by Anna C.K. Smith / photojournalist

**Aiden Christensen** takes off drag queen makeup during a performance of the short "Hell is a Place on Earth" for the 2018 Winter Shorts. The skit, which was about gun violence and religion, featured Christensen's character having a conversation with the human embodiment of God played by Sarah Winston.

poise. The hard part of writing a captivating short story or play is being able to capture an audience from the moment the curtains are drawn. This year's Winter Shorts have achieved that, with the added bonus of exploring timeless topics within contemporary narratives.

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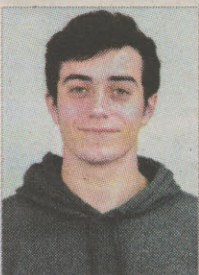
## SPORTS



# 'A chance to be special'

photo by Noah Noteboom / reporter

**Jimmy McDonald** awaits a pitch from one of his teammates during practice. The McDonald, a Yakima-native is one of the team's two captains this season.



## Lane ranked fourth in preseason poll

NOAH NOTEBOOM  
REPORTER

After a "heartbreaking" loss to Lower Columbia last year, as described by Lane pitcher Jesse Davis, in the NWAC baseball tournament semi-final, the Titans are seeking a second chance. Just one out and one run away from a championship berth, the Titans fell apart and lost in the final inning to the eventual NWAC champions, the Lower Columbia Red Devils.

"Going into the last inning, we were all pretty jittery," recalls Davis. "But we have a lot of guys who know what they're doing, and we have high expectations to return."

Lane was ranked fourth in the first preseason coaches' poll released earlier this month. Under seventh-year head

coach Josh Blunt, the Titans have never placed lower than third in the Southern Region. Despite not having won a conference title yet, Blunt remains optimistic on bringing their first Southern Region trophy to Eugene for the first time since 2004.

"Since our semi-final loss last year, we went from being good on paper, to a chance to be special," Blunt said about this year's expectations.

Blunt also praised his pitching staff, which is ranked ninth in the nation for earned run average among all levels of collegiate baseball.

"As part of the pitching staff, we have to build on what the players have, and instill our own kind of identity," Zack Kayser, who is entering his fourth season as pitching coach, said.

"We like to pitch fast, our goal is to keep hitters off-balance," said Kayser, on the pitching staff's philosophy.

Kayser also pointed out that Davis and Dillon Larsen have both signed letters of intent to play for the Division 1,

University of Washington Huskies after this season. Davis' 1.81 ERA was good enough to be ranked fifth in the NWAC.

Since 2002, six Lane baseball players have been selected in the annual MLB Draft held in Secaucus, New York. The latest draftees were Kyle Keith and Austin Crowson, who were both selected in last year's draft. Keith went in Round 22 to the Texas Rangers, while Crowson was picked not far behind by the New York Yankees in the 26th round. Last season, Keith was second on the squad with 66 total strikeouts and a 2.86 ERA.

"I'll remember the people the most. Especially on the baseball team," said Keith, of his experience as a Titan. "He [Blunt] does everything he can to help get his players to the next level."

The Titans open their regular season with a four-game series against Everett in PK Park on Feb. 24 at 12 p.m. Two weeks later, they will face the reigning NWAC champions, the Lower Columbia Red Devils, and look to avenge last year's early tournament exit when they travel up to Longview, WA.



**Charlie Patterson** winds up as Jimmy McDonald waits for the pitch. Patterson joins Lane as a freshman pitcher from Whidbey Island, WA who attended South Whidbey High School.