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Opinion: What's trending for fall? Burgundy, flannel and conscious consumption!

Maisy Clunies-Ross • Staff Writer • Sept. 22

Fall is finally here: leaves are turning from green to gold, Christian girl autumn posts are beginning to adorn once bikini-covered Instagrams, and glasses of lemonade are being replaced by steaming pumpkin spice lattes. In recent years, hundreds of ads, articles, posts and videos focused on the “Must-Have Trends” have joined the crisp crunch of a dried leaf underfoot as a classic part of fall.

To be clear, fashion trends aren't new, nor is widespread coverage of them. Fashion magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* have been reporting on rising trends and advising readers on popular styles for decades. However, the landscape of this world is completely different in the digital age than it was a mere fifteen years prior. Most notably, social media and the internet have made the spread of ideas nearly instantaneous.

In some ways, this has been incredibly positive: the democratization of information means marginalized creators and niche content are able to gain prominence. Everyone has a voice. However, when everyone has a voice, it takes more to be heard, which leads to some of the more detrimental elements of style and clothing content in the social media age. In order to gain views and notoriety in an algorithm-driven landscape, it's not enough to simply be a stylish person. There's pressure to follow every trend for engagement. Small and large creators alike film huge hauls in order to create popular content and have clothes for new outfits every day. Often, in order to keep the prices of these purchases relatively low, influencers shop from fast-fashion brands like Shein. Now, simply being a person who wears their clothes and uses the products they own is “so underconsumption core.”

Additionally, the increasing instability of the political and economic state of the world has pushed many people online and encouraged them to seek comfort in the pursuit of beauty. For many, these behaviors are a somewhat fruitless attempt to gain a sense of control.

In such a heavily consumerist culture, identity is not about who you are or what you do, it's about how you look and what you own. For

those who feel lost in a complex, demoralizing world, a concrete sense of identity achieved through purchases rather than introspection and relief that doesn't rely on systemic change is appealing. It's deeply lonely to be depressed, but it's romantic to be a Lana Del Rey, smeared red lipstick, cigarette sad girl. It's scary to confront the reality of climate change and ever-depleting natural resources, but it's thrilling to imagine a cottagecore fantasy where the land is beautiful, the bounty plentiful and every garment is airy and floral.

It's a logical instinct to seek control in a world where the majority of the populus is often deprived of that autonomy. However, no systemic or personal problems can truly be solved via a well-crafted label or perfectly curated outfit. The pursuit of identity through aestheticism is futile and the consumption necessary to satiate that hunger only exacerbates existing issues.

In some ways, this seems like a non-issue. Not everyone encounters fashion content or obsesses over aesthetics. It's mostly relevant to chronically-online fashionista girlitas. Nevertheless, many organizations have reported a rise in fast fashion and rapid consumption due to the social media landscape. The speed at which information is shared, products are produced, bought, worn, posted and popularized has made the trend cycle faster than ever before, leading to more consumption, and by extension, more waste. The fashion industry contributes nearly 10% of all carbon emissions, plastic fibers from clothes pollute waterways, clothes fill landfills, and their production is the second biggest consumer of water.

Aside from the sustainability component, many clothing companies exploit workers to keep costs low and profit margins high. The majority of fast fashion is produced in the global south, where safety regulations are disregarded, pay is low and workers are frequently put in danger. This subjugation is furthered by the demographics of garment workers: primarily women of color, who often face abuse in the workplace and lack the resources and financial stability to advocate for themselves.

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Student seems overwhelmed by their abundance of clothing, yet simply can't find a thing to wear.

Art by ALYSSA DIGGDON

While confronting the multitude of problems that make the world feel so hopeless is a steep task for any academic, activist or political leader, let alone an article originally intended to focus on knee-high boots and infinity scarves, one message is undeniable. Overconsumption needs to stop. This doesn't mean shopping needs to stop or that an interest in following trends is vapid or immoral, it merely means sustainable options should be prioritized.

For example, the rapid turnaround of trends means pieces often end up in thrift stores while the style is still popular, making them a great place to affordably experiment with fads. Additionally, online thrifting

sites are becoming more popular and easier to search, allowing for the casual scroll and ease of use that make traditional online shopping so appealing. For those looking to spend no money at all, clothing swaps are an easy way to get new pieces without creating any waste. Or ... boldly, radically, bravely, people can just wear the clothes they already own. By rewearing an old piece of clothing in a different way or pairing items together that would normally be kept separate, it's easy to breathe new life into old clothes.

In a world where the impacts of climate change become more present by the year, buying less and living more sustainably is the only truly timeless trend.

Bishop introduces new employee: A vending machine

Amelia Hare • Staff Writer • Sept. 26



A full view of the Wellness Vending Machine on the first floor of the University Center.
Image by PATRICIA KREPEL

Students may have noticed a hidden vending machine in the Putnam University Center (UC), tucked behind the stairs, between the mail center and the Bistro. However, this machine does not dispense Coca-Cola or Twix: it dispenses wellness items. But how does it work, and why is it there?

This new vending machine features over-the-counter medicinal products, from Tylenol to allergy relief. It also has dental dams, menstrual cups and a “period kit,” which comes with sanitary wipes, a pad and tampon, a pair of underwear and chocolate. Additionally, the machine is stocked with important items often difficult to get at a drugstore, including Naloxone, the medication used to reverse an opioid overdose, as well as pregnancy tests and

STI testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea. It also has the morning-after pill and over-the-counter birth control.

These items, while available at Walgreens or Rite Aid, may be an inconvenience to obtain or inaccessible for some, such as those without a mode of transportation off campus. Kate McLellan (’28) stated that having access to these goods on campus was “easier than the hassle of trying to find the testing somewhere else.”

The vending machine, called SimpliChek, has the benefit of being available 24/7 since the UC is always open for Willamette students with key card access. It also has the comfort of being confidential, besides the contact information required for the chlamydia and gonorrhea testing. SimpliChek works with Santiam Health, an organization of hospitals around Oregon.

Lauren Carlson, director of Bishop Wellness Center, emphasized that the machine’s purpose was to “improve access” to healthcare products and to give students the financial ability to get testing, no matter a student’s situation.

The chlamydia and gonorrhea tests go to a Santiam Health Hospital to be tested. There is a small metal drop box to the left of the SimpliChek machine that tests are placed in. Students have the option to bill their insurance, or if they do not want it billed, they can pay around \$40 out-of-pocket. Carlson

also spoke about the ease of it being a self-test so that students can continue to use Bishop without the added step of seeing a healthcare provider. “We really don’t have a lot of staff here, so that prospect was nice,” she said.

Most students who were asked about the machine had little knowledge about its existence, not to mention where it was on campus. While the fact that it is tucked away is ideal for privacy, the biggest drawback is the challenge of locating the machine on campus. For some students like McLellan, they “didn’t even know it existed.”

This is another reason Carlson and Bishop Wellness Center are trying to spread word of the machine, so the machine can have a chance of staying on campus full-time if students utilize it. If not, there is a chance it may not be returning for the 2025-2026 school year.

According to Carlson, this opportunity for a SimpliChek machine was “hard to say no to.” There is one already at the Willamette University PNCA campus through donor funding, which is how Carlson considered the addition to Salem’s campus. She hopes that through student support, they can find a way to implement it indefinitely. “If the students want it and are using it, then we really do want to find the funding so that it can continue to be present on [Willamette’s] campus.”

Willamette University revamps campus: Relocation to enhance collaboration and community

Karmen Zhao • Staff Writer • Oct. 2

In a bold move to enhance academic collaboration and streamline resources, Willamette University has begun relocating several majors and programs to new buildings across campus, aiming to foster a more integrated learning environment. These buildings include Tokyo International University of America (TIUA), Smullin Hall, Atkinson Annex, Atkinson Graduate School of Management’s (AGSM) Seeley G. Mudd Building, and Gatke Hall.

TIUA, located in Kaneko, consists of conference rooms, classrooms and a large auditorium, all of which were formerly used by students studying abroad from Japan. As stated in Willamette’s information page on TIU, the relationship between the two schools began in 1989, when TIU students were offered a 10-month-long study abroad program at Willamette. This

is known as the American Studies Program (ASP). This program continued strong until the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, halting ASP for three consecutive years. As the program returned after COVID, the number of Japanese study-abroad students declined drastically, leaving TIUA unattended. With few TIUA students attending Willamette, TIU handed the management of ASP over to WU.

Jo Kozuma, the current director of the English Language and American Studies program, was welcomed to Willamette with the responsibility to relaunch the ASP, and in doing so, changed the name of ASP to English Language and American Studies program (ELAS). According to Kozuma, TIU students had moved out of TIUA classrooms in the fall of 2023 due to heating and cooling issues and low occupancy in

classrooms. “I was teaching with my gloves on because it was so, so cold. I kept mentioning that we needed to move. The facility was too big for our program,” Kozuma recalled. In the spring semester of 2023, all TIU classes relocated to Smullin Hall. With only 17 TIU students this year, they have built a tight community in Smullin with a designated TIU student lounge.

While TIUA was emptied out due to low occupancy, the Mudd and Atkinson Annex buildings were having the opposite problems, resulting in the plans to move all undergraduate and graduate business classes into TIUA. David Sundby, the assistant dean of students, plays an active role in the AGSM. Outlining the reason for initiating the move, Sundby stated, “Business has become the second most popular major of expressed interest by stu-

dents, especially when it comes to our MBA programs.” With nearly 70 undergraduate business major and minor students combined as of August 2024, the Atkinson Annex became an overflow of business students. The large sum of students prompted the move to TIUA.

Ashley Nixon, associate dean of AGSM, said, “The goal is to have everyone in our business programs moved into TIUA by next semester.” All business staff, faculty, recruiters and career managers will move to second-floor office suites of TIUA, while first-floor classrooms will be occupied by business classes.

Additionally, the news of Kaneko gaining more student traffic has created increased excitement about the possibility of Kaneko Cafe reopening.

The cafe, once an alternative food hall to Goudy, has been closed since the pandemic. According to Nixon, there is no set plan to open the Kaneko Cafe for the spring semester of 2025, but there are conversations about the cafe potentially opening next fall.

Shouvik Ahmed Antu ('26) is a second-year Kaneko RA and a third-year Kaneko resident. When commenting on the possibility of the Kaneko Cafe reopening, he said, "We have not heard anything official about the cafe opening, but it would be wonderful. I would eat breakfast that I don't get to eat right now."

This shuffle of buildings has also affected Gatke Hall and exercise science students. As the business program moves out of Atkinson Annex and the Mudd building into

TIUA in the spring semester, the exercise science program is moving into the Annex. "Exercise science has half the annex now, but they're too big for that. They need the whole thing, so they were working on finding a spot that is big enough," Nixon said. This reshuffling will result in the Mudd building and Gatke Hall remaining unoccupied for a duration of time.

As of fall 2024, general plans have been made to update the interior of Mudd, leading to the possibility of a new school moving into the space. However, these plans are still up in the air. As Nixon concluded, "We are just trying to match the size, need, and to allow the move out of spaces that need a little bit more construction work within the next few years."



Outside of the Kaneko dorms where Tokyo International University is located.
Image by PATRICIA KREPEL

Unclothed and unforgettable: The Naked Run

Aubrey Tuttle • Staff Writer • Oct. 3

Willamette traditions seem to be slipping through the cracks one by one: first Freshman Glee, an annual tradition where each class would competitively create and perform an original song, and now the Spring Preview Streaking — popularly known as the Naked Run.

While no one knows how or why it began, The Naked Run was a longstanding tradition for graduating seniors to streak the quad on the last Bearcat Day. The hope was for prospective students to see the graduating students' camaraderie and bravery, along with generating a positive perception of the student body that they are signing up for. As written in The Collegian's April

2012 issue, "[The Naked Run] says that we're spontaneous and fun and free to express ourselves to all those prospective students and their tuition-dropping parents."

With this intended message in mind, it is no surprise that in The Collegian's September issue of 2016, when a poll was conducted on the senior class's bucket list items for the term, participating in the Spring Preview Streaking came out on top. Former Collegian Staff Writer Nebraska Lucas wrote that it was "a staple for every senior. Drop trou, slap paint on your ass and go crazy." If this tradition was so crucial to past senior experiences, why didn't the class of '23 carry on with this bold rite of

passage?

One of the reasons former Collegian staff writer Alison Ezard points to is the age of smartphones. After joining herself, Ezard wrote in 2014's April issue that she noticed pointed cameras from prospective students, parents and even her peers. The cameras added a disturbing element to the tradition, and she went on to write that "there is a major difference between choosing to get naked for 10 minutes in front of a select group of people and having your naked self immortalized on the Internet for anyone available to see." The Spring Preview Streaking requires a certain level of respect and responsibility from the audience. Their involvement can make or break the experience. Ezard noticed the duality of the crowd, writing that "the cheering and high-fives from the onlookers definitely created a sense of camaraderie among the University community; seeing all those cameras out also made me feel a little like a circus animal."

If fear of an online presence held students back in 2014, how did the tradition last six years past this account? As per typical Willamette fashion, students found creative solutions to their less-than-typical troubles. The solution that was decided upon was to give the word "streaking" a much looser definition.

Willamette alumna Lauren Saxton ('09), while not a participant, recounted, "Most people wore something to cover up that was a little creative." At this point, the Naked Run evolved into more of an "anything-but-clothes run." Saxton stated that students adorned themselves with "body paint and Willamette balloons or something" that would give students a little bit of cover to provide a less revealing experience. Another alumna, Maddy Kaplan ('22), a spectator for her year's

run, noted, "It's so cool to have a way to participate in traditions in a way that is meaningful and comfortable to you."

Despite adjustments, the class of '23 chose to let '22 be the last streakers on record. Alumna Casey Swinkels ('23) said that she never imagined that the tradition would die out since students seemed to have such a fun time with it. Swinkels mentioned that it failed to happen during her graduation year because nobody took the time to organize it. The anticipation recorded in 2016's senior bucket list had smoked out, leaving less participation and no one to plan in '23.

The end to this long-standing tradition might have been forecasted by the dwindling enthusiasm, but has campus changed so drastically that students don't need a streaking tradition to complete their college experience? Alumni have an underlying concern that by taking away long-standing traditions like the Spring Preview Streaking, students are having less fun than in previous years. Saxton said, "You guys work so hard, and no offense but you don't seem to have as much fun as we used to have before the internet was so pervasive."

While it can easily be said that the modern Willamette student body can have fun without dropping trou, painting our asses and taking to the quad, it does bring to light the question of whether a new tradition should take its place that has a similar carefree element. Should the graduating seniors take to the quad in a newly imagined manner? This, of course, is up to the class of '25 to decide. Will they be the class to bring headway to a fresh custom that better represents the current student body, or will Willamette slowly lose traditions to the trials of time?



Two students running naked. They are strategically covered with WU merch for modesty.

Art by BASIL ALLEN

WU Bird Nerds flock together to protect the birds

Maya Darski • Staff Writer • Sept. 28

Walking the grounds of Willamette University, you may spot a hummingbird buzzing near a flower, ducks happily floating on the Mill Stream or occasionally a great blue heron standing by the Mill Stream banks. Professor David Craig, a biology professor at Willamette and club advisor for WU Bird Nerds, always enjoys seeing birds around campus — except when he spots a cedar waxwing lying cold on the ground by a window.

Dead birds on campus are often victims of window strikes, which is what occurs when a bird unwillingly crashes into a window while migrating or searching for food. Willamette's windows are deadly to birds, especially the window students see frequently: the window of the Bistro. Luckily, Craig knows the best people to gather to protect the birds: the WU Bird Nerds!

The WU Bird Nerds, the bird-watching club on campus, is led by three second-year officers: President David Gregg ('27), Vice President Teya Fukuhara ('27) and Treasurer Daniel Barnard ('27). Craig brought these three together after seeing their shared passion. Gregg and Barnard had always been interested in birds, with Gregg stating that they have been an interest for him since he was 10 years old. Fukuhara initially didn't know much about birds until she went on a bird walk led by Craig. She remarked how after that, an everyday creature "turned into something magical."

Once these three got together to form the club, they decided

that they wanted a mix of learning and fun. Fukuhara described it as a "nerdy interest club" where members can learn about birds, find ways to help them on campus, and "foster a general appreciation for them, because appreciation turns into action." Gregg states that the club also values doing volunteer and service projects on campus. Most of all, the officers want to "focus on what the members want to do." Member Marina Grey ('28) is hoping to learn how to identify birds and member Nathaniel Ashford ('28) is looking forward to identifying bird calls, learning their Latin names and taking photos.

The Berds (Bird Nerds) meet in Olin 101 on Fridays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and go out around campus looking for birds with their binoculars, but they have goals of expanding their adventures. Gregg is eager to go to Minto Brown Island Park in Salem, his favorite place to be growing up. Gregg noted that there are lots of different trails and ponds to see ducks, and added that this park has "a lot of species you won't see anywhere else," making it an ideal place to birdwatch. He also has a goal of gathering people to help fill the bird feeders around campus. Fukuhara would like to go to Cannon Beach in the spring to see puffins and hopes that in the future, the Berds can go on camping trips, not only to birdwatch but to bond as a club.

With these bigger events in mind, the officers plan to make sure they move on with their plans

steadily. Fukuhara says that they are "taking it one thing at a time" and are focusing on gaining knowledge from one experience, then applying it to their next project.

The Berds' first project was intended to protect birds from window strikes. On Oct. 5, from noon to 3 p.m., students came to The Bistro to paint lines and bird art on the Bistro's windows. "Cedar waxwings that may strike windows are around campus during the fall, making this issue a priority," Gregg stated. Birds see the reflection of trees on the window and unintentionally crash into them. With the painted lines and art, the birds will see that they cannot fly through. Club member Gavin Solari ('28) described how this project was "an easy solution" to the issue and helps raise awareness.

In terms of reasons to join the Berds, Craig explained, "Bird-watching is a gateway to lots of other outdoor activities." Anyone who has a curiosity for birds or outdoor activities

will find Bird Nerds to be an excellent way to be introduced to nature adventures.

Fukuhara hopes that the club will help people develop a compassion for birds and the nature all around them. "The littlest hummingbird can make people stop and stare," Fukuhara reflected. "When you're walking around campus, try to listen and think about the sounds. Appreciate the small things." You can find the WU Bird Nerds on Instagram @wubirdnerds or email wubirdnerds@gmail.com with any questions about the club.



Professor David Craig and students in the Willamette Bird Nerd Club search for a bird outside of the Bistro on September 20th, 2024.

Image by CARAMIA CHRISTENSEN

Marion Berries to stomp on Bearcat turf

Arlo Craft • Staff Writer • Sept. 30



New Marion Berries logo, courtesy of their website.

Chronic walkers-around will know that the Spec Keene stadium, Willamette's baseball field, is housed in the middle of Salem's idyllic Bush's Pasture Park. Fewer know that the field, which is being revamped on behalf of an investment by the state of Oregon, is soon to be shared with K-12 students and a for-profit base-

ball team.

In summer of 2025, Spec Keene's lush new synthetic grass will be ready to act as a stomping ground for the West Coast League's newest member, the Marion Berries. If you've seen Captain America, the Marion Berries are what emerged when Salem Baseball Club injected itself with super serum.

Sporting a shiny new name and logo, Salem's new baseball team announced that they're "all about community." Their branding is, of course, a nod to Marion County's very own famous fruit. Team owner and manager Luke Emanuel put out a call for name inspiration over the summer on the Salem Baseball Club's old website; marionberries won out due to their regional relevance.

Staying true to the theme of staying local, the Marion Berries' promise to the residents of

Salem-Keizer is to provide a family-friendly, homegrown environment at games. "Our players, coaches, and staff are committed to being active members of the Salem community," their website reads — well, as soon as they figure out who those players are. One has to wonder if some of Willamette's own ballplayers will seek to join the expansion team!

The schedule for 2025 has yet to be announced, but as the 17th team in the West Coast League, the Marion Berries will likely take on such opponents as the Portland Pickles, Bend Elks and Corvallis Knights (to name a few fellow Oregonian teams — the West Coast league also includes teams from Washington and even bite-sized pieces of Canada).

Despite all the community talk, concerns have been raised by some residents of the neighbor-

hood surrounding WU's ballpark. Those who make frequent use of Bush Pasture Park's playgrounds — not to mention the large swaths of grass — are wary of the potential disruption summer baseball games might cause, especially by way of filled parking spots. After all, City of Salem's website cites the vision for the parks surrounding Willamette's stadium as including "a sense of history" and "areas for reflection," not the rowdy, rousing sounds of megaphones, cheering and bat-against-ball.

On the other hand, perhaps the new team will provide a boost to the oft-drowsy summers of Willamette students who remain in Salem over the break — despite the added hustle and bustle to a historical chill-out spot.

Digital mock-ups of the finished field are available on the Marion Berries' website.

Opinion: Indivisible with liberty and Instagram for all: Politics in the internet age

Maisy Clunies-Ross • Staff Writer • Oct. 2

Kamala is brat. J.D. Vance had sex with a couch. Joe Biden joyously proclaims, “Soda!” [cut from a clip where he mentions Minnesota] and Donald Trump stumbles over, “Obama.” Biden, Trump and Obama can all be found playing Minecraft together, joking and quipping, even rapping along in parodies of Ice Spice and Pink Pantheres’ “The Boy’s a Liar.” Quotes, pictures and videos are deep-fried and reused until many forget the original circumstances from which they originated. In this climate, one must look inward and ask themselves, do you think you just fell out of a coconut tree? No, you exist in the context of all of the political satire, meme culture and media coverage in which you live and that came before you.

Politics has always been deeply intertwined with media. “Basically as long as everyone who’s alive right now has been alive, politics and media have been inseparable. The media will always influence how people look at politics,” noted Tristan Surbaugh (’27). In America, politicians have used the media as a tool to influence the general public since the Revolutionary War, providing financial support to newspapers that endorsed their party and their policies. As technology evolved, politicians evolved alongside it; the advent of the radio made speeches and debates accessible across the country. Television completely changed the political landscape, as illustrated by the famous story of radio listeners who reported Nixon won the debate, while those who watched on television overwhelmingly reported Kennedy. As soon as the internet was widely available, politicians began utilizing that as well.

Politicians weren’t the only ones adapting to changes in media and technology; their critics adapted just as smoothly. Political cartoons were prevalent during the American Revolution and remain a popular tool to lambaste politicians today. Comedy making fun of politicians got a larger stage after television became a staple of American households, and political satire and impressions of politicians became an essential component of many late night shows. The internet furthers and quickens the transition public figures make from people into caricatures, but the ideas aren’t new. People have long coped with the absurdity of American politics by heightening and embracing it, and it’s not a new concept for people to speak truth to power in the most accessible language: humor.

Although satire as an inher-

ent part of the political ecosystem is not a new concept, the specific way that it manifests in today’s social media-driven landscape presents unique challenges. “Most people are consuming a lot of their news and political content through TikTok or Instagram, where the algorithm will feed you what you engage with. So you might not get stuff that is particularly truthful,” Surbaugh said. In some cases, this means individuals get caught in an echo chamber, surrounded only by posts or news sources from those who share their beliefs. For others, it means they’re consistently promoted rage bait,

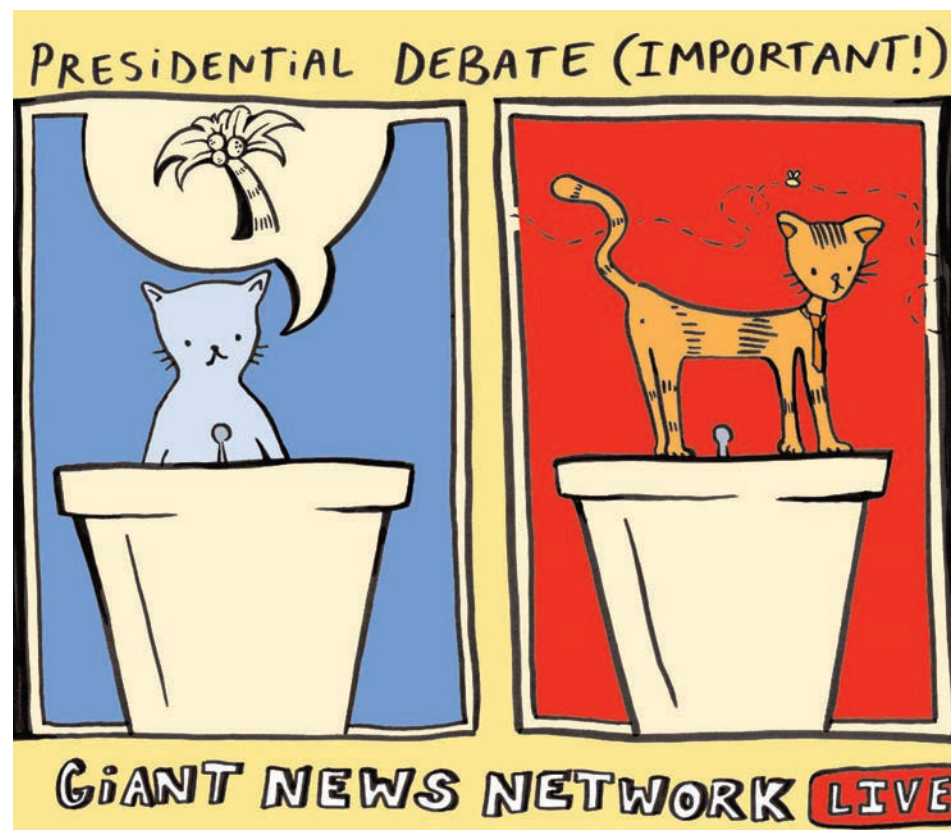
ing together. “I think [this] makes it so you’re not taking them seriously. And I don’t know whether that’s a good thing or a bad thing,” Whipple said. Those videos are somewhat unsettling, but potentially the least harmful use of AI: this same technology has been used to discourage voters in swing elections around the world.

The unregulated and rapid nature of social media also allows misinformation to spread faster than ever before. One recent example is the J.D. Vance couch story, where in an X (Twitter) user edited a picture of Vance’s book, “Hillbilly Ele-

present on many social media platforms, but many, like X, actively promote it. After purchasing Twitter, Elon Musk undid many of the platform’s content regulations, supposedly in defense of free speech, although this point is a clear lie considering Musk’s attempts to make “cis” a slur on the platform. Since Musk’s purchase of the app, right-wing propaganda has taken over the platform, with conservative conspiracy-prompting tweets (promoted as ads) appearing on everyone’s feed, regardless of attempts to block and limit the content. Social media has already been shown to promote extremism and violence, and when the primary determinant of a website’s function has a vested interest in promoting hate and lies, abstract threats become visceral ones very quickly.

Economics professor Brian Gross noted the regulation of information as one of the biggest differences between the pre-social media age and now. “Media provided gatekeepers,” Gross said. “Like, you want to get your ideas across, you have to go through us. We do our editorial, fact-checking, filtering whatever. You label it, and then it gets pushed.” In some ways, it’s helpful that mainstream news outlets aren’t the primary provider of news or information, as they can leave out a variety of perspectives and tend to primarily promote ideology that is already widely accepted. However, as Gross says, “Certain messages can be essentially insulated from reality, insulated from fact-checking, insulated from scrutiny or any pushback. Those can sort of persist and grow, whether it’s through certain news channels, social media bubbles, whether it’s bot-influenced or not, it greatly affects the [political] landscape.”

For many people, social media has filled the role that newspapers and mainstream media outlets used to play, which makes the misinformation present on these sites a far more pressing danger. Although it doesn’t always feel like it, especially when fearmongering, conspiracy theories and conservative grifters are near permanent fixtures on channels like Fox News, there are standards for acceptable information to publish that aren’t present on social media. It’s near impossible to dam the river of progress; the internet will continue to impact politics, regardless of how dangerous. Thus, it is increasingly important to arm people with the necessary skills to identify misinformation and distinguish harmless jokes from concerted efforts to spread hate.



“Mr. President, please get down from there.”

Art by ALYSSA DIGGDON

outlandish content designed purely to upset them into sharing or commenting, all in service of keeping people on those sites for longer. “The internet is super attention farming and time wasting because that makes money,” Phoebe Whipple (’28) said. Contrary to popular belief, many young people, like Whipple, are deeply aware of the detriments of social media, preferring instead to get information from peers and assess politics through the lenses of their community.

AI has also begun to impact politics, as exemplified by the videos of politicians singing and playing together. These deep fakes lead powerful political figures to be seen as silly characters; they’re not calling for bombings, they’re just gam-

ing,” to include a passage describing lewd acts involving couch cushions, which quickly picked up traction and circulated around X, eventually being referenced by Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Walz. This joke has been incredibly divisive and led to outcry from both sides, with some on the left defending the joke as harmless fun. The meme is less damaging than many right-wing falsities, like Pizzagate, and isn’t motivated by prejudice like the Obama citizenship conspiracy. (Freaks are not a protected class.) However, the widespread nature of the story and the fact that many people sincerely believe the passage was real raises concern about the ease with which fabrications become fact.

Not only is misinformation

Opinion: Percy Jackson vs. Harry Potter

Mrinmayee Kulkarni • Staff Writer • Oct. 2

Over the last couple of decades, Warners Bros. and 20th Century Fox graced our screens by bringing to life two of the most popular fictional characters of the time: Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. We witnessed the spiraling Hogwarts castle and the iconic Lotus Casino scene. We also witnessed an intense rivalry between their two fandoms. As Harry Potter and Percy Jackson were the powerful main characters of two famous universes, it was a natural question: who would win in a fight? While that era of Tumblr arguments is long gone, the revival of both books in the form of TV shows has the question back on the rise. For obvious reasons that will soon be laid out, Harry Potter is the clear winner of this debate.

Reason 1: Childhood

Harry's parents both died at the hands of the Dark Lord. While Percy grew up without a dad, he had a very loving mother who is present even in the most recent books about his college journey. Harry also lived in a broom closet until he was 12 years old. He grew up with cruel people who had no care for him. It isn't until the very last book that Dudley even shows a shred of kindness to Harry. Once he turned 11, he learned about the wizarding world, but until then he was an unloved, unwanted and mistreated little boy. Compared to that, the most character-building aspect of Percy's childhood was that he grew up in New York City. While that is certainly not for the weak,

Harry navigated an entire wizarding world at 11 while Percy was still completely unaware of his demigod nature. Therefore, Harry's childhood has given him more grit that would definitely show through if they were to duel.

Reason 2: Power

To give both of them equal ground, we will consider that Percy has access to water and Harry has his wand. While Percy's control of water is impressive, Harry can also control water. He can control anything he wants, as his wand contains infinitely more variable approaches than Percy's water. It wouldn't be an easy fight, but in the end, there is only so much Percy can do with water that Harry can't do with his wand. Additionally, Harry is physically just as strong as Percy. While the Son of Neptune book cover makes it clear that Percy is not a puny little boy anymore, Harry is a star Quidditch player. The books repeatedly state how he has days of grueling practice in harsh weather. In the wizarding world, he would fall into the jock category of high school factions. Therefore, while Harry may not have Percy's sarcastic wit, when it comes down to a fight, he will win.

Reason 3: Community

Harry has a stronger and closer community than Percy Jackson does. While Annabeth and Grover are incredibly attached to Percy, he doesn't have many other people firmly in his corner. Harry has Hermione and Ron as well as most of

Hogwarts behind him. He has powerful people like Dumbledore and many members of the Order of the Phoenix who would and have died for him. While Camp Half-Blood is a wonderful place to be, the Gods and all things related to them are a lot less reliable. That itself is a huge theme in the Percy Jackson books: the Gods are largely selfish and ignore their children. In the final battles of both of these book series, all the houses except for Slytherin ally with Harry without question while Percy has a more difficult time winning children of various Gods over.

One of the main emphases of both of these book series is the importance of community, and Harry has the stronger one.

If Harry and Percy were to fight, it would undoubtedly be a respectable match. Both of them have endured terrible moments and fought increasingly longer odds. Harry defeated the darkest wizard at 17 while Percy, quite literally, went through Hell. Still, while this fight would not be easy for either, Harry Potter would likely come out victorious.



Percy Jackson and Harry Potter beginning a fight.

Art by SAMANTHA LANG

Opinion: ADA accessibility at Willamette: What's working and how do we make it better?

Brooke Austin • Staff Writer • Oct. 2



Willamette University has room for growth in becoming more ADA accessible
Art by ELLIE STARR

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990 by President H.W. Bush. Since then, public buildings and infrastructures have shifted to ensure people with disabilities are able to utilize public spaces. One place these accommodations were implemented was universities, and Willamette is no different. It's not uncommon to see automatic door buttons, ramps or elevators on a college campus. But what does Willamette do well? And where is Willamette falling short?

Sophie Gelfand ('27) identifies as disabled. Gelfand recalled her first year at WU "tragically" living in Kaneko, explaining that she was originally put into Kaneko because they had an elevator and air conditioning, two things that were medically necessary for her, and yet, Kaneko still didn't fully accom-

modate her. "The problem with accessibility specifically surrounding housing is that the problems are infrastructural," Gelfand said. "Over half of the dorms here aren't ADA accessible and the excuse is that they're old."

Though Gelfand expressed understanding that adding elevators would prove to be a difficult task, she still argued that the juice would be worth the squeeze. She argued that "accommodations would benefit everybody," using the example of moving into dorms, having injuries and simply having your hands full. The idea that only people who identify as disabled would benefit or use the ADA accommodations is not true.

Max Machmen ('25) is a senior at WU and the president of the Disability Advocacy Club (DAC). Machmen explained that he had a

similar experience to Gelfand with resident halls, having lived on the second floor of Belknap, an elevator-less building, as a first year. As a second-year student, he lived on the first floor of Doney Hall conveniently close to the exit, which was a significantly better fit.

Residence halls are not the only areas on campus where students need ADA accommodations. Some academic buildings lack comfortable and convenient ways for students with disabilities to navigate. For example, Machmen explained that the Art Building has a ramp entry, but the door the ramp leads to doesn't have an automatic button to press. Therefore, students utilizing wheelchairs need to rely on others to open the door. So close, Willamette ... almost there!

(continued on page 8)

‘Best in the West’ rope and ride at NW Rodeo Finals

Ruby Hampton • Staff Writer • Sept. 30

Competitors from all over the West descended on the Oregon State Fairgrounds Sept. 21 to showcase their talents at the Northwest Professional Rodeo Association’s (NPRA) Rodeo of Champions. The NPRA runs a gauntlet of activities at each competition, from wild cow milking to bull riding, ensuring a variety of riders get their chance to

perform on the sandy stage of glory. The championships feature the top cowboys and cowgirls who competed at one of the NPRA’s 40 yearly rodeos.

“I love all the events, so it’s hard to pick a favorite, but bull riding is definitely an event to keep an eye on this year,” said Dave Witherell, an Oregonian and NPRA staff member.

Wilder, Idaho’s Trey McFarlane, a seasoned competitor, took home the championship with a score of 82.00.

The strive for greatness was evident this year. In steer wrestling, Samuel Mundell earned 6.3 points, sealing his championship buckle. Following close behind him was BoDee Foster with a 6.7, Haydn Maley with 7.3, and Cord Gomes with

a 7.7. The winner of the bareback bronc event was a four-time winning 17-year-old high school graduate. The 2024 Rodeo of Champions not only presented exhilarating experienced horsemanship, and let outsiders peer into the greatness of the Northwest’s young riders.



LEFT: Competitors wait in the left chutes for their chance to win the tie-down event. The riders use this waiting period to prepare themselves and keep the horses calm amid the chaos. Between the cows, the horses and the equestrian personnel, waiting behind the chute can be overwhelming for everyone involved. During Saturday’s Finals, a calm, cool energy filled the dust-covered arena.

Image by RUBY HAMPTON

RIGHT: Many small businesses, including Barbara and Richard’s local jewelry shop, use rodeos to sell their handcrafted items. Barbara and Richard follow the rodeo and other festivals like it selling pieces of jewelry and art.

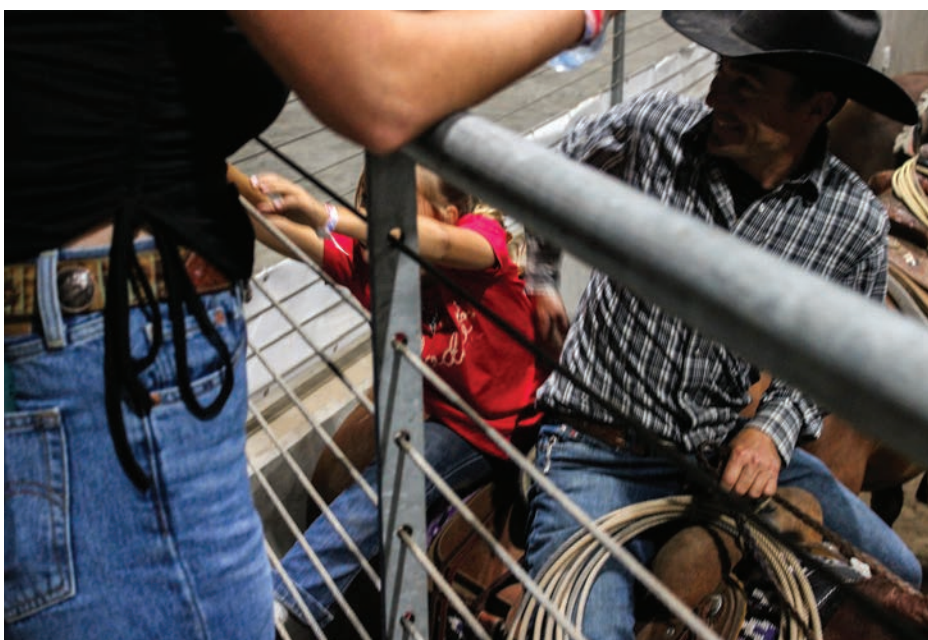
They say they’ve adopted techniques from Kalapuyan artists, learning from their forms of beadwork and weaving techniques to create stunning jewelry and asabikeshiinh (inanimate form word for “spider” or dreamcatchers).

Image by RUBY HAMPTON



LEFT: A young girl gets some help dismounting off of her father’s saddle. Her dad is about to compete for the tie down roping event and laughs at his fearless cowgirl. Families work together to keep the rodeo tradition alive and well in their everyday lives, encouraging even the youngest family members to be involved. Once the young competitors get their foothold in competing with the big boys, they often win big.

Image by RUBY HAMPTON



RIGHT: A cowboy wrestles a steer to the ground during the steer wrestling event.

Image by MAC CHILDERS



Gelfand has also had some unfortunate luck with utilizing ADA accommodations in older buildings. For example, Gelfand attends many of her classes in Eaton, a building that seems as old as time. “[The] Eaton elevator is so slow, everyone knows it. It’s always running down. Sometimes it skips the third floor,” said Gelfand. She proposed that renovating these aspects of the older buildings would be beneficial. “I just feel like maybe some elevator repair is a good idea. A lot of the elevators here are so old, and it’s frustrating.”

Machmen shared the same complaint about the elevator in the

University Center. He recalled a time earlier this semester when the elevator was broken and took days to get fixed. Machmen stressed that this was detrimental to students who are unable to use the stairs and wished it was addressed with more urgency.

Despite some needed renovations in Willamette buildings to make them more accessible to students with disabilities, one major thing that Willamette has gotten right is the narrative professors and other faculty have around students with disabilities. “I was so surprised by how kind everybody was,” Gelfand said. “I feel very lucky to be

surrounded by good people, peers and professors alike, and the campus security team. Daniel is the best, and he used to drive me around all the time. Alex, James, Richard, all of them!”

Machmen agreed, adding a similar experience when it comes to the narrative that people have at Willamette. He explained how impactful it has been in his life to be a member of the DAC club, reflecting on the importance of finding community with other disabled students and allies. He stressed that the club is open to anyone and is always welcoming new members.

There is no doubt that Willamette is a uniquely inclusive campus, with the narrative surrounding disabilities kind and understanding. However, that does not mean there are no steps Willamette can take to keep moving its campus toward a more accommodating campus. Whether students identify as disabled, want to be an advocate or simply want to benefit from the convenience that comes with proper ADA accommodations, it can be mutually agreed that better accessibility is beneficial and needs to always be high on Willamette’s list of priorities.

Oh So Spooky Crossword

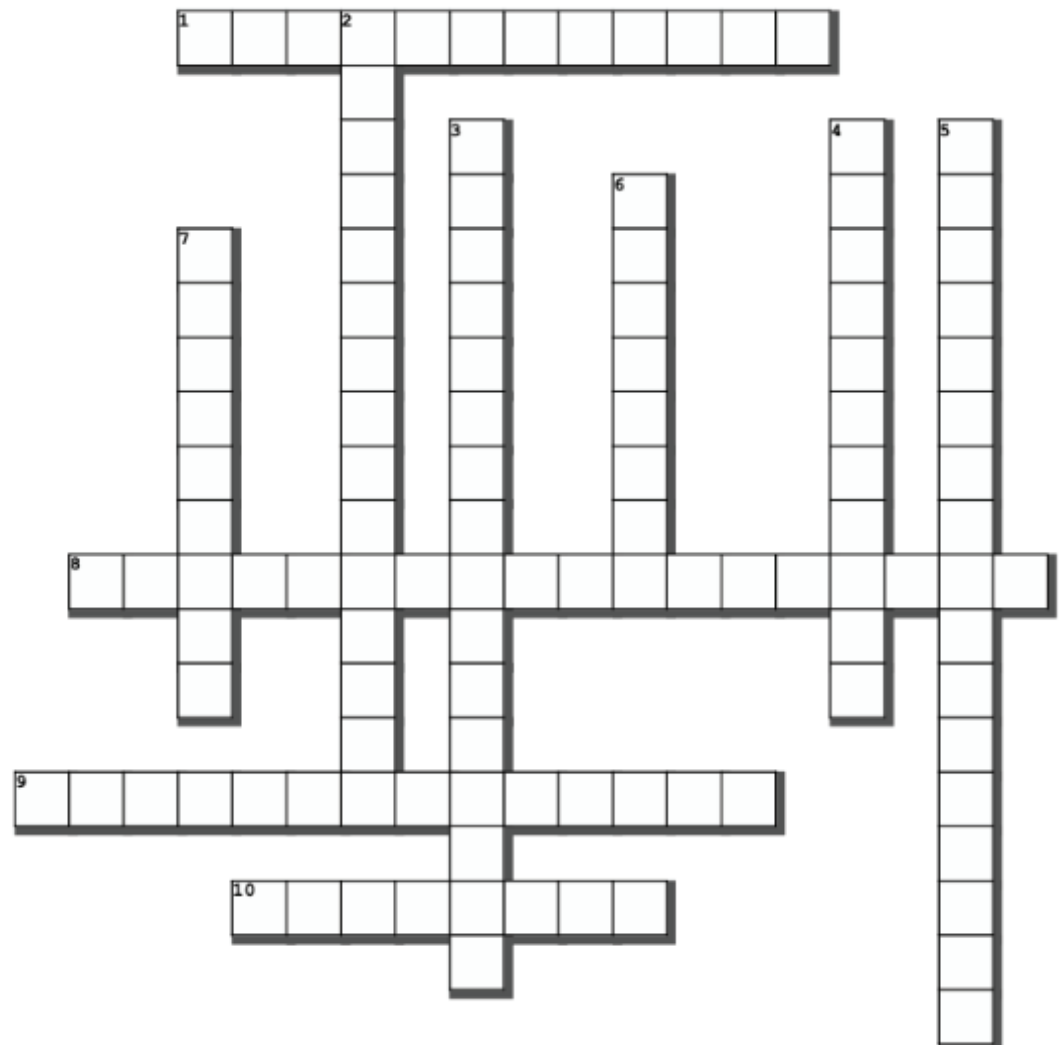
Across

1. Beloved autumn baked good.
8. This fall tradition makes quite the splash!
9. Jack Skellington’s Place of residence.
10. This spooky stop-motion was a recent subject for Portland artists.

Down

2. The mind behind ‘Tell Tale Heart’ and ‘The Raven.’
3. Eerie tourist destination under Portland’s Old Town Chinatown.
4. Sweet treat whose center requires a few licks.
5. Last year The Collegian covered this Salem-based haunted house.
6. October social media challenge for artists.
7. Rihanna released this spooky hit in 2008.

*answers may contain spaces



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