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Willamette's building naming policy provides clarity to naming procedures

Robin Linares
Staff Writer

In 2021, Willamette's board of trustees adopted a new building naming policy, creating new procedures regarding honorific naming and renaming buildings on campus.

The policy, linked on the Office of the President's webpage, was created following an increased period of national reflection after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. This sparked conversations at universities across the country regarding building names and whether or not the names properly reflected a university's values. For instance, the University of Oregon changed two of its buildings' names after it was revealed they were named after a former Ku Klux Klan member and an advocate for slavery.

For Willamette specifically, a task force was created to address similar concerns if they arose at Willamette. "We knew we didn't have any sort of documented policies in place and so we wanted to make sure we had a clear and transparent process in place, so should this issue come up, we wouldn't have to make it up on the fly," said Colleen Kawahara, the chief of staff, administrative secretary to the board of trustees, vice president for communications, and member of naming policy task force.

The task force team had a variety of perspectives involved. Members included trustees, faculty, the ASWU president at the time, representatives from the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indians, among other representatives. As Kerry Tymchuk, the executive director of the Oregon Historical Society, Life trustee and task force chair explained, "[The task force] was just as broad and diverse of a group of students, faculty, trustees, alumni and folks with expertise as they could get."



Image by Eli Fukuji

This resulting policy outlined two different naming scenarios: honorific naming and renaming buildings. In regards to honorific naming, or naming not supported by a gift, there are several procedures to be followed. Some of these criteria include having an image consistent with the values of the university, making significant exemplary contributions to the Willamette community and, if a person is considered, not having a building named after them until at least five years after their death.

For the building renaming policies, like changing the name of a building due to the individual's associations or actions being deemed un-

acceptable, there is another lengthy process to be followed. As Kawahara noted, the length of this process is needed to ensure that the best decisions are made, keeping in mind the various perspectives that can arise. "Time should be taken with [renaming], and it should be done with care and without haste because there's a lot of emotion behind it," Kawahara explained, "both for the people who want the building renamed and for the people connected to Willamette who may have other feelings about the name. If you look at any other renaming process that other universities have gone through, it is hardly ever without controversy or challenge since this is a very sensitive process."

While the primary goal of these new policies is to have procedures in place in case building name concerns arise, there are discussions of having a more proactive review of the university's building names. However, no official plans have been made for a formalized comprehensive review. "It is something we've talked about, but we haven't figured out how to find the time or resources to do [a more comprehensive process]," Kawahara explained. "I think that that's something that would be good to do as a part of the [review] process, so if there is a request to rename the space, looking into the history of the name would be included

as part of that procedure."

For Ellen Eisenberg, a Willamette history professor and member of the building policy task force, there are ways she would like to implement a proactive review, including within her own course curriculum. "One of the first recommendations of the report is that the university engage in a proactive review of all the named building sites. I'm interested in doing that, and I've mentioned it, but so far, to the best of my knowledge, there hasn't been an overall review," Eisenberg said. "I have thought about the possibility of some kind of class structured around that."

Despite varying perspectives regarding the implementation of a proactive review process, the goals surrounding these policies are to be as transparent as possible regarding the criteria surrounding a university name. Eisenberg stressed the importance of ensuring naming protocols are up to date as names are often associated with a university's values. "The naming of spaces, buildings and programs are expressions of the institution's own voice and a proclamation of what it honors and stands for," Eisenberg explained. "So you want to make sure that the person you're honoring meets the criteria."

Ultimately, as the policy noted, with Willamette's history as an institution, the task force was cognizant that Willamette's founding has explicit ties to the introduction of colonial developments in the Willamette Valley. In the making of this policy and in reflection on American history in general, Tymchuk acknowledges the importance of having continued historical transparency. "As we look back into the years, we need to highlight the bad as well as the good," Tymchuk explained. "We need to take ownership of our history and hope that we've learned from mistakes and we're doing better."

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New changes to Opening Days operations in the works for the 2024-25 school year

Karmen Zhao
Staff Writer

Plans for the 2024 Opening Days have begun as applications for Opening Days (OD) leaders closed on Feb. 19. New OD student leaders have been chosen and the process of planning and integrating a new system of leadership has emerged. The Willamette Events and Activities website has already posted its general structure of how the 2024 Opening Days will be run, stating, "Opening Days will give you the tools and resources you need throughout your first semester and beyond. This year's program takes place Aug. 21-25, with move-in day on August 21st."

With the 2023 Opening Days lasting six full days from Aug. 22 to Aug. 27 in comparison to the 2024 Opening Days, which lasted only five days, there is an apparent change in the schedule that cuts out an entire day.

Along with this alteration, Dean of Students and Director of Student Engagement and Leadership Lisa Holliday explained other changes: "[We are] really trying to simplify the responsibilities of the OD leaders. ... So we are really trying to say, 'Okay, you're an OD leader, you're responsible for helping students connect and build relationships and get them acquainted with the campus and resources.'" Instead of having two OD leaders per group, there will only be one

leader per group of 15. "Instead of hiring 60 OD leaders, we will be hiring 40," said Holliday. This adjustment is meant to relieve some of the responsibilities for OD leaders, but in turn, causes Opening Days to be less student-led.

The 2023 OD Leaders webpage outlines the former expectations of an OD leader, stating, "They complete a Spring Training and then return to school in August for intensive training and preparation before Opening Days begins. ... [These] leaders are also responsible for planning all the events and programs that occur during Opening Days. Every leader is a member of one of the OD committees, each responsible for planning different events." Though many of these responsibilities remain the same, the new changes made to the OD leader position will decrease this workload.

According to Holliday, other adjustments are due to feedback from current first-year students about their Opening Day experiences. Some students found the experience to be overwhelming, as she recalled, "There was one day where students were busy from eight or nine in the morning until 11 o'clock at night. It was Colloquium, a couple of educational programs, and then it was Matriculation and then the Glow Up dance. It was just too much." In order to create a balance within the new schedule, a day was taken off of Opening Days and the events were more

spread out so there would be more time to incorporate meals and breaks.

Willamette student Henry Ives ('24) was an OD leader for the 2022 school year and in a reflection of his time, he stated, "I've always valued so much of the connections that can be made with individual students and I could see the worth of the program and how much people got out of it." He transitioned his interests into student engagement through his position as an OD leader.

Commenting on the changes to Opening Days that decrease student-led activities, Ives mentioned, "We never have enough leaders to distribute the workload evenly, so hopefully that [change] takes a little bit of stress off student leaders because every year was always, like, too many people being stretched a bit too thin." With oncoming class sizes increasing steadily every year since the COVID-19 pandemic eased, OD leaders have felt their responsibilities increasing linearly as the role requires more of them.

As an OD leader for the 2021-2023 school years, Naydine Lima-Mercado ('24) recalled, "[I] wouldn't have done it over and over again if I wasn't interested in improving the program and being part of that experience. ... Part of what I would like to see changed for Opening Days would definitely be [more appreciation for the leaders]. ... Opening Days leaders do a lot of work. ... They commit a lot

of their time for a small fraction of payment." Lima-Mercado led a group of more than 30 international and transfer students the first year she participated in Opening Days. Another year, she led a group of 19 students with the help of another OD leader.

"I have no doubt that [the Opening Days staff] will pull it together. They always have, we always have. Opening Days have always succeeded because of the way that we're

able to pull it together all at once," said Lima-Mercado regarding the new changes to the program.

In hopes of a better work-education-life balance for OD leaders and to reduce the chances of first-year students being overwhelmed, finalized plans are still up in the air as the current academic year nears its end.

Art by Eli Fukuji



ASWU project funds new accessible door button in Smullin Hall

Alan Cohen
Staff Writer

A new automatic door button has been installed at the west entrance of Smullin Hall with funding from the Associated Students of Willamette University (ASWU) as part of a campus improvement project aimed at increasing accessibility.

Andrew Caruana is a current ASWU senator for the class of 2024 and the former president of Disability Advocacy Club (DAC) for three years. He said that this campus improvement project, organized alongside senators Anastasiia Lemesh ('26) and Sean Olson ('26), consisted of funding the installation of a button for the west entrance of Smullin Hall to open automatically. Many people with disabilities previously had to use a different entrance with an automatic door opener. "If you were coming from [the west] side you'd have to go all the way around the building to the other side to get to a door with a door button. It was not the most acces-

sible route," Caruana added.

The company contracted to install the new button is Capitol City Door, Inc. The cost of installation was \$7,179 and it was fully funded by ASWU, according to the company's budget proposal.

The building where Smullin and Walton halls are located is home to the offices of many faculty members, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Accessible Education Services (AES) and Willamette Information and Technology Services (WITS).

Caruana said that the idea for this project came from many members of DAC who had been advocating for the installation of an automatic opener button for several years. The project also received help and support from AES, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Ruth Feingold, ASWU Advisor Lisa Holliday and the Neurodivergent Student Union (NDSU). ASWU senate approval for the proposal was unanimous.

Milo Greenberg ('24), the treasurer of ASWU, said that "getting a quote for how much [the button] was going to

cost was an ordeal," but he is glad that the project was finally completed.

Nonetheless, Caruana thinks that such accessibility projects should be funded by the university instead of ASWU. "I'm happy that [ASWU] had the money to do it. I'm sure that students generally are happy to see their money going to things like that, because those are real and tangible things, but the university should have paid for it and it should have happened decades ago," Caruana said.

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990 and further expanded in 2008, public buildings have to meet accessibility standards, including functional elevators and accessible entrances through ramps or automatic buttons. With its existing single accessible entrance, Smullin Hall was already ADA-compliant, but Caruana believes that these standards are insufficient. "What do we consider as ADA-compliant versus what is actually accessible to people with disabilities? We might be

compliant, but are we really doing the best that we can?"

Caruana said that members of the university administration supported the project, but added, "What admin is willing to support and what admin is willing or able to pay for are two very different things." He hopes that this project encourages the university administration in the future to "look at these projects more seriously" as other large buildings on campus, like Kaneko, still only have one automatic

door button. "To the university's credit, Willamette is a really old campus, and when you're working with really old buildings it's very expensive to do some of the remodels that should be done," he added.

Caruana concluded that the university should always aim to increase accessibility and send a message to prospective students with disabilities that they are welcome and heard at Willamette.

Photo by Keenan Yoshizawa



Willamette students open for drag queen Poison Waters

Elise Lien
Staff Writer

On March 18, the PNW-based drag queen Poison Waters came to Willamette to perform a show presented by the Willamette Events Board. Before Poison Waters performed, two Willamette students hit the stage to open the show with a bang. One of them was completely new to drag while the other had some experience under her belt already.

The first opener was Ceph Tronco ('26), who made his drag debut to the song "The Ballad of Mona Lisa" by Panic! At the Disco in a middle school, emo-inspired look, complete with Dr. Martens boots. Tronco's full look consisted of a black wig and a black dress, with the latter

borrowed from his mom. "My mom has been a really big help on this," Tronco shared. "I feel like that is a really cool experience to have for my first time doing drag, [which] is my mom being 100% supportive."

Tronco had been eyeing getting into drag and thought that being an opener for Willamette's drag show was a perfect place to try it out. "This is a type of performing that I have never done before and am really really excited about," Tronco said. "The chance to try something new is big for me, and also as a trans guy I think that women's fashion is just more fun in a lot of ways — there [are] more variety options. It appeals to me aesthetically. I think it's fun to take something to its logical extreme." Tronco also said that drag is a great way to interact

with his interest in women's fashion in a way that feels comfortable to him. "It's a circumstance where it's clear that this is a costume, that this is a bit that I'm doing. I get to engage with it and explore it again and have it be safe, contained and clear that it's not true to me."

The second opener was Natalie Risse ('24), who has been doing drag for about a year. Last year in her study abroad program in Ireland, Risse had the opportunity to go to a drag school and perform in a drag show. "It was a great experience," Risse said. "I wanted to do it here because in Ireland my friends from here didn't get to see it, so I wanted to bring it to Willamette. It was perfectly timed." Risse performed with the drag name Shrexxy both in Ireland and at Willamette, donning a bright green wig,

green clothing, fishnets and completing the look with bright green platform heels. Shrexxy became Risse's drag persona in high school long before she actually started doing drag, when she and her high school friends would watch "RuPaul's Drag Race" and discuss what their drag names and looks would be. Even though she started doing drag for her high school friends, Risse found a lot of comfort within the art form.

Risse shared that drag "was essential to growing in my queer identity and understanding myself as a queer person." From watching her favorite drag queens to doing drag herself, Risse appreciates the accepting and liberating atmosphere that drag provides. Risse added that drag makes her feel "that I'm not strange and that I'm not wrong. It's

been a long road of suppressing it and being like, 'no, being gay is wrong,' 'being sexual is wrong,' 'doing all these things [is] wrong.' College has been that experience of trying to leave that boundary that I was placed into and understand myself in a new way and in a way that is liberating and joyous and my true self."

After the show, Risse expressed the pride she felt after performing: "I rewatched it and thought I did good. It makes me happy and joyous that I feel like I performed my genuine self and my friends all enjoyed it and everyone came to support me [which] I really loved."

Photos by Jason Lehmann



Fast Break sports report

Skeet Starr
Sports Editor

4/2

Welcome back, Bearcat Fan! While you were galavanting across Europe or pulling teeth at home with your well-meaning but abrasive families, spring athletes were hard at work, often to no particular end. Let's get back to work ourselves and head to the news!

Men's Golf struck gold at the George Fox Invitational. They surpassed Linfield in the team standings by a mere three points. Women's Golf languished at the UCSC Invitational. Roberta Moore ('26) led the 'Cats but still failed to make par.

Baseball ceded conference supremacy to those evil sadists and future IRS officers from Walla Walla. They pulled one win of a possible three from the Pirates, then defeated Linfield twice, but fell in their final

(11-inning) matchup.

Track and Field is preparing for the conference championships. Whitley Stepp ('26) and newcomer Steeley Mucken ('27) chomped at the bit as the 'Cats charged through spring break.

Lacrosse picked up three more wins. They are tied for second in the conference. George Fox still lurks in the farmlands, a black mark on the horizon.

Tennis put in a shift, battling it out against four schools each over the break. Both squads failed to find a team victory, however. May our racket-wielding peers gaze upon the oaks that border their court and be reminded that they sprouted from humble acorns.

Softball went 2-2 against Whitworth, who stand alone below them on the table.

In the world of sport: No. 11 seed North Carolina State danced its way to the March Madness Final Four,

and by the release of this Fast Break, LSU and Iowa's women's squads will have carried out a championship rematch in the Elite Eight.

Consider in the coming weeks: Are you feeling like Travis Bickle in that one scene from "Taxi Driver" where he's working out and monologuing ominously? Good. Finals are a month away. No more destroyers of your body. Total organization. Every muscle tight.

4/7

Hello, Bearcat Fan! Men's Soccer has hired a new coach, SCAN is preparing for war with the Athletics, Department and sports writers are racing to cover it all as we speak. For my part, a raven knocked on my window seeking respite from the spring rains, so I've been trying to teach it to read and regurgitate Willamette sports scores for me. Unfortunately, all he's done so far is complain about Poe's reductivity. Let's caw

to the news!

The Basecats demolished Pacific in back-to-back games but were knocked out in a similar fashion in game three. Regardless, they are back on top of the conference.

Tenley Grant ('25) knocked on the door of Willamette's hammer throw record at the Jenn Boyman Invitational track meet, throwing down 158' 8" in the last attempt of the day. Will Hennem ('25) won the steeplechase, Zoe Heino ('26) won the 3000-meter and Le'cia Sincere ('25) won the triple jump. The 'Cats are gearing up for the conference meet.

Men's Golf was sitting in second place as night fell on day one of the NWC Classic. They should be wrapped up by the time this Fast Break hits the site. The Women finished day one at seventh.

Lacrosse thrashed Whitman (19-3), then scraped out a win over Whit-

worth (14-11). Could they finally achieve conference supremacy?

Both the Tennis teams had a bad case of the Whitman Blues, failing to find any victory across nine matchups. They fared little better against the Pirates, Pioneers and Boxers.

Softball brought one win of a possible four back from the Lutes in Tacoma. They remain ahead of only Whitworth in the standings.

In the world of sport: Only No. 1 seeds made the March Madness finals. South Carolina won the women's division, the men will have a champion by Monday night and here at home, the Willamette Soccer Club hosted the first ever Bearkitty Cup.

Consider in the coming weeks: Why did the scorpion sting the frog, and alternatively, what's it going to take for tennis to start winning?



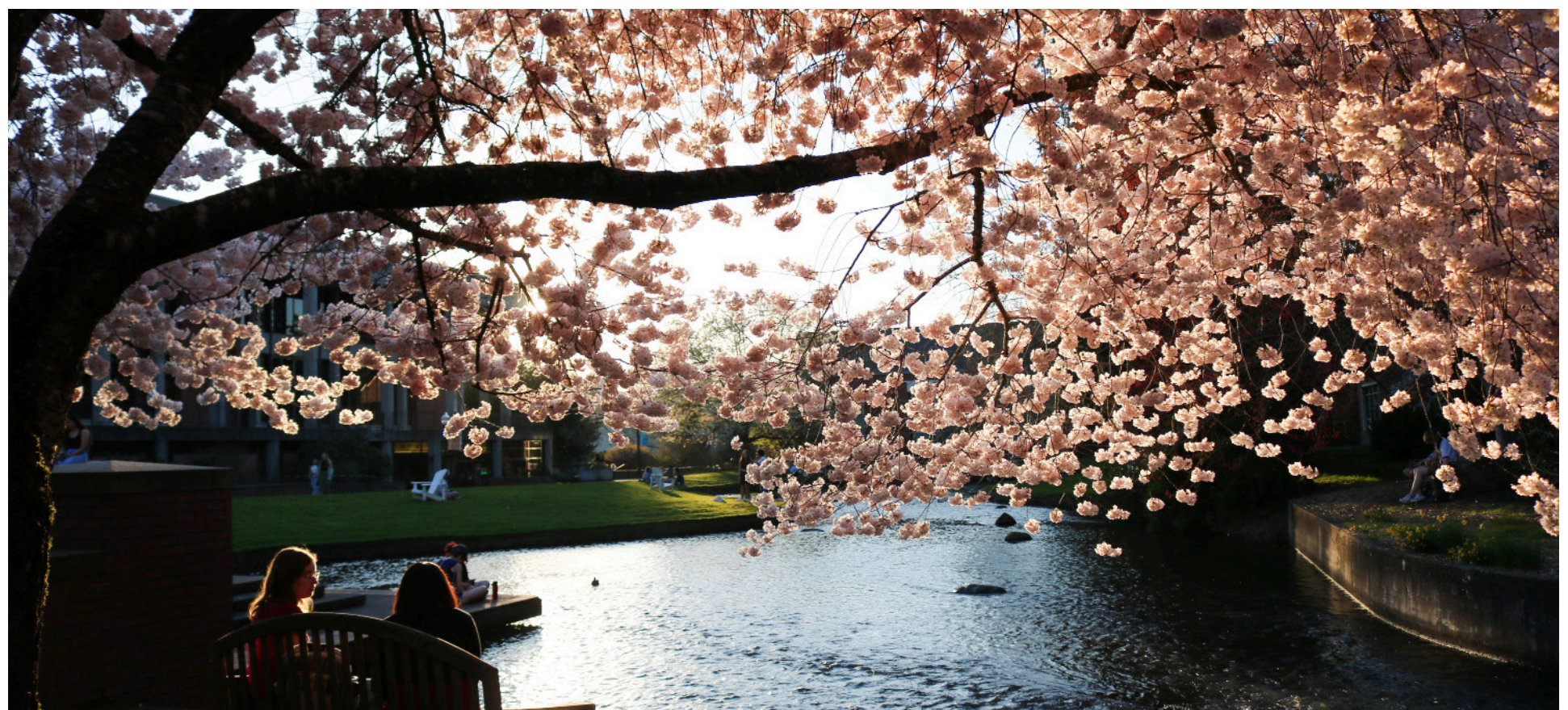
Photojournalism: Willamette cherry blossoms

Skeet Starr
Sports Editor
Photos by

Lucy Devlaeminck

Seldom does nature represent the fleeting beauty of life so dramatically as in the case of a cherry blossom bloom. That's probably why early European settlers to Oregon unnaturally planted so many cherry trees

in Salem to simulate the same effect year after year. According to Oregon Encyclopedia, Salem was named Cherry City in 1907. In more recent years, our annual cherry bloom has been honored through a pink blossom on the city flag. The Central Area remains one of the best places to experience Salem's sacred flower in all its grotesque excess and majesty.





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400 decadence is fear in Las Vegas, Pennzoil:

One journalist's manic and magical quest to reach the Pennzoil 400

Mary Vickery
Staff Writer

PDX's Tillamook Market was a mere siren's call. It was 10:30 in the morning. A woman thumped the keys of a piano behind our table at the airport restaurant, playing whatever music she had memorized including the Charlie Brown theme song.

I was annoyed, and so was Jasper; we had to get out of there. Dragging ourselves toward our supposed gate was difficult. Jasper gravitated toward The Oregonian news outlet, where he picked up some toothpaste, a Powerade and a bottle of Excedrin. As tempted as I was to cure my hangover, the warning on the Excedrin bottle about liver damage scared me.

We sat silently on a bench for a while as Jasper sipped his drink, just out of reach of the piano chords that still littered the air. The Pennzoil 400 sat before me, and I was going to make it mine.

The trip was spurred a few weeks earlier by a viewing of Will Ferrell's "Talladega Knights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby." As Hemmingway once said, "There are only three sports: bullfighting, motor racing and mountaineering; all the rest are merely games." A NASCAR race — the power, the shriek, the metal and the speed — was a sports journalist's dream. We had to go to one of these things. The Pennzoil 400 in Las Vegas was the closest and loomed just around the corner.

Finally at the terminal gate, a man interrupted Jasper's and my conversation. He turned to me, his teeth sitting unusually straight. I laughed as he asked for gum I'd just put away and even more when he asserted that Jasper and I made a good couple. "Thank you, but we're just friends," I replied.

Disappointment or even embarrassment laced his voice: "Oh. That's nice too. I've never been very good at making friends, especially as a kid." I felt awkward, and I think he did too.

Halfway through boarding, a woman on the PA informed us that all flights in and out of Vegas were grounded due to high winds. I asked Jasper if he wanted to get a beer. That was that.

By the time we crawled back to the gate, we were each six drinks deep. A man who wore a fluorescent vest slumped by with leathery skin. His hair stood up in the middle of his head, thinned otherwise by time at the top.

"Lizard Man," I said to Jasper. He laughed.

We boarded our Spirit

flight six hours after our arrival at the airport. Anticipation left my body as the plane ascended, and I fell asleep.

I woke to the sound of the seatbelt light turning on. My stomach fell as the floor was pulled out from under my feet, then put back. The seats around me creaked, their bolts straining to keep them stable. On the other side of me, the windows glowed with city lights. Jasper rocked forward and back, his eyes sealed tight.

The seats groaned louder as we approached the ground; the panels lining the plane vibrated as the wheels slammed into the tarmac. We braked. The panels shook violently, and our bodies pressed against our seatbelts. A sigh of relief was heard throughout the plane. I turned to Jasper.

"I am going to clap." He looked at me with humor in his eyes: "Do it."

I clapped once and was immediately joined by at least half the aircraft. This trip was already a joke and I was excited to see just how funny things would get.

Jasper and I Ubered from the airport — an overwhelming nightmare with its constant jingling of slot machines, the smell of cigarette smoke and flashing lights. We arrived at our hotel, a Howard Johnson just a block off the strip.

My mom had gotten in my head about staying at a "Ho Jo," saying I "wasn't allowed to get murdered ... or shot." In an attempt to soothe her mind, I assured her I'd be with a man, to which she responded: "Yeah ... but he's British."

The beds were clean. It didn't matter that the floor was littered with stains or that mold clung to the bottom of the shower curtain.

Jasper left to get drinks, and I slumped on my bed. When he returned with a twelve-pack of Twisted Teas, we finished the case, then hit the strip. Our green flag was up, hours before it would raise at tomorrow's Pennzoil exhibition.

I was reignited with excitement previously dulled by travel. Godless light blinked at me in every direction, and I was elated by the unnatural feeling of it all. The skyline loomed over us and cars whizzed by carelessly. The world from top to ground was branded, and the Aria Mall called our names.

The mall was eerie — no one was there. I expected Jasper to be waiting for me outside the bathroom after, but he was nowhere to be found. I waited. Jasper soon emerged from the men's restroom with his shoulders slanted and square after throwing up. We kept walking.

A mediocre Bellagio fountain show spewed to a popular classical music tune, and we stood watching, falsely enamored. A man behind us was selling hotdogs. We peeled ourselves up the walkway into the entrance of the Bellagio. Light pressed through the colored Dale Chihuly glass lining the ceiling like a mangled bird of paradise. The labyrinth of slot machines pinged to the right, begging for our entrance.

We wandered through the maze of machines, gazing at a plethora of people. A large man received a massage from a small woman who had "Massage" written across her back. Old women sat hunched towards the screens, and couples sat side by side, lifting cigarettes up and down to their mouths.

We wandered Caesars Palace in crowds of small



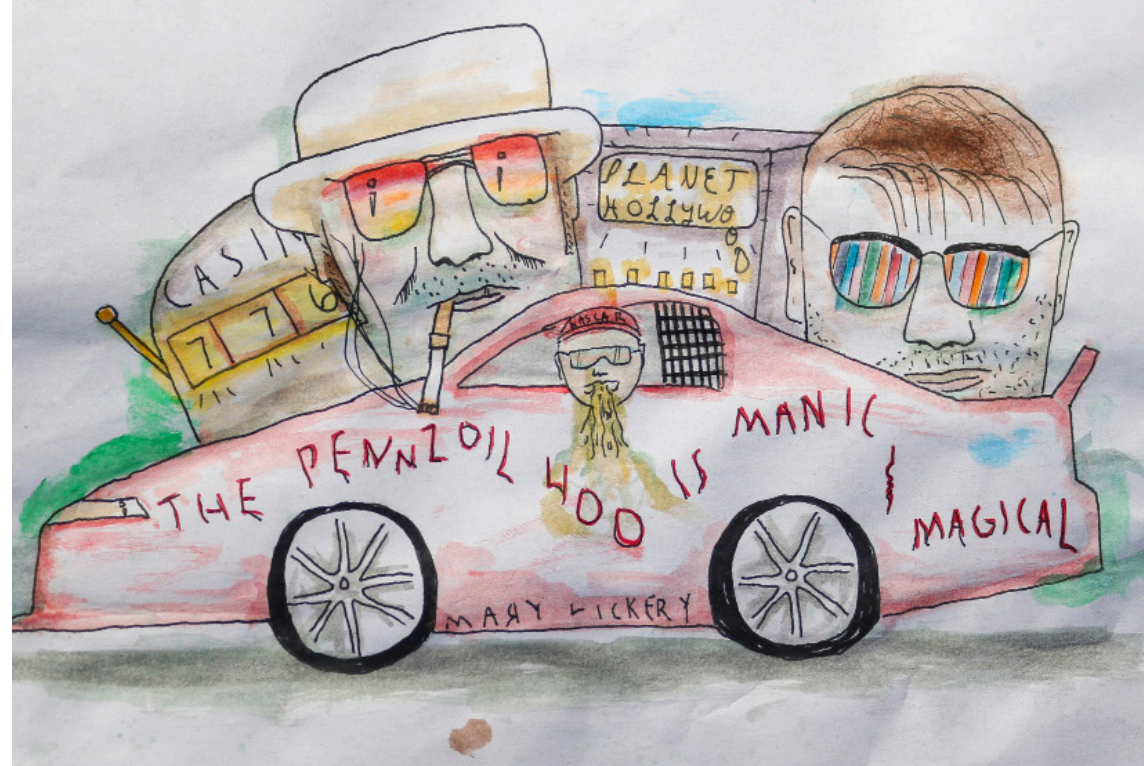
Photo by Mary Vickery

women in tight dresses and tourists looking for magic in machines, which I found easily. 'Just a feeling' tugged at my skin and eventually the feeling yielded 'credits' which I cashed out and put Jasper \$30 in the green. I am magic. Men ambling around me made my stomach rage with their smug faces full of unknowing and cockiness. They were dogs, and I was going to bark at them. We drank more.

Planet Hollywood seemed dingier than the casinos we were in before. It was darker, and the machines glowed more red as we headed to the bar. On our way in, I went to take a photo of Jasper. My phone was gone. The woman at the bar looked relieved to see me when I ventured back. "It's you," she said, as if she'd been waiting for me all her life in those mere minutes, then handed me my phone.

Women in black be-dazzled outfits that covered just the important parts danced on the tables. I was tired; I wanted to lie down. Cold file pressed against my back. This had to be gross, but it looked so clean and there was practically

Art by Skeet Starr



no one here. I wanted to leave this place.

Raising Cane's was a delicacy from home that I often missed at school. Its blinking sign was equivalent to an angel being sent before me, instructing me to "be not afraid." The fast-food haunt was full of reddened Australian men in rugby jerseys, babbling on about what to get. Most of them clutched collectible Las Vegas Kings cups tight to their stomachs.

Jasper and I annihilated our chicken. I needed to go to bed.

I woke up Sunday morning, and God had it out for me. So many horrible things happened that it took every ounce of my remaining strength to even type them, but after all that work it was slashed with a mutter about "bio-capitalism." All was a swirl of bathtubs and wrath, but it was the perfect day to spend some time outdoors at the track. The tickets were burning a hole in my pocket, and it was race day — the goddamn Pennzoil 400 in Sin City, USA.

We sat high in the stands with a view of the whole arena. RVs sat parked in the center, waiting for the speed. USAF Thunderbirds soared above, and Jasper began shaking in fear. Each car flew around the track. The sound ripped by, rumbling the seats beneath us. My skin cracked in the wind and desert sun. People hollered and the man sitting behind me roared: "I'm not here for the racing; I'm here for the crashing."

Flags flew. The smell of burnt rubber and oil soaked the air. Despite all the anticipation and excitement for this day, the tumble and crash to reach this moment, I felt nothing but a headache. Around and around the cars bolted monotonously. Behind the track, the skyline of the strip was clouded in dust, contrasting the mountains sitting steadfast and immovable against the scene below. Tepid in my seat, the Pennzoil 400 darted by.

I was ready to leave

Opinion: The TikTok ban is bad, but not for the reason you think

Ari Torres
Staff Writer

The popular social media app TikTok has been controversial for quite some time, but recently this contention has come to a head. The House of Representatives has officially passed a proposal for TikTok to either be bought from the Chinese government or banned in the United States. If approved in the Senate, the bill will only need the president's signature. A lot is up to the legislators, so as of right now, there is very little the American public can do about the situation. For many this seems inconsequential — it's just another social media platform that students would be more productive without. But the question of a ban is much larger than just one addictive app.

Surprisingly, TikTok seems to be dropping in popularity according to some students. Few have the app downloaded and less than half use it on a daily basis. Instead, they watch reuploaded videos on Instagram and YouTube. While Instagrams Reels and Youtube Shorts attempt to replicate the platform's success, Tiktok struggles to escape its viral niche. For once being arguably the most popular short-form content, TikTok is dying out as fast as its predecessors of the 2010s. Musical.ly and Vine were both platforms with similar setups. They were beloved by their generation and yet neither lasted more than four years. Vine was launched

in 2012 and discontinued in 2016. Musical.ly was released in 2014 before merging in 2017 with none other than TikTok. Perhaps this is fate; the shorter the media, the shorter it lasts. Trends come and go, and when a trend is as much of a threat to national security as the government implies about TikTok, the sooner the better.

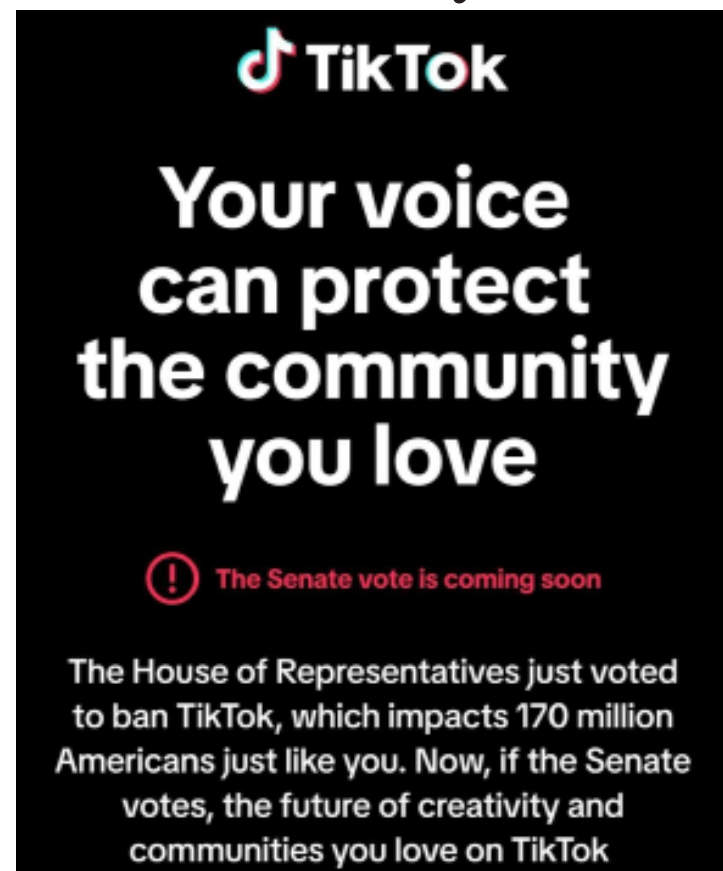
U.S. Representative Mike Gallagher (R-WI), who currently chairs the House Select Committee on China, sponsored the bill with these concerns in mind. According to him, TikTok has already begun to abuse user privacy in order to target journalists and interfere in elections. If the United States does not take action, there's no telling what amount of unclassified information the app could share with rival countries, he asserts.

However, public and federal privacy concerns don't require banning the platform completely. If regulated safely, the American public would still be able to enjoy TikTok. "The TikTok user experience can continue ... so long as ByteDance [China] doesn't own the company," Gallagher clarified to NPR's congressional correspondent Deirdre Walsh. Even U.S. Representative and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) commented on this in her House floor speech in March, insisting that improvement was the bill makers' only motive. Is this true though? Not likely. At the insistence of the Chinese government, TikTok's

parent company has agreed to work alongside Oracle, an American software service, to oversee user data management. But privacy doesn't appear to be the U.S. government's only concern. All these apps have another thing in common that must be taken into account, and that's their intended demographic.

Musical.ly shared the same privacy allegations, as it was also owned by China. That isn't the case for Vine or even Facebook, the latter of which wasn't just accused but actually did sell information back in 2017. Both were American-owned, but the dangerous one, Facebook, somehow endured. The truth is that Vine, Musical.ly, and TikTok are Generation Z's platforms. While every other generation is allowed to keep their favorite flavor of social media, the youngest are forced to start over multiple times. Maybe that has something to do with Zuckerberg and his chokehold on the economy — too Meta? — but more likely it's because the government wants to silence one group in particular. Everyone knows Gen Z is too unpredictable. Too opinionated. Too extreme. The government has not been timid in its views. Officials are afraid of radical ideas voiced by this generation and they know TikTok is where we rally.

This is why the bill is a big deal. Either way, extreme regulation goes against freedom of speech, but America buying TikTok might even be



worse than banning it altogether. "I get my news from TikTok. If the government owned it, they could regulate what we see," Samantha Fernandez ('27) noted. She's right. The United States government may not buy the app outright, but whichever American company does will be subject to demands. Sure, they may only want to limit screen time right now, but there will always be the possibility of worse. First no more scrolling after midnight, then just the slightest

hint at rebellion will get a video blocked. Kylie Smith ('26) said it best: "Censorship can be bad. ... If they're just going to change the platform, there's really no point in keeping it."

Maybe TikTok getting banned won't have much of an effect by itself. It is, however, indicative of future restrictions. Freedoms that, if not preserved, can be lost forever. Sorry Nancy Pelosi, this proposal will not make the platform "tic-tac-toe, a winner," but maybe it doesn't have to be a lost cause either.

Opinion: Envisioning the new Salem Center as a communal space with affordable options

Brooke Austin
Staff Writer

Salem Center is a shopping mall in the heart of downtown. Unfortunately, it isn't known for its incredible reputation. The Yelp reviews sum the space up pretty well: "Boarded windows, lights off and scattered people shuffling around with nothing to do. It looked like 'Last Man on Earth,' if you've seen that show"; "[I don't know] how they are staying alive, let alone the smaller businesses"; "[The city] should just close it down, it's a waste of retail space." These are just a few examples of what local residents are saying about Salem Center. Of course, then, it was news to the community when local investors Kelly McDonald, Patrick Carney and Mark Shipman bought out the acres to invest in renovating the mall.

According to an article from the Statesman Journal, McDonald, Carney and Shipman are three business partners

who pride themselves on being from Oregon. All three say they appreciate the potential Salem Center has to become a vibrant place and a better reflection of what they believe to be the essence of the Salem community. McDonald, Carney and Shipman are looking to renovate Salem Center in order to flip its entire connotation as a "horrible and miserable place to be," and they plan to achieve that goal by catering to what the people living in Salem are looking for in a shopping center.

All of this begs the question: what do Willamette students, now calling Salem home, want in a shopping center? As the majority of Willamette consists of college students who are budgeting (i.e., learning to suck it up and eat the two end pieces of the bread loaf because even though you know it's just bread, you still swear it tastes different), what are Bearcats looking for in a shopping center?

The current Salem

Center is, admittedly, a dud. Contrary to how it might seem within the on-campus bubble, Willamette college students do not make up the whole population of Salem, and thus, amenities in Salem Center need to apply to everyone in Salem. The center has chain department stores like American Eagle, Bath & Body Works and the scariest place to get your ears pierced, Claire's. After several years of Salem Center's continual decline, it is clear that these stores are not what the people of Salem are looking for.

From a college student standpoint, what do the Bearcats want to see in the new and improved Salem Center? Some students expressed wanting public areas for people to spend time in without necessarily having to spend a lot of money. Annie Birch Wright ('27) said, "A lot of infrastructure is built around keeping people moving and buying things, so I think it would be so cool to have a place where that isn't

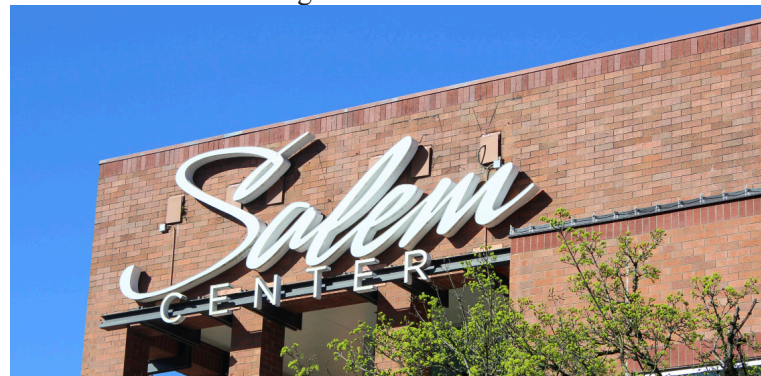
the case." Birch Wright also emphasized a desire to see the new Salem Center shift toward more sustainable development and take a few steps toward carbon neutrality.

Other students proposed the benefits of having basic necessities easily accessible, like expanding their walkable grocery store selection to more than just Safeway with its big lines and even bigger prices. Some proposed affordable clothing stores for students to grab staples.

Though the students of Willamette are looking for a

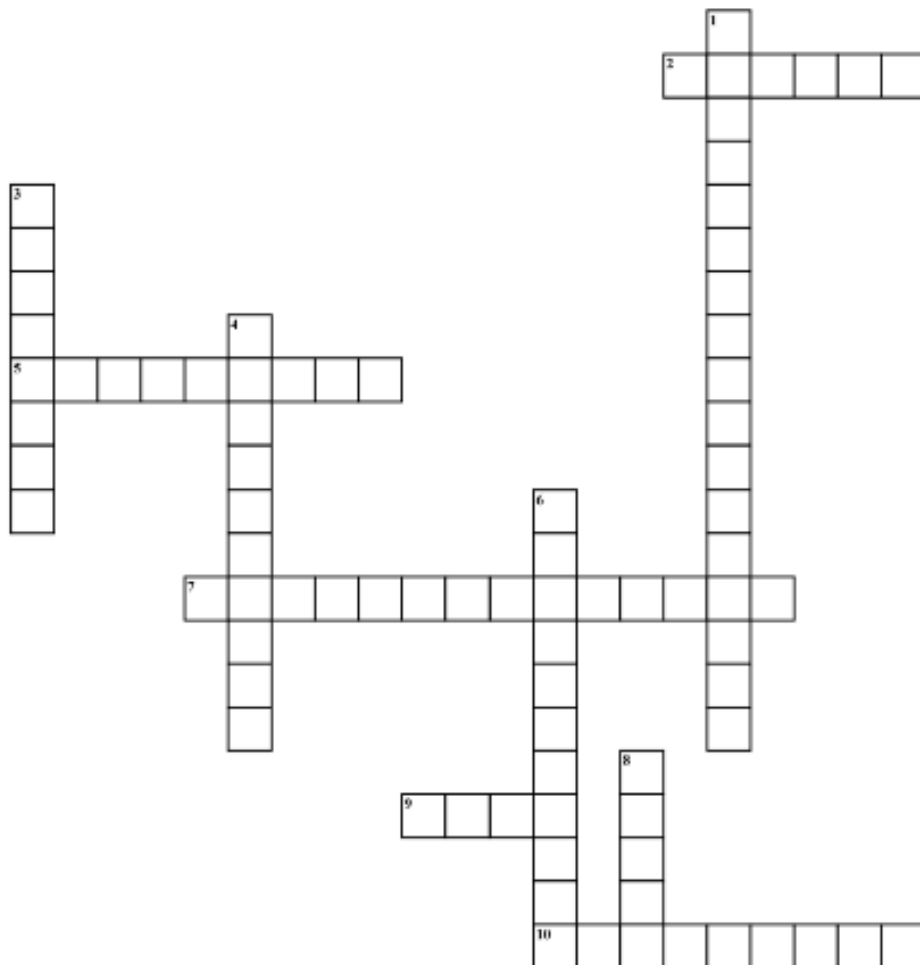
variety of things, it goes without saying that all are excited to see the renovations of Salem Center under McDonald, Carney and Shipman. Their goal is to "add new energy to this vibrant, human gathering place for greater Salem," and despite what specific qualities people are looking for in the new shopping center, it's clear that Salem residents are looking forward to seeing people use the full potential of Salem Center.

Image by Alma Snortum-Phelps





Finals Week(s)




Across

- [2] The No Drama Llama.
- [5] New-to-campus feathery friends.
- [7] Magical cause for sunny days.
- [9] Take the day off and watch some presentations!
- [10] A short reprieve to finish that paper.

Down

- [1] The theatre department's newest hit.
- [3] We'll all see a little too much of the graduating class during this event.
- [4] Celebrate our seniors on this May date.
- [6] Countless tours happen on these exciting Fridays.
- [8] Hawai'i club's much-awaited spring event.



ASWU Student Org Upcoming Events

- Health Professions Club's Annual Glasses Drive— Feb 7– Apr 30
- Aca-Prom— Friday, April 19
- Hawai'i Club's 34th Lu'au – Saturday, April 27

Be sure to get your club or org event on the calendar by posting to the university events calendar or contacting The Collegian directly.

ASWU sponsored orgs from the University Calendar are added here.
See more at: <https://events.willamette.edu/>



Keep up with Willamette Athletics!

Comic by Carolyn Vazquez

