

STORY BY BOWEN ORCUTT

n the classic story "The Wizard of Oz," our hero Dorothy stumbles upon a living scarecrow hanging in a random field along the yellow brick road. No explanation was ever given, in that story or others in the series written after it, as to how he got up there. Until now, courtesy of LBCC's theater group! Last Thursday, the magic of Oz came

to LBCC as children from three local elementary schools flocked into the Russell Tripp Center to see this year's Annual Children's Play. The play this year was "A Scarecrow in Oz." An original production written by members of the LBCC drama club and directed by theater faculty Dan Stone, it tells the origin story of the beloved brainless scarecrow.

Once everyone was seated, event coordinator Michael Winder greeted the crowd and explained the rules of the theater through jokes, such as warning them to not leave with the wrong group lest they mistakenly end up with the wrong family, who'll make them dress up in ridiculous pirate outfits. Yes, that makes exactly as much sense in context. He also asked how many of them had read the book beforehand; about two-thirds raised their hands.

After Winder was done came the play itself. Most of the cast functioned as a sort of Greek choir that moved parts of the set around, as well as a narrator who walked around on stage singing a beautiful song about what was going on in the plot.

The plot opens with a pair of Munchkins, the witch-terrorized group from the original story. The Munchkins were cursed after an attempted revolution against the Wicked Witch of the East, and were left unable to have children. The pair of Munchkins in question, Mayzey (played by Laural Tannehill) and Cornelius (Joseph Johnson), are a married couple working on a corn farm who very much wish to have a child.

Lacking other options, the two of them decide to leave Munchkin-land to seek out another witch who is rumored to possess a magic capable of creating life. The witch, named Mombi, lives north of the East Witch's territory, through the enchanted poppy fields and a cursed forest. After a brief yet harrowing journey, they reach Mombi's abandoned castle and successfully cont. on pg. 4

Men's Basketball

SamCare

"Birds of Prey"

THE LINN-BENTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE



The Commuter is the weekly student-run newspaper for LBCC, financed by student fees and advertising. Opinions expressed in The Commuter do not necessarily reflect those of the LBCC administration, faculty and students of LBCC. Editorials, columns, letters, and cartoons reflect the opinions of the authors.

LBCC is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

Letters Welcome

The Commuter encourages readers to use its "Opinion" pages to express their views on campus, community, regional and national issues. The Commuter attempts to print all submissions received, but reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, libel, privacy concerns and taste. Opinions expressed by letter submitters do not represent the views of the Commuter staff or the College. Deliver letters to:

Address:

The Commuter Forum 222 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW Albany, OR 97321

Web Address: LBCommuter.com

Phone: 541-917-4451, 4452 or 4449

Email: commuter@linnbenton.edu



The Commuter

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A&E

WHAT WELLNESS WORKS FOR YOU?



Quick, name three things you do everyday to help feel energized? (I'm willing to bet coffee, Red Bull, Pepsi, or Coke come up a lot). How about a quick walk outside? Standing and stretching? A crisp apple to eat? A full two minutes with an electric toothbrush? Cold water on your face? Two really deep breaths, with a slow exhale?

I was fresh out of college with a four-year degree in teaching and exercise science. I was working at a local YMCA. I'd studied and passed some serious exams to do fitness testing and prescription and I was pretty full of myself in how to improve health and wellness. One day, I was working with an older woman determined to "get more fit and have energy for traveling." I spent two hours on flexibility, strength, cardio endurance, etc. and detailed a specific plan to get started. I joyfully (and no doubt full of myself) exclaim, "Okay, so does this make sense and will it work for you?" She very seriously answers, "well, it sounds good. But I think I'm just going to do what my neighbor suggested. She has this machine that you stand on and it has straps and rollers that massage your body. She said after a week she had so much energy and was losing weight. I think I'm going to try that first. It seems really easy."

My point is, it's got to sound or seem easy. Just because experts say this is what you should do, does not mean that will fit for you. Do your own wellness thing.

And if you have more time, these are great health and wellness resources on or near campus.

1. LBCC Advising Center web page. Link to Wellness Resources. Or Career Services, and Career Coach to explore new options that fit your style.

2. Wellness Trail around perimeter of campus. East side, West Side or, all around the campus, fields and gardens.

3. Extended Hours for the weight room and cardio equipment in the Activity Center (1 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday). This was a result of lots of feedback from students, faculty and staff. Keep speaking up about what you want and need.

4. SamCare Mobile Medicine Bus - Coming to LBCC February 18 from noon to 5 p.m. and twice a month through the spring. Call 541-768-2220 to schedule an appointment, or drop in for routine health check ups, acute illness, and anxiety and depression screening.

THINK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The IEDI Encourages Student Leaders to Serve on Conference Panel



This week's focus for the Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (IEDI) Update is the upcoming event "Think Outside the Classroom," a panel discussion about the value of attending conferences. Organizer Catherine Stevens is a student worker at the IEDI. She and other student workers staff the main desk in the IEDI in Forum 220 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The students organize or help with events which highlight the department's themes of equity, diversity and inclusion.

"Think Outside the Classroom" will be on Wednesday March 4 from 12 to 1 pm in Forum 220. Panelists from the LBCC Space Exploration Team, Theater Department, Math Department, Writing Center, and Student Leadership Council will share about conferences they have attended or will be attending. Stevens is welcoming new panelists any time up to February 28. Attending conferences, Stevens has found, gives you an extra boost in college. "It kind of gives you superpowers," said Stevens, explaining

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHO: LBCC Students and Staff Panel will speak about attending conferences in their discipline.

WHAT: "Think Outside the Classroom"

WHEN: Sign up to participate in panel by February 28; panel will be on March 4 at 12 p.m.

WHERE: Forum 220

FMI: Email Catherine Stevens at Catherine.stevens.1021@ mail.linnbenton.edu or drop by the IEDI in Forum 220, open Monday through Friday 9 am to 3 pm. All are welcome.

WHY: This is an opportunity to share and hear about other departments in LBCC and the conferences associated with those departments. and you think of disregarding financial status everyone starts out at the same level," said Stevens. "Then you do research, and you go to office hours, and that boosts you up a little bit. One thing I've found recently is that when I go to a conference, that gives me an extra boost of learning about another company or a subfield in my major that I wouldn't have thought of pursuing. So I just want to show other students that there might be possibilities like that in their major, because I only know about computer science. That's why I'm trying to get panelists from a wide swathe of majors."

"I hope that students find it useful," said Stevens. She is compiling a list of conferences that are inexpensive conferences or offer scholarships to hand out to students at the event. Emily Dray from the Advising Center will open the event with a short presentation. "There will definitely be food at the event," said

Steven Pryor

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Dhe Yazan Alkomati Cindy Lin

Contributors

Bowen Orcutt Isaiah Haqq Georgia Ry Dunn-Hartman Arianna Stahlbaum Sabrina Parsons Mckenna Christmas Konoha Tomono-Duval Brenda Autry that college students come to college as newbies, but it is the choices students make once they're in college that separate them from the crowd.

"If you think of being in college,

Stevens.

Students and staff who are interested in being one of the panelists should email Stevens at Catherine.stevens.1021@mail. linnbenton.edu or talk to staff in the IEDI, Forum 220, by February 28, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the presentation and panel on March 4.

Wednesday, February 12 @ Noon

There are many events going on in Forum 220 in coming weeks. The IEDI is co-hosting a series of five speakers this month for Black History Month. On Wednesday February 12 Dorian Smith will speak at 12 pm in the IEDI. Smith, former Beaver football player, now OSU Coordinator of Black Student Access and Success, will speak about "Black Men in College Sports and Life After."

WHO: Dorian Smith, speaking for Black History Month

WHAT: "Black Men in College Sports and Life After"

WHEN: Wednesday February 12 at 12 p.m.

WHERE: the IEDI Department in Forum 220

WHY: This is an opportunity to hear Dorian Smith reflecting on his experience as a black man in college sports and in life after college in the work force.

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ASTROLOGY CORNER:

Over the weekend we reached a peak expression with a full moon in Leo on the February, 9. This super moon showed us the areas in our life that deserve a more honest and full expression. Though this may have been challenging for some, it is always a choice of surrender or resentment to our own illumination. As we are now in the Yin waning gibbous moon stage, we are being encouraged to demonstrate the peak expression of both the full moon in Leo, and the ending of Aquarius season. It is a time of manifesting what we are truly grateful for, and allow the rest to fall away.

In essence, this week could have us feeling like we're being wrung out like a washcloth - having our values reoriented towards joy with Venus and Jupiter on Wednesday, Thursday comes on strong with Scorpionic stings, constraining us to transform and evolve areas of our lives that need change in commitment, self assertion or more work; Friday follows these more intense themes with an illusionary veil from an opposing Neptune; it is encouraged by Mercury to initiate communications that can come full swing into expansion from Jupiter.

Saturday and Sunday will be ruled by a waning half moon leading us into the cultivation process of transformation, especially in regards to how we can support and interact with others. This will especially be potent because Mercury will go retrograde Sunday evening in Pisces. These mixed signals from Mercury Rx (retrograde) in Pisces will be accentuated on Monday by a square (challenge) from Neptune, the ruler of Pisces. Take some deep breaths and some space before Tuesday when the Sun will enter Pisces and we officially start our mutable water sign season.

Astro Dictionary:

Full Moon: Peak expression of intentions, culmination of lunar cycle Waning Gibbous Moon: Filtration and manifesting mode Waning Half Moon: Cultivating and transformative modeYin: Feminine energy, passive, wise, intuitiveMercury Retrograde: When Mercury appears to be moving backwards as the Earth's rotation overtakes it * more next week on Mercury Rx



Aries: Ruling Planet: Mars (Competition, Vigor, Self Assertion, Action, Separation)

California (California)

Taurus:

Ruling Planet: Venus (Investments, Relationships, Creativity, Aesthetic, Union, Cooperation)

Gemini: Ruling Planet: Mercury (Self-Transformation, Negotiation, The Mind, Learning, Perfection, Exchange) **Libra:** Ruling Planet: Venus (Investments, Relationships, Creativity, Aesthetic, Union, Cooperation)



Scorpio: Ruling Planet: Pluto & Mars: (Power, Transformation, Death, Rebirth, Evolution, Competition, Vigor, Self Assertion, Action, Separation)

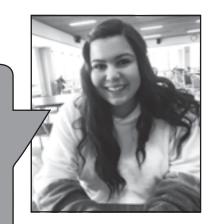
Sagittarius: Ruling Planet: Jupiter (Expansion,

Abundance, Philosophy, Wisdom, Gratitude, Confidence, Exploration)

CAMPUS VOICE

What do you pretend to hate but actually love?

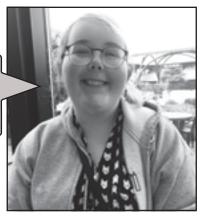
AVRY HARTL DENTAL HYGIENE "I DON'T PRETEND TO HATE ANYTHING BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON YOU SAY YOU ARE BECAUSE YOU'RE ALWAYS PRETENDING ALL THE TIME, SO I TRY AND BE REALLY HONEST."





CARSON KING GRAPHIC DESIGN "PROBABLY SEAFOOD."

HANNA BARTEN BIOLOGY "MY JOB, LIKE BEING REAL."









Leo: Ruling Planet: Sun (Divine Will, Rulership, Vitality, Choice, Masculinity, Honor, Leadership)



Virgo:

Ruling Planet: Mercury (Self-Transformation, Negotiation, The Mind, Learning, Perfection, Exchange) **Capricorn:** Ruling Planet: Saturn (Maturity, Boundaries, Work, Misfortune, Commitment, Procrastination, Foundation)

Aquarius:

Ruling Planet: Uranus & Saturn (Reformation, Unpredictable changes, Eccentricity, Maturity, Boundaries, Work, Misfortune, Commitment, Procrastination, Foundation)

Pisces:

Ruling Planet: Naptune & Jupiter (Maturity, Boundaries, Work, Misfortune, Commitment, Procrastination, Foundation)

STORY BY GEORGIA DUNN-HARTMAN @ @CATALYST.CO.RY

MARISSA JOHNSTON PART-TIME STAFF "MY INITIAL RESPONSE IS BARBIE MOVIES. LIKE THE OLD STUFF FROM THE EARLY 2000's."



STORY AND PHOTOS: MCKENNA CHRISTMAS

A SCARECROW ON STAGE

LBCC Theater Company Performs the Origin Story of the Beloved Brainless Character

CONTINUED FROM COVER...

make a bargain for her magic: she gives them an enchanted silvery paint, which they can use to create the child they desire, but they must only use it once!

Returning home, they start gathering up some old clothes, a burlap sack, and a lot of straw. They put all of these together in the shape of a person, and painted a face on it. That's when the real fun started.

The cast delivered their lines like a preschool teacher reading a storybook to their class, in the best way possible. Lines were spoken in an engaging manner that kept the audience's attention throughout. The children also got a lot of laughs out of many choice scenes. They really enjoyed all the scenes with the scarecrow, named

Cornwall by his parents, such as him learning to walk, learning about farming, and having a birthday party. This was thanks in no small part to the perfectly conveyed sense of child-like innocence his actor, Drew May, brought to the role.

As for Mombi, she was easily a crowd favorite with her high-pitched, over the top delivery and her tendency to go off on long, rambling tangents. It won't surprise anyone that she returns later in the play, and the way they decided to have her return to the stage made all the children in the audience completely lose it!

All in all, if you have any children and can spare a couple hours this Saturday, this play would be a great way to spend your time. The last showing will be at 2 p.m., and the ticket price is \$8 for adults, \$6 for the chil-



Drew May stands tall as Cornwall the Scarecrow.

dren. Tickets are available for pre-ordering now at linnbenton.edu/tickets.



Korina Rayburn, narrator and vocalist, steals the stage with her lyrical storytelling.

PHOTOS: DAN STONE

From left to right: Falyn Lazarus, Sophia Brown, Laural Tannehill, Joseph Johnson, Shayanne Bolton, and Sarcon Majors.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHAT: "A Scarecrow in Oz"

WHEN: Showtime is Saturday, Feb. 15, from 2 to 3 p.m.

WHERE: The Russell Tripp Performance Center at LBCC's Albany campus, 6500 Pacific Blvd. SW

ABOUT: Play runs for about 45 minutes

Ticket prices are \$8 adults, and \$6 for children and everyone under 18.

Purchase advance tickets at linnbenton.edu/tickets

STARRING: Laural Tannehill as Maizy, Joseph Johnson as Cornelius, and Drew May as Cornwall. Other cast members include: Falyn Lazarus, Sarcon Majors, Shayanne Bolton, Sophia Brown, Korina Rayburn as the singing narrator, and Rianda Linebarger as Mombi

Student Designers: Natalya Bradley, Braden Rosevear-Wingo, Russell Stone

Director & Scenic Design - Dan Stone

Stage Manager- Grace Porter

Set Construction-John Richard Elvin

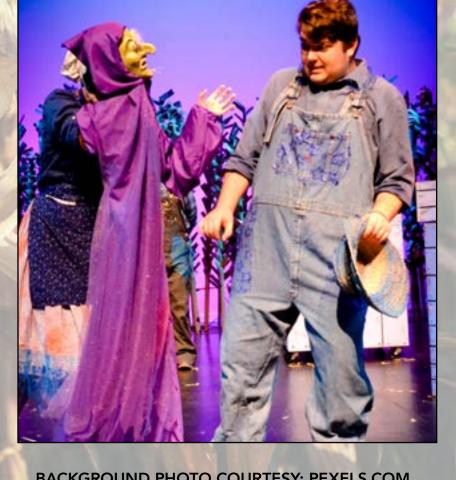
Costume Designer- Barbara Mason

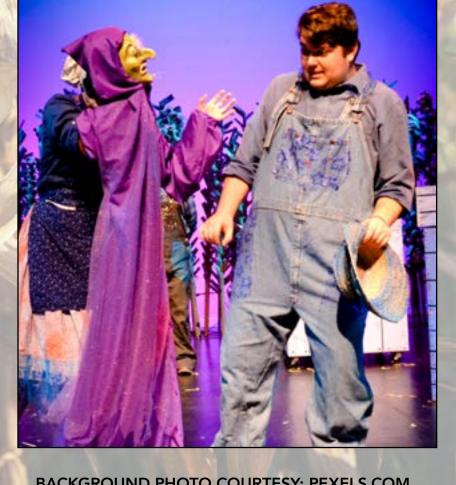
Lighting Design- Calvin Phipps Technical Direction-John **Richard Elvin**

Music- Korina Rayburn

Musical Director- Alyson Fewless

Rianda Lanebargr (Mombi) and Joseph Johnson (Cornelius) have an animated conversation.





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BACKGROUND PHOTO COURTESY: PEXELS.COM

BASKETS OF DISAPPOINTMENT

Linn-Benton's Men's Basketball Team Plays Hard, But Comes Up Short

STORY BY ISAIAH HAQQ

Linn-Benton's men's basketball team had a shaky week in terms of closing out the two games they played. In their 61-70 loss against the 19-2 Clackamas Cougars, the Roadrunners hung in the game until the very end. After a slow first half that, at one point, saw a 13-point deficit, it was clear that the key to winning the game was to hold it down on the defensive side of the ball.

As the clock trickled down and the defense started intensifying, the Cougars were able to outrun the Roadrunners down the stretch. The inside and outside shooting was disappointing against Clackamas as they shot just 18-51 from the field, 5-15 from 3-point land, and only 20-30 from the free throw line. However, the shooting and spreading of the ball has gotten much better since the season started for the Roadrunners, and a slight bump in the road shouldn't put much of a downturn on their improvement.

The biggest story of the game was the rebounding and points in the paint differential between the two clubs, as Clackamas reeled in 48 rebounds

compared to Linn-Benton's 35. Those rebounds led to 30 points in the paint for the Cougars, while the Roadrunners finished with just 18. Freshman Kyree Davis executed a solid night, scoring 16 points along with 6 rebounds and an outstanding defensive effort that kept him in the game for 39 of the 40 minutes of play.

In their 63-73 loss at home vs the Chemeketa Storm, the Roadrunners fought until the end, and came up just short once again. With one player on the Storm scoring over 30 points, Linn-Benton found themselves in a hole as they had to defend a high-powered scoring threat and compete against a very welldisciplined defense.

After a back-and-forth first half, the Roadrunners came out with a second half gameplan to lock down the offensive threats, and slow down the pace to create points through half-court offense. Their free-throw shooting was an improvement from the last game, as they went 14-18, and 8-10 in the second half. Freshmen Kadeem Nelson and Fred Harding IV put in solid stat lines with a combined 32 points, 4 assists, and 9 rebounds on 10-22 shooting.



PHOTO: CAM HANSON

Dakota Kuranara (left), Ethan Flanigan watch Kyree Davis shoot from the three-point line during a practice on Jan. 31.

for the roadrunners, but it was another game they know they were capable of winning. It's clear that Linn-Benton can the Roadrunners have a great chance at compete with the best teams, yet they came up short in many games down the

It was another disappointment stretch of the last few minutes. With a few more made shots, defensive rebounds, and better defense toward the end of games, upsetting future tough opponents.

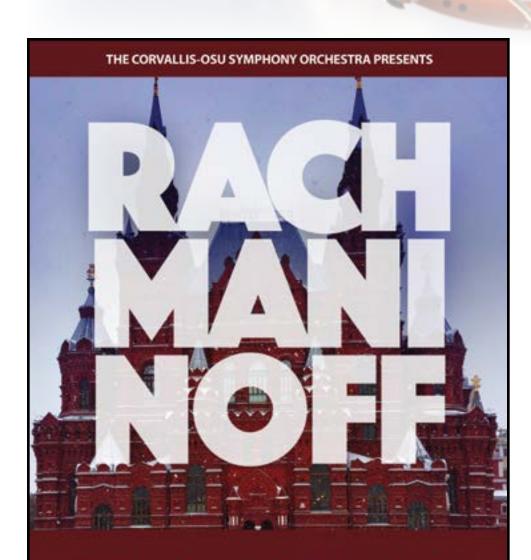


PHOTO COURTESY: PEXELS.COM



Tuesday, February 25, 2020 • 7:30 p.m. The LaSells Stewart Center, 875 SW 26th St., Corvallis

All Students Free • Tickets \$25-\$35 at The LaSells Stewart Center 60 minutes before each performance or online at cosusymphony.org

Call 541-286-5580 at least one week in advance for accommodations relating to a disability.





A HEALTHY CAMPUS

Samaritan Health to Introduce SamCare Mobile Medicine Unit to LBCC



Health care and medical bills in 2020 are as expensive as they've ever been. Because of these costs skyrocketing in the past 10 years, it has become increasingly difficult to receive health care services and treatment for illness without feeling like you are at a loss. Thankfully, LBCC students, faculty, and other members of the community will soon be able to take advantage of these benefits in an affordable and convenient way.

Starting February 18, LBCC students, staff, and community will have access to all the basic healthcare services they need; thanks to Samaritan Health bringing a SamCare Mobile Medicine Unit to the Linn-Benton campus. Located in parking lot 1 off Allen Lane on the south side, the health care resource will be there for the remainder of the school year.

Launching in 2018 thanks to a donation by the Pastega Family



PHOTO: LISA HOOGESTEGER

The SamCare Mobile Unit will provide routine health checks and vaccinations

Foundation, the SamCare Mobile Medicine program is a new undertaking by Samaritan Health looking to make health care easier to access while helping to lower the number of visits to urgent care; which is very costly.

SamCare mobile is just one of many mobile medical programs across the country. The unit is a 40-foot vehicle containing two clinical exam rooms and a check-in area, which are staffed by Samaritan clinicians. Some services that it will offer include bi-monthly vaccines and routine checkups. Patients can also receive care for illnesses such as earaches, sprains or strains, small cuts or abrasions, minor burns, mild asthma, urinary tract infections, depression and anxiety screenings and referrals, flu symptoms, and infections.

Patients can receive these services without an appointment, but if you want to make an appointment, you can call 541-768-2220. In order to be treated, you must have your insurance card. If you don't have insurance,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These benefits will not be offered every day. Here are the dates that the SamCare Mobile Medicine Unit will be helping patients on campus:

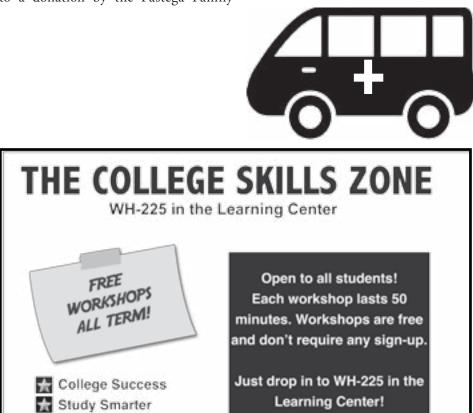
- Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 12 to 5
- Monday, March 2, from 11 to 3

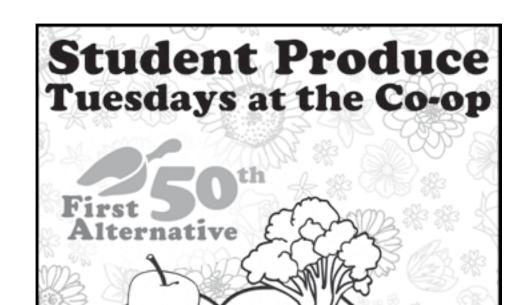
• Tuesday, March 17, from 12 to 5

- Monday, April 6, from 11 to 3
- Tuesday, April 28, from 12 to 5
 - Monday, May 4, from 11 to 3
 - Tuesday, May 12, from 12 to 5
 - Monday, June 1, from 11 to 3

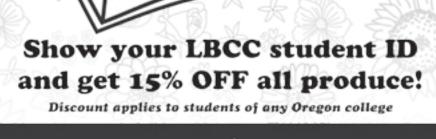
• Tuesday, June 9, from 12 to 5 (we could put these times in some sort of box or graphic)

however, a staff member can help you obtain insurance or apply for a Samaritan financial services program.





Thursday 2/13	Friday 2/14	Monday 2/17	Tuesday 2/18
NT1:Elements of Good Notes 1 PM	NT2: Using Your Notes to Study	No workshop. Feel free to stop by for any help!	Textbook Reading Strategies
	2 PM	Open 8 AM - 5 PM	11:00 AM
Leath the elements of good notes & see why they work; ana- lyze your own notes to see how well they are working for you. Please bring class notes.	Leath to use notes effectively as part of your study process through summanizing, daily review, and review, and reviewing notes before class. Please bring class notes and course imatenals		Decode the structure of a textbook, and learn to use it to create study guides, predict test questions to study smarter, not harder
	OTHER DATES: 2/20, 3/6		OTHER DATES: 3/2



South Corvallis North Corvallis 1007 SE 3rd St. 29th & Grant @firstaltcoop

www.firstalt.coop Open daily 7am-10pm

THIS DADDY HAS ISSUES

REVIEW BY LEE FRAZIER

Being the producer of such cult favorites as "Housebound" (2014) and "Turbo Kid" (2015), Ant Timpson takes the director's seat with authority for his directorial debut in "Come to Daddy." The film is a dark and twisted comedy, scattered with an entertainingly violent outlook with a dash of poo.

Norval Greenwood (Elijah Wood, Lord of the Rings trilogy) seeks out his father after receiving a mysterious letter asking for him to visit. After being estranged for nearly 30 years, Norval arrives at his father's house, hoping to rekindle a relationship that for all intents and purposes, has died. He is greeted by a man (Stephen McHattie, Orphan Black, Immortals), that seems to have been beaten down by life, and comes across as hating everyone, including Norval.

Norval tries to bridge the space between them with an outright lie and a tale that lands as merely a story filled with delusions of grandeur. Once Norval is challenged, he caves in, revealing a lack of self-respect and a sense of submission. This does not go over well in the house and the tension builds between the two.

Norval must figure out why his father has reached out to him all these years later, and what exactly is going on around him. The thing that disturbs him the most though, is the sounds coming from under the house.

"Come to Daddy" takes place in a beach house for most of the film, which lends the beauty of nature to lighten this dark, satirical examination of the classic paternal abandonment trope.

Another thing the film has going for it is the cast. The characters are in no way one dimensional, as you never really know their motivations for the way they are until the end. The twists show up at the right time, and even in the moments of brutal violence, Timpson elicits comedic release with either an expression from the character, or a camera movement revealing a huge "DUH" moment.

The film was nominated for Best Picture from 2019 Fantasy Filmfest, 2019 Molins Film Festival, 2019 Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival, 2019 Sitges-Catalonian International Film Festival, and 2019 Strasbourg European Fantastic Film Festival. Of the nominations, the film won the Audience Award for Best Film and the Jury Prize for Best Screenplay at Molins. It snagged it's third win at Neuchâtel with the Youth Jury Award.

"Come to Daddy" is currently available in limited theaters and can also be purchased or rented on Amazon Prime Video, prices starting at \$6.99.



A&E

'COME TO DADDY'

STARRING: Elijah Wood, Stephen McHattie, Garfield Wilson, Madeleine Sami, Martin Donovan, Michael Smiley, Simon Chin, and Ona Grauer.

DIRECTOR: Ant Timpson

RATED: R

MY RATING: ★★★★☆ PHOTO COURTESY: IMDB.COM

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Lasagna Rolls, Soups: Loaded Baked Potato Chowder, Kim Chi Stew w/Tofu, Salads: Tonkatsu (Japanese Deep Fried Pork Cutlet), Tofu-Katsu (Japanese Deep Fried Tofu). Monday to Friday Lunch - 11:15 AM - 1:15 PM Gluten Frei

SUPOKU

Complete the grid so each row, column, and 3x3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit.

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A&E

'BIRDS OF PREY' SOARS



STORY BY STEVEN PRYOR **@STEVENPRR2PRYOR**

"Birds of Prey" is the latest film in the DC Extended Universe. As another marked effort to rebrand their shared "cinematic universe," director Cathy Yan has delivered a gleefullypsychotic hard-R spinoff that's easily DC's distaff "Deadpool."

The film takes place after the events of 2016's "Suicide Squad," with Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie) having broken up with the Joker. On top of making her a target for other criminals in Gotham City, this also puts her at odds with mob boss Roman "Black Mask" Sionis (Ewan McGregor having the time of his life); who's after a rare diamond that's been stolen by teenage con artist Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco). Forming a reluctant alliance with GCPD detective Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez), the "Huntress" Helena Bertinelli (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) and the "Black Canary" Dinah Lance (Jurnee Smollet-Bell), the film is a madcap three-ring circus that puts a delightful and twisted spin on its comic

book source material. The script by Christina Hodson ("Bumblebee") tells its story in a nonlinear fashion that's equal parts superhero blockbuster and Tarantino-esque crime thriller. The film opens with a shamelessly violent and profane animated intro and doesn't let up from there (giving a sly nod to Harley Quinn's origins in the acclaimed "Batman: The Animated Series").

On a relatively modest-for-DC budget of \$85 million, this film focuses less on massive CGI supervillains and shiny beacons of light and more on keeping the action focused directly with the characters. Whether the fights take place at a roller derby, a market stall or a parking garage; there's a simple but effective feeling of "less is more" that's in line with the smaller scale successes of 2019's "Shazam" and "Joker." The final battle at a broken-down carnival funhouse is one of the most refreshing finales in years for DC, with Blask Mask and his men meeting a gruesome fate that shall not be spoiled here.

If "Sucide Squad" was a darkly comic fever dream, then "Birds of Prey" is a high-flying; hard-R rush of candy-colored chaos, contained in



'BIRDS OF PREY' STARRING: Margot Robbie, Ewan McGregor, Rosie Perez, Ali Wong, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Jurnee Smollett-Bell, Ella Jay Basco, and Chris Messina **DIRECTOR:** Cathy Yan (Based on characters created by DC Comics) **RATED: R** MY RATING: PHOTOS COURTESY OF: WARNER BROS.

