

Oregon Daily Emerald



Eugene pumps out indie flicks Page 11

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Much ado about Noah

University Theatre actors will try to raise money this weekend to aid former student Noah Smith's recovery from a paralyzing auto accident

By Chelsea Duncan
Senior News Reporter

Former University student and aspiring actor Noah Smith's life took a tragic twist on Dec. 1, 2002, when he was involved in a car accident that left him a quadriplegic with little hope of walking again.

Smith, 23, has since found hope on his way to recovery, thanks to the support of friends and strangers.

"I wouldn't have been able to do hardly anything if I hadn't had so much support," Smith said in a telephone interview. "It's taken me a long way."

The path to healing has been strenuous, especially considering that the driver who caused the accident was uninsured. Smith said he had limited coverage, which provided little relief for such a devastating accident. He and his family have relied mostly on donations to help fund a variety of rehabilitation programs. A special needs trust, which can be found at <http://www.noahsmith.org>, has also been established to aid his recovery.

Through rehabilitation, Smith said he is now able to take steps using a walker or support from his therapists, and all of his major muscle groups are functioning.

He said he moved out on his own about five weeks ago for the first time since the accident. He now lives in Carlsbad, Calif., hundreds of miles from his parents' home in Hood River. He moved to seek therapy at a rehabilitation center called Project Walk, a cutting-edge intensive program for people with spinal cord injuries. There, Smith attends what he calls "the best rehab available" three hours a day, four days a week, working his body through different ranges of motion and working on his coordination.

"It's just a real test of patience, I guess," he said.

While retraining his body to function properly poses unfathomable challenges, the cost of the program provides its own obstacle. Treatment, along with living expenses, costs about \$7,000 a month, according to his Web site.

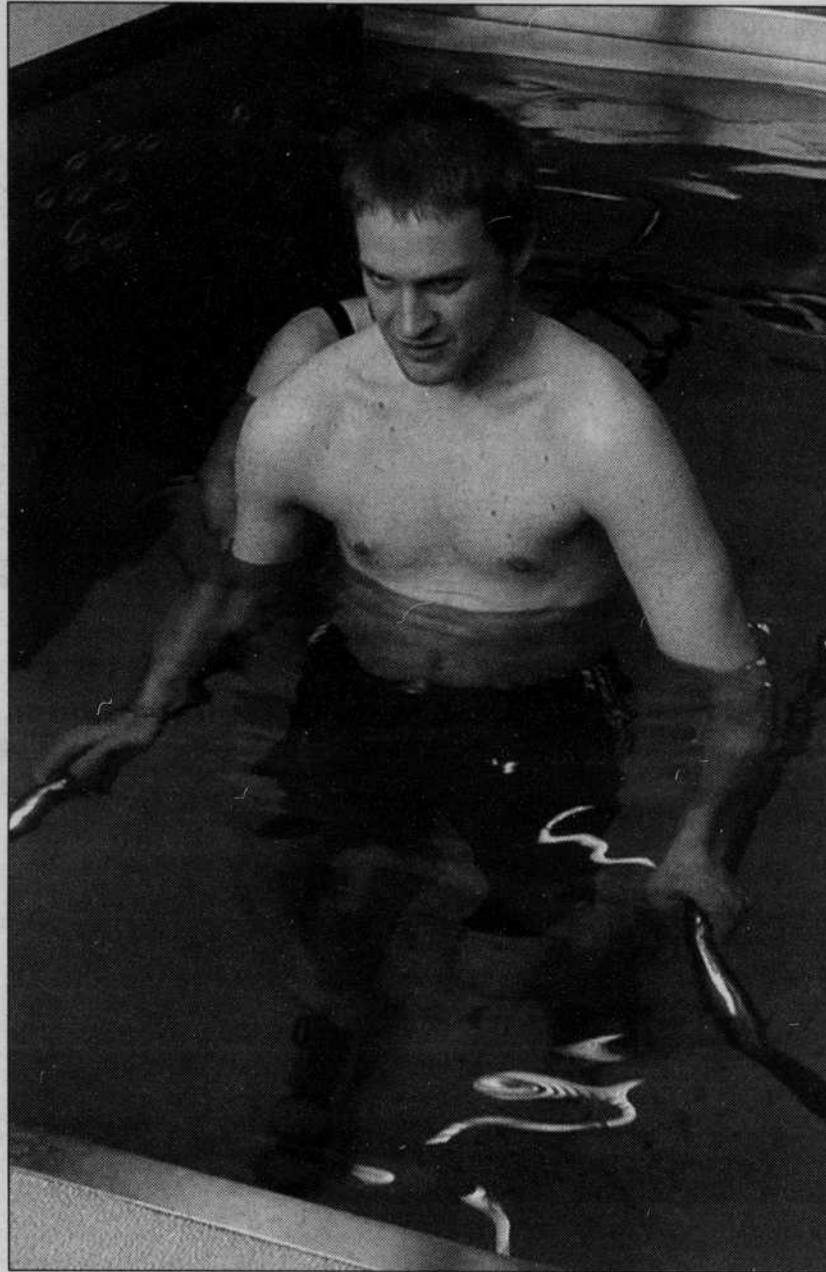
But fellow actors from local theaters have joined together to raise money for Smith's cause through a fund-raiser called "Noah Nights." After performances given at the theaters, actors have asked audience members to donate money toward Smith's therapy.

So far, about \$3,500 has been raised, said local actor Greg Foote, who organized the fund-raiser. Foote, who is also a Lane County Circuit Court judge, said Smith could need up to a year at Project Walk.

"He wants to be there as long as possible," he said. "The more we can raise, the longer he can stay."

In April, actors from Cottage Theater Inc., Actors Cabaret of Eugene, Lord Leebrick Theater Co. and Willamette Repertory Theatre asked audience members for donations. This weekend, University students acting in the play "Much Ado About Nothing" at

Turn to **NOAH**, page 4



Courtesy

Twenty-three-year-old Noah Smith exercises on a pool treadmill as part of his rehabilitation at Project Walk. Smith was seriously injured after a car accident in 2002.

Same-sex opponents await OK to petition

An initiative to ban same-sex marriage could appear on November's ballot pending Supreme Court approval

By Parker Howell
News Reporter

Authors of an initiative to ban same-sex marriage may start gathering signatures today, pending final approval of the ballot title by the Oregon Supreme Court.

If approved, supporters will have until July 2 to collect the 100,840 valid signatures necessary to put the initiative on the ballot. The signature drive is being led by the Defense of Marriage Coalition, an organization that has been involved in several court cases challenging same-sex marriage in Oregon. If enough signatures are gathered, the initiative will appear on the ballot as an Oregon constitutional amendment in November.

Although the Supreme Court on May 13 approved the ballot title — the entire text of the proposed initiative — it has to allow five business days for opponents to ask for reconsideration. Barring any requests, the court may issue its ruling as early as today.

The American Civil Liberties Union challenged the title of the initiative on April 22, stating that its wording didn't convey the subject matter, scope and effect of the measure, but the Supreme Court ruled that the title was acceptable.

Opponents argued the ballot wording should be changed to indicate that the initiative might alter the scope of Article 1, Section 20, which guarantees equal

Turn to **MARRIAGE**, page 3

Student Senate approves 3 groups' funding requests

In the year's final meeting, the Student Senate approves budgets for Club baseball and Mad Duckling Theatre

By Sheldon Traver
Freelance Reporter

The Student Senate met for the last time this year on Wednesday night, approving more than \$10,000 in new budget requests and helping Club Sports baseball attend the National Club Baseball Association World Series.

In a full show of support, the Senate unanimously voted to approve a \$6,400 request by the team to help pay for lodging and transportation expenses.

"This opportunity is really good for the school," Club Sports baseball team captain Jonathan Loomis said. "We're exposing the school in a positive manner."

Loomis said he hopes the national exposure will give the University a chance to become a Division I team in the future.

Mad Duckling Theatre, a children's theater that hires students for summer

performances, also received \$2,500 to pay for stipends for the actors as well as production costs for two shows. University Theatre Director Joseph Gilg said the program operates on box office revenue and funds allotted through the Senate. Sen. Rodrigo Moreno-Villamar had a few concerns about this allocation.

"I went to 'Winnie the Pooh' last year and really enjoyed it," Moreno-Villamar said. "I just wonder why you don't get more support from University Theatre."

Gilg said University Theatre provides access to costumes and sets as

well as land use but that it did not have the budget to support Mad Duckling, which has been a huge attraction for Eugene residents.

Not all student groups had their requests approved. The Community Internship Program asked to transfer funds to pay for office supplies and a stereo. Sen. Jesse Harding voted to deny the disbursement for the new radio.

"When we can use student money effectively, that is what we should do," Harding said. The Senate decided to transfer funds for supplies but not the radio.

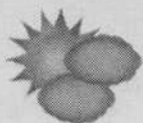
The Senate has been dealing with problems arising from senators not attending meetings. A vote to change minor Senate rules had to be postponed because the meeting failed to meet quorum. President Ben Strawn motioned to censure Sen. Colin Andries for non-fulfillment of duties according to Senate rules; however, no decision was made and Strawn said it will likely not come up again.

"It has to die; there's no way to continue it," Strawn said.

Sheldon Traver is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

WEATHER

LOW
50



HIGH
70

INSIDE

Campus buzz.....4	Crossword.....15
Classifieds.....14	Pulse.....5
Commentary.....2	Sports.....13

NEXT ISSUE



CDs: Not as durable as some might think