A tuneful connection for Chapman alumnus and local veterans

While studying music at Chapman University, trumpet player and new alumnus Matthew LaBelle ’17 performed in numerous venues and with a variety of student groups, from Chapman Symphony to the Pep Band. But during those four years, LaBelle saved most Wednesday evenings for a brief performance that held a unique and special place in his heart.

Just before sunset LaBelle played "Taps" at the mid-week Flag Retreat Ceremony conducted in Plaza Park at the center of Old Towne Orange. As the poignant notes filled the air, the moment always transformed into something extraordinary, says Don Blake, a Marine Corps veteran and City of Orange resident who helps organize the informal gatherings.

"The music makes it a special event," Blake says. "When Matt plays, he's got a voice. His bugle becomes his voice. You can tell who it is." The experience was also profound for LaBelle, a 2017 Musco Scholar who says he treasures the friendships he’s made through the years.

"I have developed a lot of close connections with a lot of the veterans there and they’re my friends. They have a lot of stories and I really enjoy the comradery," says LaBelle, who came from the Northern California town of McKinleyville to attend Chapman University. "It means a whole lot to a lot of people here. And that’s something I can’t fully understand, being a young person who was never been in the service. I’m just glad that I can serve this way."

LaBelle isn’t the first – or last – Chapman trumpet player to perform the duty in the 10 years since the veterans launched the ceremony. Several student musicians preceded him and another from Chapman’s College of Performing Arts has stepped in to take his place now that he’s busy in a graduate program at UC Irvine.

The veterans and friends who gather each week are grateful that the partnership lives on, Blake says.

"It’s just been a phenomenal relationship," he says. The Flag Retreat Ceremony is at 6 p.m. each Wednesday at the center of Plaza Park. Organizers read the names of newly fallen service people on first Wednesdays.

Meanwhile, the university is diligently pursuing additional high-density housing opportunities off campus and on.
“Socktober” Saturday: Chapman Family Service Project
Saturday, Oct. 7, 9 to 11 a.m.
Bert C. Williams Mall

My Barrio: Emigdio Vasquez and Chicana/o Identity in Orange County
Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA
Ongoing through Jan. 5, 2018
Chapman University joins the Getty’s ambitious exhibition of Latin American and Latino art throughout Southern California. The historic Cypress Street mural by Emigdio Vasquez is the highlight of Chapman’s participation, which will also include exhibitions in the Guggenheim Art Gallery and Argyros Forum. As part of the Getty project, Higy Vasquez, son of Emigdio Vasquez, will paint a living mural throughout the semester on a wall adjacent to the Guggenheim. Free and open to the public. For more information, visit pacificstandardtime.org.

You’re invited!
Join us for these engaging events at Chapman

Chapman is your place to discover art, culture and more

From the fascinating sculptures installed across campus, to the landscapes at the Hilbert Museum of California Art, there’s something for every art lover to enjoy at Chapman University’s public galleries and museums.

The Phyllis & Ross Escalette Permanent Collection of Art – sometimes called the “museum without walls” – and the Hilbert Museum are always free and open to the public. Tours can be arranged for most and are a great way to learn more about these collections.

So, if you have a free afternoon or have out-of-town guests on the way, consider a campus visit soon to check out the art right in your own backyard.

Here are some details to help get you started.

• The Escalette Collection is spread throughout campus and consists of mostly contemporary and modern paintings, prints and sculpture. For student-led tours, call (714) 997-6815.

• California’s Gold Exhibit and Huell Howser Archives in Leatherby Libraries includes a permanent display of artifacts, mementos and photographs chronicling the career of the late television legend Huell Howser. Hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (714) 532-6088.

• The Hilbert Museum houses a superlative collection focused on the California Scene painting movement that blossomed from roughly 1920 to the 1970s and beyond. Starting Saturday, Oct. 7, the Hilbert will also feature exhibitions of American Illustration, surf art and Disney animation. The Hilbert is at 167 N. Atchison St. in Old Towne Orange. Hours are Tuesday–Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information about guided tours, please call (714)-516-5880.

Members of the Orange Barrio Historical Society recently enjoyed a special tour of the Hilbert Museum of Art personally led by museum founder Mark Hilbert. All of the university’s art collections are free and open to the public.

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