

Men knock off No. 1 seed before bowing out of NWAACC Tournament to close Cinderella season ▶ Pg. 9

Weekend of seafood, wine, art and music draw thousands to Newport's annual bash ▶ Pg. 6-7

# The Commuter

a weekly student publication

Wednesday, March 3, 2004

Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon

www.linnbenton.edu/commuter  
Volume 35 No. 16

## Election draws 106; Quigley new president

**Sarina Smuland**  
The Commuter

LBCC students cast 106 ballots in the Associated Student Government elections held Feb. 24-25, electing seven of eight candidates to student government and voting against a question on whether they would support increasing student fees to fund the Linn-Benton Loop Bus.

Some students expressed surprise about the low number of ballots cast compared to the number of students enrolled, which number in the thousands. Other students said they did not care enough about student government to take the time to vote in the elections, which were conducted online for the fifth year in a row.



**ASG President-Elect Stephanie Quigley**

Participation in elections has been sporadic over the past few years. According to Terry Gordier, department secretary for Student Life and Leadership, 300 ballots were cast in 2000, the first year of online voting, followed by only 117 ballots in 2001. Participation increased in 2001 and 2002, with 155 and 148 ballots cast,

respectively.

Stephanie Quigley, who ran unopposed, was elected ASG president-elect. She said one of her early goals is to hold all new ASG members accountable for their positions and duties.

Quigley said last year a few representatives resigned after only a short time in office. "Once it was explained about the extra work that would be involved, some members did not feel it was worth it," she said.

Quigley said she intends to make sure right away that the new representatives know what they are there to do. ASG representatives are "here to represent the students," she said.

Vice-President Elect Jackie Lohner, who also ran unopposed, said she plans to work hard at getting the student body interested in campus events.

"Students don't know about student government," she said, adding that one solution to this problem is to educate the student body on student government procedures and campus issues by ensuring the information is clearly posted.

LBCC's new ASG members have all previously expressed a desire to communicate better with the student body and generate more feedback on campus is-

▶ Turn to "Elections" on Page 4



photo by Jeremy Hennig

### Let Them Eat Cake

Sheun Floyd (left) and Derek Hubbert, both first-year culinary art students, make final preparations to their entries at the Chocolate Fantasy benefit auction in Corvallis on Saturday. The students made two versions, a coconut white chocolate and a dark chocolate with mousse. The big winner of the competition was Big River Restaurant and Bakery. See story on Page 5.

## Brighter PCB-free future ahead

**Erica Hennig**  
The Commuter

After most students and staff leave the main campus every day, a team of contractors arrives to replace toxic light ballasts with an electronic alternative.

The ballasts being removed are original to the construction of the college and nearing the end of their expected 30-year life span.

According to Sharon King, contract and risk manager for LBCC, "The change-out is a substantial energy saving for the college. Approximately 40 percent less energy will be used by each fixture installed, plus it will dramatically increase lighting quality."

New ballasts are electronic and certified free of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB).

The gas was responsible for the closure and

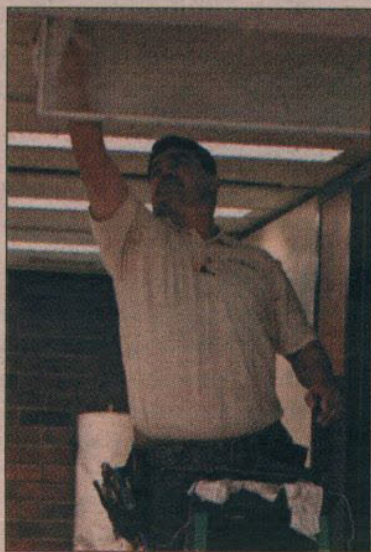


photo by Jeremy Hennig

**Delario Gonzales replaces old light ballasts. This week workers will be in the Health Occupations and Science Tech buildings.**

evacuation of several buildings early last month when ballasts burst, releasing the toxin. PCB has been shown to cause cancer and has multiple effects on the reproductive, nervous, immune and endocrine systems, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The roughly six-week project began in the AHSS building on Monday of last week and will continue on weekdays, from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. Each building is expected to take 3-5 days to complete.

Work is being done by a team of six from EarthSavers Energy Services of Oregon LLC. As PCB is considered hazardous, workers are expected to wear protective gloves when handling the old ballasts, placing them in an approved container to be properly disposed of.

Students may become aware of a brighter at-

▶ Turn to "PCB" on Page 4

## LRC offers stress relief to students

**Jacob R. Smathers**  
The Commuter

Students are beginning to feel the crunch brought on by the approaching finals. With only 20 days left until the end of term, stress can become a factor that adversely affects success.

To help ease the burden, a stress-relieving program is available in the Learning Resource Center. Two computers are reserved specifically for this use.

The program, created by Jeanée Reichert, instructional

assistant of the LRC's Reading and Study Skills Lab, was put in place last week to help students know more about the stress they are feeling.

The 12-minute slideshow begins by educating the viewer on what stress is, as well as why it occurs. Reichert believes that with this information at students' fingertips, they will

know that stress is something that is learned, and therefore can be unlearned.

In the "What can I do about it" ▶ Turn to "Stress" on Page 4

**"Sustained stress definitely is not good for you, but it appears that an occasional burst of stress or low levels of stress can be very productive."**

▶ Richard I. Morimoto, Ph.D.

### WEATHER THROUGH THE WEEKEND

SOURCE: WWW.WEATHER.COM

high 48 low 39  
**WEDNESDAY**

high 49 low 35  
**THURSDAY**

high 53 low 38  
**FRIDAY**

high 53 low 38  
**SATURDAY**

high 54 low 41  
**SUNDAY**

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**C**  
Commuter

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# OPINION

**Send letters to The Commuter:**  
 Turn into Forum 222. Please sign them and  
 keep them at 250 words or less



## Familiar places rekindle memories

**Erica Hennig**  
 The Commuter

It's strange how events and circumstances of two or even 10 years ago can have a haunting effect. Passing by the places where you spent time in the past can bring up many different emotions.

I have lived in this area my entire 25 years. I was born in Corvallis and have lived in Albany, Lebanon and Sweet Home.

When I go by places where I have walked many times, I often don't notice the role they played in my past. A few weeks ago, I was wandering around downtown Albany across the street from Wells Fargo and by a dance studio. I have glanced through the window many times, but I was looking at the people and not the place.

On this occasion, there were few people and instead of looking at dancers, my eyes skimmed the wall and fell upon a couple people chatting in the back. The dimensions of the actual room struck me for a second—I knew this room.

I had a flash of memories from my childhood: Doing somersaults and struggling to learn cartwheels. Another was of myself and several other children sitting at a long table that was dressed in clean linens and fancy, confusing, but elegant place settings.

In this second memory, a plate of what I now know is escargot had just been placed decoratively on a plate in front of me. I was dumbstruck—this is a snail! How could they expect me to eat this? I stared at the snail, still within its shell and felt sympathy for it, while at the same time I felt intense anxiety and dread. I was expected to eat, or at least sample this dish. I cut off the tiniest square and contemplated putting it in my mouth, only to hide it in a napkin.

I have always been skeptical about trying new foods, so this memory is quite amusing to me as I remember the variety of feelings that I felt.

I grew up around this area, but spent my adolescence in Sweet Home. As my home life was riddled with mental and physical abuse, at times when I couldn't be at home I took shelter under the football stadium or the Weddle Bridge in Sankey Park. To this day, I don't step into that park without a flood of emotions coming back, reminding me of my past and the circumstances, that, in part, made me the person I am today.

Sometimes I went to those places in tears or frustration, sometimes in defiance and anger. From these feelings I drew a creative spirit, that I used to write poetry. However, sometimes I just thought of the blessings of my situation, the fact that I would soon be 18 and I would be allowed to make my own decisions, to live in peace and safety.

It's taken me a long time to gain the confidence I have now. I am still not very outgoing, but I have strength from the knowledge of what I went through. I have compassion for those in need, especially to people who have been abused or who don't have the freedoms I now enjoy.

The next time you pass by a place that brings up memories of the past, whether they be happy or not, think of what you gained from the experience and how it might have changed the way you see the world.



**ERICA HENNING**

**COMMENTARY**

## Right-wingers trying to restrict rights, freedoms of gay couples

**Laurent L.N. Bonczijk**  
 The Commuter

For the past two hundred years the U.S. Constitution has granted citizens a various number of rights and freedoms. With the notable exception of the shameful slavery era, it was never designed to take those rights and freedoms away from any category of Americans.

But today, the Republican Party, in an attempt to secure the votes of Right-Wing religious bigots, has decided to meddle in people's private lives and to take away the rights of 10 percent of the population. Yes, I said 10 percent of the population. You may not realize it, you may even deny it, but about one in 10 people, male or female, is homosexual. I hope that you homophobes remember it next time you are in the locker room.

Unless you have been news deprived for the last few weeks, you know that the conservatives want to amend the Constitution to render marriage a legal agreement between a man and a woman only. In other words, the current government wants to use religious standards when deciding on matter of national policies.

That is just another example of the double standards religious zealots advocate when shoving their very narrow view of the Christian faith down everyone's throat. I say "double standards" because as you all know, Iran is on the "axis of evil" list, in part due to its government being controlled by ultra conservative

Muslim clerics, clerics who recently "won" a sweeping electoral victory by rigging the elections: They declared over 2,000 of the most progressive politicians to be ineligible. So, those right-wing Christians, who very rightly so, decry the religious regime in place in Teheran, are attempting to do the same thing in the United States.

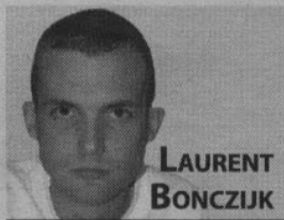
Their general rhetoric is that allowing homosexuals to marry would take away from the sanctity of marriage. I have to ask myself, "Are two old ladies, who have been together for over 20 years and now are getting married, a greater threat to the institution of marriage or this young Hollywood starlet who recently got married in Las Vegas, only to divorce within 24 hours?"

I mean, seriously, who the hell are they kidding here?

For selling themselves as the party of small government and little regulations, I think that the Republicans are straying pretty far off their ideology. They claim, even recently, that they want to allow people to make their own decisions and then turn around and announce that they want to tell 10 percent of the U.S. population what they can and cannot do.

What a joke they make of themselves. They prostitute their ideology in order to secure the Bible Belt vote.

When you next go to the voting booth, ask yourself: "Do I want to keep the freedoms that I enjoy or do I want to turn my country into a religious oligarchy in the Iranian style?"



**LAURENT BONCZIK**

**COMMENTARY**

### The Commuter

VISIT THE COMMUTER ONLINE  
[www.linnbenton.edu/commuter](http://www.linnbenton.edu/commuter)

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# CAMPUS NEWS

News about Linn-Benton Community College, including the administration, faculty and students on campus

## Phi Theta Kappa holds first induction of the year

**Laurent L.N. Bonczijk**  
 The Commuter

LBCC's Alpha Tau Upsilon chapter of the honor society Phi Theta Kappa held its first induction ceremony of the year last Thursday. Approximately 83 members were inducted, which is a about a third less than last year's 120 inductees.

The guest speaker was instructor Tim Reed, who explained to the audience how his parents have been instrumental in developing his leadership skills. ATU President Brandi Hereford explained that she dumped the script of the whole ceremony two weeks prior and rewrote it anew, causing some stress in her leadership team.

Phi Theta Kappa was started as a sorority in 1918 by the president of the Missouri junior colleges for women. It is the largest honor society in U.S. higher education.

Members must have a 3.5 GPA upon acceptance in the society and maintain a 3.33 GPA until graduation. The requirements to join are the same nationwide, but local chapters set their own retention clauses. A student meeting the requirements will be invited to join only once by mail, but eligible students are allowed to join any time.

The formal induction is held twice a year in February and May. "Most schools only do one, but we have such large membership we need to have two," said Hereford.

The lifetime membership is \$60, but will give you access to a \$35 million scholarship fund. Other perks include health insurance, eligibility for the national dean's list and the possibility to graduate with honors. They will also help with the search for an internship or a first job if a member elects not to pursue his education past the community college level.

LB has had a chapter since 1990. "(Our) local chapter has exceeded goals for induction membership."

"We have been giving workshops on how to recruit people," said Hereford. She won the society "Pinnacle" award for increasing membership by over 10 percent.

"The society is one hundred percent student-run," said Hereford. Any member is allowed to run for a leadership position, even if they were just inducted.

The \$35 million in scholarships comes from members fees and fundraising activities, but the society also has several corporate donors.



photo by Scott McClure

Students line the stairs of the main Forum last Thursday for the annual Phi Theta Kappa induction ceremony. Eighty-three members joined the LBCC chapter of the national honor society and listened to keynote speaker Tim Reed discuss his parents influence on his leadership skills.

## Stress: A little anxiety is OK, but too much can be unhealthy

From page 1 section," users are taught how to reduce stress through three areas of focus: Positive thinking, learning how to relax and taking practice tests. These stress-reducing techniques can be accessed from home at [lessons4living.com/relaxation\\_exercise\\_download.htm](http://lessons4living.com/relaxation_exercise_download.htm). An additional spoken method is available on the same computers to help everyone melt away stress built up through everyday life. The slow Southern drawl of the man on the recording is reported to be "very soothing."

A 1996 Prevention magazine article describes these effects of stress on the human body:

- Heart rate and blood pressure soar to increase the flow of blood to the brain to improve decision making

- Blood sugar rises to furnish more fuel for energy as the result of the breakdown of Glycogen, fat and protein stores.

- Blood is shunted away from the gut, where it is not immediately needed for purposes of digestion, to the larger muscles of the arms and legs to provide more strength in combat, or greater speed in getting away from a scene of potential peril.

- Clotting occurs more quickly to prevent blood loss from cuts or hemorrhage.

These results can be contributing factors in hypertension, strokes, heart attacks, diabetes, ulcers, neck or low back pain and other "diseases of civilization."

Despite these medical findings, an article published in the February 2004 issue of the journal Molecular Biology of the Cell reported that stress received in small portions will help you.

Researcher Richard I. Morimoto, Ph.D., professor of biology at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. is quoted as saying, "Sustained stress definitely is not good for you, but it appears that an occasional burst of stress or low levels of stress can be very productive."

His findings show that a little stress may result in a longer life span because small dosages of stress force the body's proteins to function properly.

Possibly the most repeated of stress reducing techniques regarding test-taking is to get plenty of sleep the night before and to eat a good breakfast the day of the test.

Another finals-week stress fighting precaution that the Stu-

dent Ambassadors have sponsored in previous years has been to bring a licensed masseur on campus to give free massages to students and staff. However, it is uncertain if the free massages will be offered again in future terms.

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**April 9, 2004**

NOTE: you may be required to meet with your advisor before you apply, so **don't wait until the last minute!**

You can print a graduation worksheet and graduation application from LBCC's web page, [www.linnbenton.edu/admissions](http://www.linnbenton.edu/admissions) and click on "forms." Select the name of the form you wish to print. You may also pick up forms at the Admissions Office.

**Caps and gowns will be available to order in Takena Hall on April 26 and 27. They will be distributed June 1 and 2 in Takena hall.**

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# CAMPUS NEWS

News about Linn-Benton Community College, including the administration, faculty and students on campus

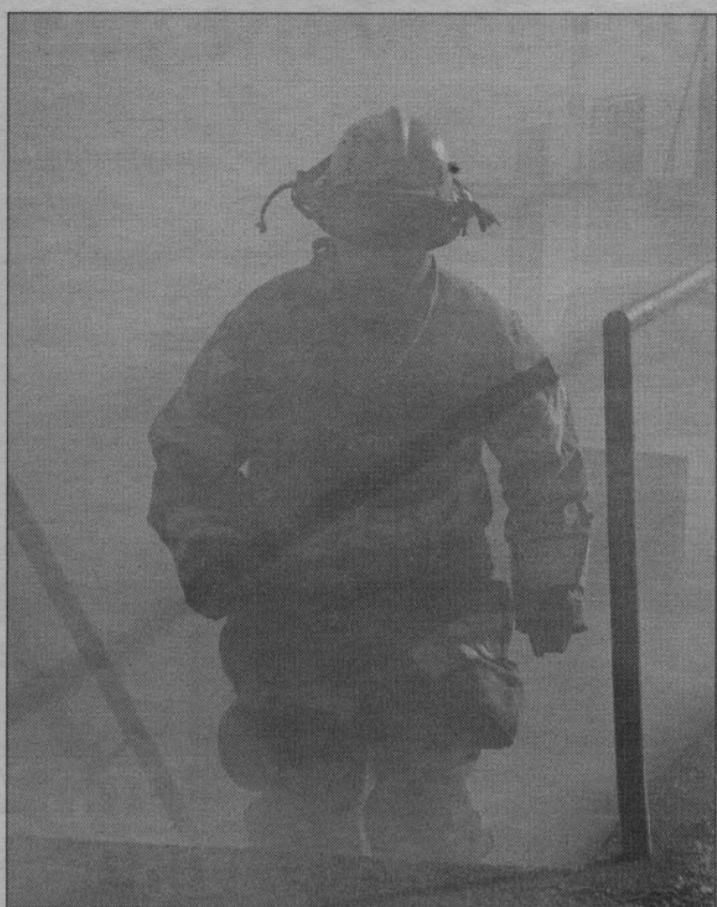


photo by Peggy Isaacs

## Heat Vision

Drill Instructor Scott Bartley emerges from the basement of the old Moose Lodge in Downtown Corvallis Thursday afternoon during a controlled burn to test the department's new thermal imaging camera.

# ASG: Low election turnout

▲ From page 1  
sues.

Newly elected At-Large Representative Sophie Mason said "It's a tough one to get people to care, but if people are more involved and more informed I think that will help."

Mason said that most students don't realize how important the ASG is to them.

"When I first got to LBCC I didn't even know we had a student government," Mason said, commenting on the lack of information currently available to students.

Mason defeated Brett Nixon 59 votes to 31 for the at-large seat, which was one of only two races that had more than one candidate. In the other 3 elections, James Crawford was elected public relations representative by a vote of 48 to 36 over Patrick Hagar.

One seat, liberal arts representative, had no candidates file for election and no write-in candidates had enough votes to qualify. Consequently, the position remains open and will be filled by appointment by the ASG next term.

The new ASG officers will take office beginning the first Wednesday in May and serve through the following April. Once their term starts, they must attend one leadership training class per term and maintain a minimum number of work hours per week.

The president, vice president and public relations secretary must maintain a minimum of eight work hours per week, and the remaining officers must maintain a minimum of five work hours per week.

## 2004 ASG election results

- President: Stephanie Quigley, 96
- Vice-President: Jackie Lohner, 92
- Public Relations Rep: James Crawford, 48; Patrick Hagar, 36
- Science and Industry Rep: Paul Weatherford, 88
- Business and Health Rep: Julie Toll, 87
- Student Services Rep: Bill Hand, 83
- Liberal Arts Rep: No candidate filed
- At Large Rep: Sophie Mason, 59; Brett Nixon, 31
- Is this the first time to vote for ASG? Yes, 74; No, 19; No answer, 13
- Are you in favor of increasing student fees to support the loop bus? No, 53; Yes, 26; No answer, 27

# PCB: Toxic lights replaced

▲ From page 1

mosphere as each building is completed. "All light fixtures are being cleaned, plus the new lamp tubes will provide a better, brighter and more natural light," said King.

About 5,200 fluorescent lights illuminate LBCC. Some of these do not need replacing, but the majority do. The project is expected to cost about \$75,000. Final cost will depend on the ac-

tual number of ballasts, tubes and fixtures replaced.

As an energy conservation project, the college is eligible for state dollars, which will help fund the work.

"The new lighting will provide better light for less money. The college should save about \$35,000 a year in energy costs, also helping to pay for the project within a relatively short period of time," explained King.

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# LOCAL NEWS

News on happenings around the county including Albany, Corvallis, Lebanon, Philomath, Sweet Home and Tangent

## Culinary students help raise dough for local arts

**Erica Hennig**  
 The Commuter

Chocolate met art during Saturday's 7 p.m. benefit for ArtCentric, home of the Corvallis Arts Center and the Linn-Benton Arts Council.

Held at the CH2M Hill Alumni Center at OSU, the event featured a silent auction, including works from artists in the community and donated items from many businesses, as well as fancy chocolate desserts from 10 area restaurants and bakeries, including LBCC's Culinary Arts Program.

Auction items included travel packages, photographs, paintings, drawings, jewelry, vases, sculptures, dishes, foods and a wide variety of services by local businesses. Bidding started as low as \$20 (for a game), and as high as \$900 (for a boxing glove signed by Muhammad Ali).

Chocolatiers offered such sweet samplings as truffles, cakes, waffle cones and more, all freshly made and elegantly served. Besides LBCC, Allann Brothers, Big River Breads, Big River Restaurant, Bombs Away Café, Bursts Candies, Intaba's Kitchen, Iovino's Ristorante, New Morning Bakery and Orchard Heights Winery presented

their creations. Guests mingled and sampled the desserts to decide which was their favorite and enjoyed the artwork that was auctioned.

First-year culinary students Derek Hubbert, Steve Austin and Sheun Floyd, joined bakery instructor Katie Newton in making a white chocolate coconut chiffon cake with chocolate mousse. Rich Bergeman, journalism and photography instructor, auctioned his platinum/palladium print, "Maiden Peak from Odell Lake."

Big River Restaurant, which presented a chocolate mousse in a chocolate cup, won the "People's Choice Award," win-

ning the balloting by guests who voted for their favorites. The award was a piece of ceramic art by Teri Inokuma.

Second and first prizes were judged by a panel of three experts, based on quality, taste, texture, presentation and overall appearance. Big River Restaurant won second prize, a silver medal and fused glass plate by Jeri Bartholomew.

The gold medal, along with a signed copy of "The Professional Pastry Chef: Fundamentals of Baking and Pastry" by Bo Friberg went to Big River Breads as first prize.

All chocolatiers received a medal for participation.

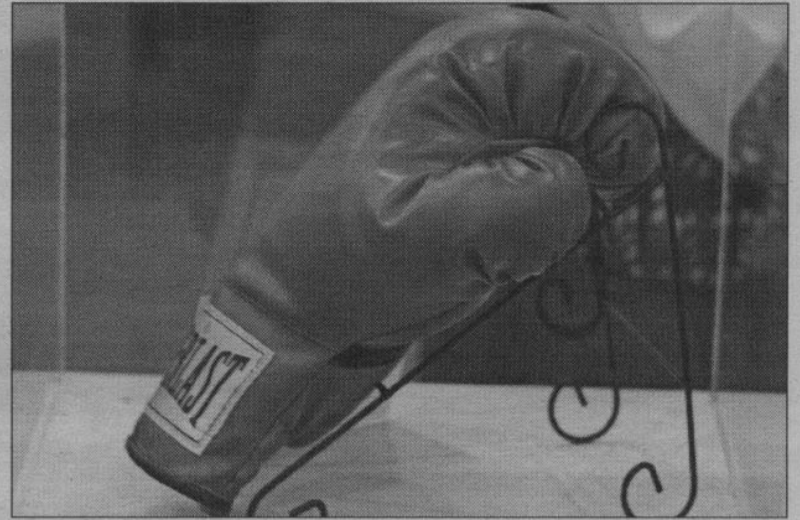


photo by Jeremy Hennig

Opening bids started at \$900 for this glove, signed by boxing legend Muhammad Ali. Many items, such as photos, paintings, jewelry and other art pieces were donated. Proceeds went to ArtCentric.

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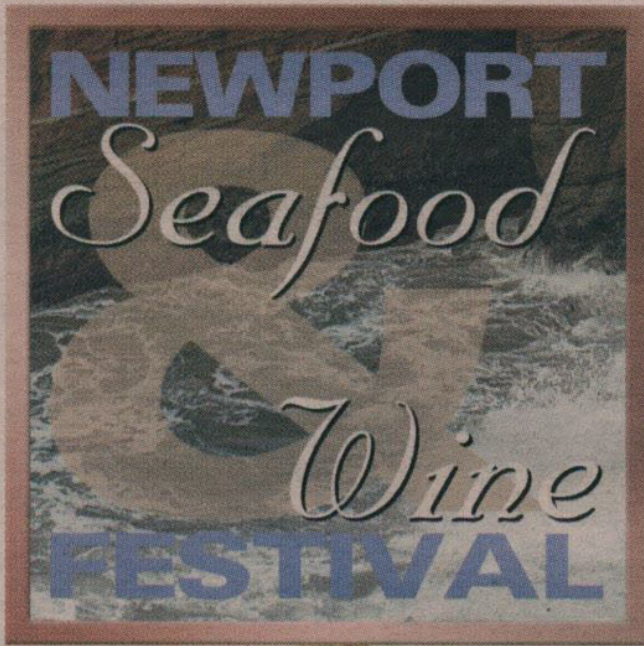
Pick up your Spring Term Textbooks starting March 22 & Beat the Rush!



# LBCC Bookstore

Managing Editor: Adam Peoples  
 Newsroom Desk: 917-4453  
 commuter@ml.linnbenton.edu

# INFO



The Newport Seafood and Wine and Festival this past weekend lived up to expectations for the 27th year in a row.

City council member and volunteer Peggy Sabanskas said on Saturday that the dollars over last year on Friday were up by 14 percent.

"There were massive numbers (on Friday). It was a line going to China, with a four-hour wait to get in," said Sabanskas. Saturday was no different. There were 70 people in line waiting to get in at 10 a.m.; some waited as early as 7:30 a.m.

The excitement, masses of people and people-watching are some of the reasons Sabanskas loves her volunteer job. Seventy-year-old Dan Rowley also loves to volunteer, putting in 13 to 14 hours a day for five days to prepare for the festival, all with a smile on his face. He was "pumped" waiting for the festival to open.

People are drawn to this three-day event that boasted 64 wineries, 23 arts & crafts booths and 37 food booths for their enjoyment.

Sabanskas explained, "It comes at a time when business is low on the Coast and no other activities are planned. Last year the festival brought in \$25 million to Lincoln County to stimulate the local economy."

Rogue Ale clears out its large warehouse to hold the festival. Next year, the festival will be in tents located in the same vicinity.

The money from the festival goes back in the fund for the next festival which takes \$15,000-\$20,000 to organize. Sabanskas also stated that some of the money goes toward running the Chamber of Commerce.

After paying a booth fee and electricity, if needed, the vendors are on their own. The vendor pays the fees, but hires a non-profit to come in to serve the wine and food. Wineries make money on the tasters and bottle sales.

Many of the non-profits are offering scholarships with the money they earn. Other booths, such as the Optimist's selling Mo's Chowder, is donating money to Grad Night Parties, safe non-alcoholic sponsored after-graduation events.

The seafood offered was typical for the Coast: Crab and shrimp cocktails, raw oysters served in warm butter, and smoked salmon—some dry, some moist and juicy.

There were non-seafood booths as well to please all palettes. Cousin Kenny's Barbecue from Banks, Ore. serves up a wholesome barbecue sandwich and Keli's Hawaiian from Seaside, Ore. served up tasty teriyaki chicken so hungry eaters can "taste the flavor of the Islands."

The biggest attraction is the wine. The festival highlights commercial and amateur wines and holds a competition for both wine categories.

"Best of Show" for commercial wines was awarded to Troon Valley from Applegate Valley, Ore., for its cabernet sauvignon vintage select reserve 2000. The wine was full-bod-



photo by Peggy Isaacs

ied without a bitter aftertaste; very refined. In the amateur winemakers tournament, another cabernet sauvignon from the 2002 harvest won. William Wendover from Cave Junction, Ore., took home the title.

All in all—out of 142 entries, there were 77 medals presented, 20 gold, 22 silver and 35 bronze.

The best cheeses on the West Coast were offered to taste alongside the wine. The Rogue Creamery showed off all its cheeses, especially its bleu cheese, which won a world title. The cheese was so creamy and smooth, without a harsh moldy taste. One bite and the reason for the title is justified.

**"Last year the festival brought in \$25 million to Lincoln County to stimulate the local economy"**

**- Peggy Sabanskas**

Another reason for the success of the festival is the Mardi Gras theme that everyone seems to enjoy. Wearing beads, crab hats, lighted crab pins and a multitude of interesting outfits made for a wild time. One person was "spreading the love" by wearing a bright orange velvet outfit with leopard trim and a wide brimmed hat that was purchased online.

The Newport Volunteer Fire Department, selling lobster gumbo, has had a booth every year for a first aid station. This was their first year for sales. Gumbo, beads and T-shirts with the slogan "show me your ticks" with a Dalmatian dog were the additions this year. If you showed your "ticks," you got a strand of beads.

After enjoying the festival, a visit to the beach was appropriate. We headed north to Devil's Punch Bowl, then south of Lincoln City to Siletz Bay Beach for picture-taking and relaxing. Heading to Mo's for clam chowder for lunch was totally delightful. As always, the chowder was perfectly in Mo's tradition, with enough clams to fill the bowl.

We stopped at Chinook Winds for Hootie and the Blowfish on the way home. It was the perfect event to end the perfect day on the Coast. Waiting for the show to start we headed towards the slot machines. Caught up in the moment, we watched \$50 disappear into those hungry beasts. But when we went to a nickel machine and put in our last \$3, we won \$61.25. Fifty dollars went back in my pocket, with \$11 dollars to spend waiting for the performance to start.

Hootie and the Blowfish started at 8 p.m. and the line formed around 7 p.m.—that's with assigned seats—although any seat in the hall is excellent. They clear out the bingo hall for each performance, then restore for bingo. The show was sold out for two performances, each drawing around 1,300 people.

**- written by Peggy Isaacs**



photo by Scott McClure

**Hootie and the Blowfish entertain a sold out crowd at Chinook Winds Casino.**

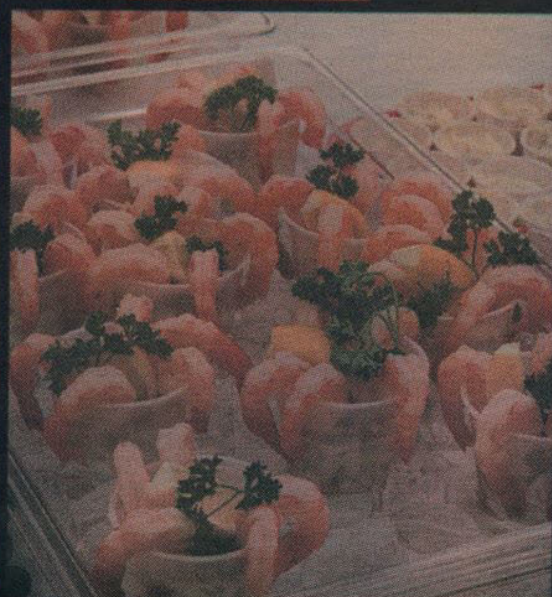
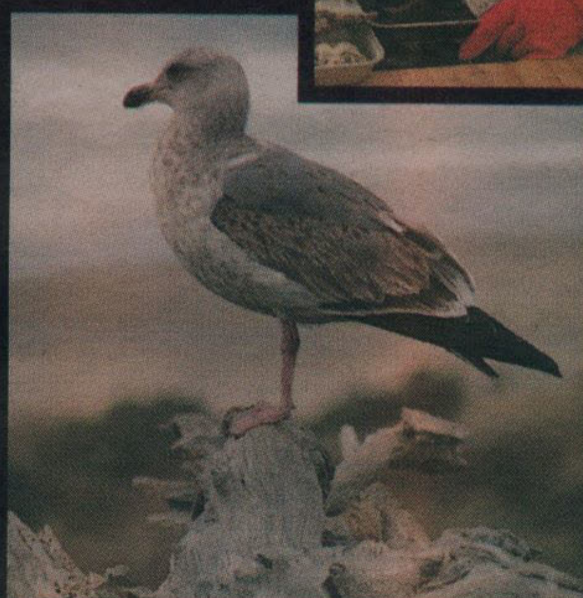
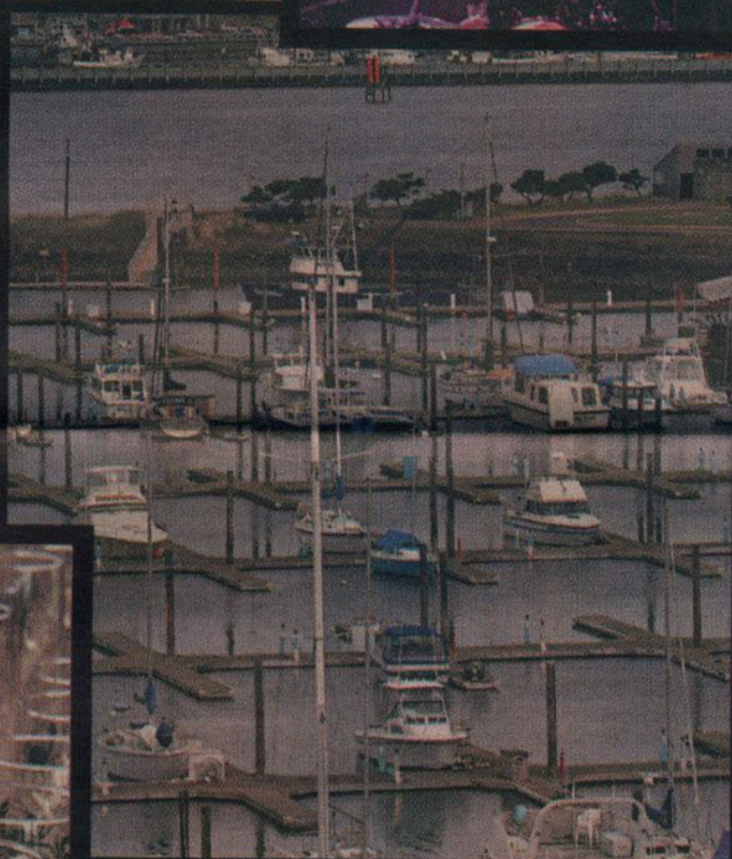
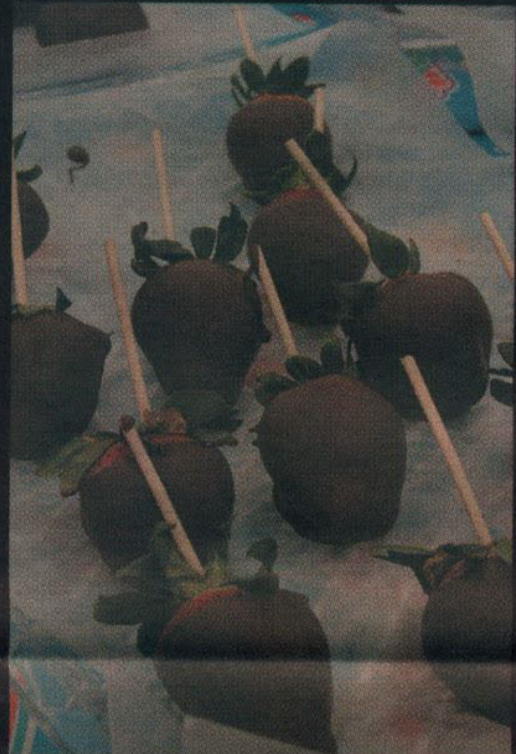


Expanded feature on selected topics, relating to student life and local issues.

## NEWPORT BY DAY LINCOLN CITY BY NIGHT

From the Seafood and Wine Festival's scrumptious snacks and refined drinks, to the card tables of Chinook Winds Casino, the flavor and excitement of Oregon's Coast invites visitors from far and wide. Delicious treats await your taste buds and a big pay out is just a lever pull away.

Photos by Scott McClure



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# LOCAL NEWS

News on happenings around the county including Albany, Corvallis, Lebanon, Philomath, Sweet Home and Tangent

## Specialty shop appeals to game market niche

Adam Peoples  
 The Commuter

Fantasy Knights harkens back to the days when role-playing was done with live members, armies were amassed with miniature pieces and the word 'video' was nowhere in sight.

The Albany specialty shop is the brainchild of owner and sole employee, Ernst "Seeth" Laemmert.

A business minor in college and former counselor, Laemmert first moved to Albany almost four years ago. He evaluated the local area to see what type of competition a traditional game store would face.

While a video game store and a sports card shop existed in the Heritage Mall, Laemmert started Fantasy Knights to offer a different sector of the entertainment industry. He sought financial backing to start his business and attributes his success to his positive credit history and his ability to prove that a store focusing on gaming would be successful. "Everybody wants evidence," he said of the marketing research he did.

The store opened Nov. 28 last year in the plaza on 14th Avenue across from the Heritage Mall, which also houses several other new businesses, including an Asian grocery market and Quizno's restaurant.

According to Laemmert, the most popular games in his store are the click-based strategy creations. He describes the games as a complicated form of chess that blends luck with skill. In these games, pieces are laid out and battles are fought across virtual landscapes and the course of battle can greatly sway the results.

Beginners can buy a starter pack to play casually, and booster packs are available with random pieces inside to build customized armies. Different themed games are available, covering everything from comic book heroes to mechanized futuristic miniature warfare.

Laemmert claims some people are attracted to the design of the medieval Mage Knight pieces, with its dragon figures bringing in toy collectors into the game's



photo by Jeremy Hennig

**Owner Ernst "Seeth" Laemmert helps customers in his Albany specialty game shop. Fantasy Knights caters to an array of frequent gamers. Weekly tournaments are held for the most popular role playing and strategy games.**

realm. Laemmert, an avid gamer himself, says the appeal of Mage Knight stems from its depth and replay value. "You get what you put into it," said Laemmert.

Traditional role playing books are also readily available within the walls of Fantasy Knights. With these games, players assume the identity of a fictional character and keep record over long durations as the book leads players through scenarios and provides a set of laws. The individual reaction to each scripted event makes for a different experience.

The Dungeons and Dragons series is perhaps the most well-known in this genre, but Star Wars-based

role playing and Lord of the Rings games are also represented on the shelves.

Used computer games can be found on a rack in the store, and Fantasy Knights also has an Internet-connected network where PC gamers can play some of the latest titles on premium machines for an hourly fee. Laemmert accepts some used PC games on trade, something that no other local store does.

Laemmert also stocks board games and card games. He even sells a game series called Munchkin that parodies cliché games and movies. Animé DVDs and cult classics line the sales counter. Special orders can be made to obtain titles Laemmert doesn't have in stock. Behind the counter are popular card games like Yu-Gi-Oh! and Pokémon.

Weaponry inspired from past cultures hangs on the wall awaiting new masters and work by local artists, including sculptures and drawings from community members, gives Fantasy Knights an atmosphere unlike large retail chains.

Customers at Fantasy Knights not only find a unique selection of products, but they also find personalized customer service. Over an hour-long period one day last week, Laemmert greeted virtually every customer by name as each entered. One customer was even directed to a product before he asked for assistance because Laemmert knew the customer's hobby.

Laemmert keeps Fantasy Knights open until midnight on Fridays to give his customers a place to socialize and play games. He also hosts weekly tournaments for the more popular games.

Not everything at Fantasy Knights is fun and games. Being the only employee requires Laemmert to work 16-hour days. "When you really love something, it's worth a lot to you," he commented.

Laemmert's passion for games keeps him motivated in spite of the workload.

"It's important to know what you want to get in your world," said Laemmert. "I want to have fun."



photo by Scott McClure

**Volunteers clear Himalayan blackberries behind Jefferson Elementary School. Native plants will be replanted in the area starting Saturday, March 6, and more volunteers are welcomed.**

## Creek replanting underway; volunteers needed

Zedidiah Potts  
 The Commuter

Jefferson Elementary's "Keepers of the Creek" has finished work on clearing invasive Himalayan blackberries from the creek beds behind the Corvallis school and will begin replacing native species Saturday, March 6.

The planting will include 180 trees and 500 shrubs, including Oregon grape, dogwood, willows, Oregon ash, snowberry, ocean spray, elderberry, Indian plum, red alder, big leaf maple, Pacific nine-bark and others. Some species, like Nootka rose, are already present on the banks, but more of these may be planted.

The project plans to improve the creek as habitat for birds, insects, mammals and fish, including riparian zones and sturdier creek banks. Volunteers have mapped the area, taken fish counts and baseline water quality samples.

According to Patti Warner, project leader, Keepers of the Creek are trying to inspire other schools and organizations in Corvallis to adopt their sections of creek and begin their own improvement projects.

Jefferson Elementary is a member of the 4-H Wildlife Stewards program. The program is intended to create hands-on wildlife habitat education sites on school grounds. Every class at the school has been out to the

creek beds this spring.

The project has been driven by volunteer efforts and paid for by over \$17,000 in grants from the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Corvallis Public Schools Foundation.

The project has had no lack of partners. The City of Corvallis, Corvallis Disposal and Recycling, Corvallis Parks and Recreation, the Boy Scouts and other groups have all been involved.

"This project has become something of a full-time job for me. Good things keep happening," she added. Warner is looking for more volunteers and people to help direct groups. She can be reached at (541) 752-0345.

### CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

Oregon Association of Broadcasters Scholarship - application due March 31. Eligibility: 3.0 GPA or higher, full-time enrollment, and plans to work in broadcasting. Information is available in the kiosk next to Financial Aid, Tadena Hall.

Samaritan Albany General Hospital Auxiliary Scholarships - due March 15. Must be full-time student and complete the application process, including an essay. Materials are available in the kiosk next to Financial Aid, Tadena Hall.

Lake Oswego Women's Art Scholarship - must be a female art major in the Fall of 2004. Check out the poster on the window of Financial Aid, Tadena Hall.

#### WANTED

Team Players for New Business part-time. Excellent earn potential. Call Scott with ProCare 917-3290.

Recipes for the Multicultural Club's International Cookbook. Submit recipes at [www.typensave.com](http://www.typensave.com), use group login lbccookbook and password e0a7f.


#### HELP WANTED

**Technician & General Helper** (#2323-Corvallis) This part-time position will work with your school schedule and pays \$10/hr to start. If you have some skills in electricity, chemistry, drafting, and/or machining, this job in a coffee company may be for you. See Carla in the Career Center (T101).

**Gas Attendant** (2321-Albany) Full-time or part-time positions available. The shifts are 5 or 8/hr shifts, 2-5 days a week. See Carla in Student Employment (T101) before these are filled!

**CWE Student Engineer** (#2320-Wah Chang, Albany) If you have a strong interest in mechanical, industrial or electrical engineering field, check on this! Preference given to engineering transfer students who have completed 2 terms. Pay is \$10.50-13/hr DOE. See Carla, Student Employment (T101).

**Seed Warehouse Person** (2322-Albany) If you are available Mon, Wed, and Friday from 7:30am to 4pm, this position is part-time and is for 4 months! You must be able to lift 60 lbs. See Carla in Student Employment (T101)!



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**Sports Editor:** Jacob Espinoza  
**Newsroom Desk:** 917-4453  
 commutersports@linnbenton.edu

# SPORTS

Coverage of competitive and recreational activities at LBCC, as well as from around the state and nation

## Runners look back on historic season with pride

**Jacob Espinoza**  
 The Commuter

Feb. 21, 6 p.m.

LBCC Activities Center, final game of the regular season vs. PCC

After pulling even with SWOCC and Lane by winning three of our previous four games, we played the last game of the season for a spot in NWAACC Tournament. On paper, the advantage was ours. SWOCC and Lane had to play the playoff-bound teams Mt. Hood and Clackamas while we were playing at home against Portland Community College. PCC struggled through the regular season with only six players.

Mt. Hood had to get a win over SWOCC in order to remain tied with Chemeketa Community College for their share of the Southern Division Championship, but Clackamas entered their game against Lane in position to enter the NWAACC Tournament as the Southern Region's third seed with a win or a loss.

I was fairly sure Mt. Hood would leave its game as the victor, but I was unsure about how prepared Clackamas would be to play their final game of the season.

With all of this on the back of our minds, we had to prepare to get the victory over Portland. Though Portland's record is one of the worst in the league, they are a very talented team who has lost more close games than any other team in the league. They had defeated SWOCC the previous Saturday.

We began the game high on emotions. The entire team was passing the ball well, moving without the ball and Ryan Schmidt was on fire. He had 20 points in the first half and finished with 25 in the game. We entered halftime up by 20.

As the second half began, our adrenaline and intensity began to fade and we started to have difficulty stopping Portland's penetration. Their wings managed their way into the key and dished to their posts for easy lay-ups time after time. The lead we had built in the first half was erased and with six seconds left, they tied the game.

Time-out.

Our Head Coach Randy Falk drew a play to get Southern Region All-Star Ryan Schmidt the ball. Portland denied him the pass and point guard Mike Braziel got the ball just outside the three-point line.

With our play-off hopes in his hands, Braziel drove the lane and threw up a floater. The ball paused on the rim, Portland knew it was going in and we knew it would fall out, but the momentum we had gained in the season's closing moments would not be denied and managed to kiss the ball through the net. Game over. Linn-Benton wins.

We had done our part. Our future now depended on whether or not Mt. Hood and Clackamas were able to get their victories. I called my brother, a member of the SWOCC basketball team, and he told me he lost. This was an awkward situation for me because I always hope for the best for my brother, but I knew that my team had worked hard throughout the season and deserved the NWAACC Tournament spot as much as anybody.

Ryan Schmidt called our former McNary High School teammate Trevor Cross, who now plays for Lane. No answer. The suspense builds. Twenty min-

*The men's basketball team ended its season on Sunday after an inspiring end-of-season run to the playoffs, qualifying them for the NWAACC Tournament for the first time in school history. In the following journal, Commuter Sports Editor and team co-captain Jacob Espinoza recounts the last two weeks, beginning with the final game of the regular season against Portland Community College and including their upset of top-seeded Big Bend Community College.*



photo by Jeremy Hennig

**Linn-Benton's 2003-2004 men's basketball team. From Left, Danny Pepperling, Jacob Espinoza, Tommy Bain, Mike Blanc, Joe Zampko, Kyler Shinn, Robbie Wood (no longer a member of the team), B.J. Nott, Matt Jasperson, Trevor Abell, Bobby Schindler, Mike Braziel, Ryan Schmidt and Pat Brown.**

utes later, there is still no answer. Finally Schmidt's phone rings. Lane lost.

Linn-Benton got their first NWAACC Tournament berth in the school's history.

Feb. 25, 4:30 p.m.

Last practice before the NWAACC Tournament

With the NWAACC Tournament approaching, our team grew anxious. Everyone was getting after each other, flexing their muscles. At times it seemed as though our team had problems staying focused through the hour of defensive drills, but this was probably because we were all anxiously awaiting the trip to Kennewick, Wash. We finished strong, however, and left the gym ready to take on the world.

Feb. 26, noon

Departure for Kennewick, Wash.

With our bags packed and loaded, we began the five-hour drive to Kennewick, Wash. This was less a time for team bonding, than a time for Discmans, magazines and sleep. The celebration was over, the time to prove our worth was approaching.

Feb. 26, 7 p.m.

NWAACC banquet

A little over an hour after arriving in Kennewick we were dressed to impress at the NWAACC Tournament's annual banquet. Sixteen women's teams and 16 men's teams showed up. Everyone came to the banquet looking good. Heads were turning like it was a tennis match.

Former Lane head coach and Oregon basketball legend Jim Boutin gave a

lengthy speech at the banquet of chicken and steak about the secrets of winning basketball. Coach Falk didn't let go of his smile once during the dinner.

February 27, 2 p.m.

First game vs. Big Bend CC

Because we were the fourth team out of the Southern Division, we were matched up with the number one seeded team out of the Eastern Division, Big Bend. We knew Big Bend was a tough team and that they would probably overlook our team because we were the only team in the tournament with a losing record. But we used this as motivation and came out fired up, ready to play. We played cool and confident throughout the entire game and upset the number one seeded team 77-74 behind 23 points by Ryan Schmidt. Bobby Schindler added 14 points and I pitched in a modest 10 points, seven rebounds, and four assists.

From the beginning we came out with the mentality that we could get the victory. We were the underdogs of the tournament and came together like transformers to get the victory over one of the tournament favorites.

Feb. 28, 4 p.m.

Second game vs. Tacoma CC

Coming into Saturday's day of play we were one of only eight teams still competing for the NWAACC Championship. This was an accomplishment in itself, but we were now matched up against a very talented Tacoma Community College team.

We came into the game out of sync. Tacoma is possibly the most athletic team we played all year and it seemed to throw off our timing offensively. We managed

to hang around in the first half, but in the second half they went on a three-point hitting terror that left us flat. Our team put together a run in the last few minutes, but it wasn't enough and we lost the game 87-76.

Ryan Schmidt continued on his hot streak, finishing with a game high 24 points. Freshman Tommy Bain and Michael Braziel added 10 points apiece.

Feb. 29, noon

Third game vs. Edmonds CC

After the loss to Tacoma our team was mentally and physically drained. As we began our game against Edmonds, our fatigue was exposed. Edmonds is a team solid at every position and entered our game after a tough 73-71 loss to Southern Division champions Mt. Hood.

We needed the victory to stay alive in the double elimination tournament, but we were unable to fight off the offensive onslaught Edmonds threw at us in the first half and entered half time down 54-28. We were unable to make a significant run in the second half and lost our last game 94-73. Schmidt finished his Linn-Benton career with a game high of 30 points. Braziel scored 21 points, grabbed three steals and dished out five assists.

Feb. 29, 3:30 p.m.

Return to LBCC from Kennewick

We made it. For the first time in the school's history the men's basketball team of Linn-Benton Community College advanced to the NWAACC Tournament. Most people said we wouldn't make it, some people said we shouldn't have made it, but we did. It took a five-game losing streak by Southwestern Oregon Community College and a buzzer-beating finger roll by Michael Braziel, but after beginning the season 0-4, our team managed to bounce back and advance to the post season.

Not only did we make the playoffs, but we upset a top-seeded team. We had numerous opportunities throughout the season to throw in the towel, but we didn't. We rolled with the punches and kept throwing jabs. We left Kennewick, Wash. one tournament victory away from placing and our heads towards the sky.

Good season sophomores. Freshman, you better be getting ready for next season. Fandel, keep rockin' the outfits. Hartman, your posts stepped up in the tournament, thank you. Coach Falk, you did it. Congratulations.

### MEN'S RANKINGS

#### NWAACC Tournament Placing

1. Lower Columbia
2. Mt. Hood
3. Peninsula
4. Walla Walla
5. Clackamas
6. Tacoma
7. Edmonds
8. Big Bend

### CORRECTIONS

In the Feb. 18 issue, The Commuter gave credit to Rusty Gorham's family for supplying the bulls for Linn County's Valentine's Day Rodeo. The bulls were in fact donated by the Howell Rodeo Company.

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# BOOK Buyback

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**March 15 thru 19**



**LBCC Bookstore**  
www.bookstore.linnbenton.edu

**A & E Editor:** Peggy Isaacs  
**Newsroom Desk:** 917-4453  
 commuter@linnbenton.edu

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Information about plays, movies, books, artwork and other entertaining or artistic endeavors

## MOVIE REVIEW

### 'Passion' shocks viewers with uncalled-for violence and gore

**Peggy Isaacs**  
 The Commuter

It's the shock and awe of Jesus Christ. Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ" has been open in theaters for one week now. "Good Morning America" reported that the first five-day totals pulled in a cool \$117.5 million.

After seeing the movie, the only shocking thing is how sensationalized this story is and how the awe of feelings of anger toward Mel Gibson overwhelmed me.

Folks, let me first say that I am a spiritual person who believes that there was such a person as Jesus Christ here teaching love in a troubled time of history. However, I do not think this story is the gospel truth of what happened. It was total Hollywood.

I understand how someone may have had a heart attack viewing this movie, as has been rumored, and how it can stir up anti-Semitic sentiments, as has been claimed.

Anyone who has lived their life for Jesus Christ would be totally upset at seeing the one they love so brutally beaten and abused. This abuse is also the reason for the complaints from Jewish groups that it is anti-Semitic.

The movie takes place on the last 24 hours of life for Jesus Christ. Through the whole ordeal, Jesus has flashbacks of a once wonderful, happy life with mother Mary.

One flashback showed Jesus as a carpenter, inventing a table with tall legs and trying to convince his mom that people will use this table if they have tall legs on the chairs. Mom says, "This will never catch on"—a small bit of humor in a very intense film.

Within 20 minutes of the movie starting, people were heard all over the theater crying and sobbing with the events taking place in the story.

As far as producing and directing the film, Gibson has it hands down. The story, on the other hand, is just that, a story. It is hard to believe that people are feeling this movie as a truth in religion.

If the purpose of this film was to spread the message of Jesus Christ, I believe it failed completely. If the purpose was to get people to start talking again about Jesus and his teachings, then bravo for Gibson.

Personally, I feel that it's all about the money. There is so much blood and gore; it is uncalled for. I have heard people say, "Well, that was a harsh time; that's what they did."

**If the purpose of this film was to spread the message of Jesus Christ, I believe it failed completely.**

▶ Peggy Isaacs

But how does anyone know? Were any of us there? Did anyone see these things? This is only if the greatest stories every told could be validated.

King James' version of the Bible is just that, King James' version. Remember that he wanted to control people and get money from

his subjects, so what better way than with condemnation to achieve his goal.

The torment of Jesus is so overboard and graphic in this movie that it destroyed the message for me. I had to look away at one time, not because Jesus was so brutally beaten, but because I didn't want to put this image in my memory bank. If this did happen this way, it was a sad day for mankind.

The best part of the movie is the devotion and love for a son that shows through mother Mary. The only time I cried was when Jesus was carrying his cross through town and Mary tried to get to him through the alleys and her emotions stopped her.

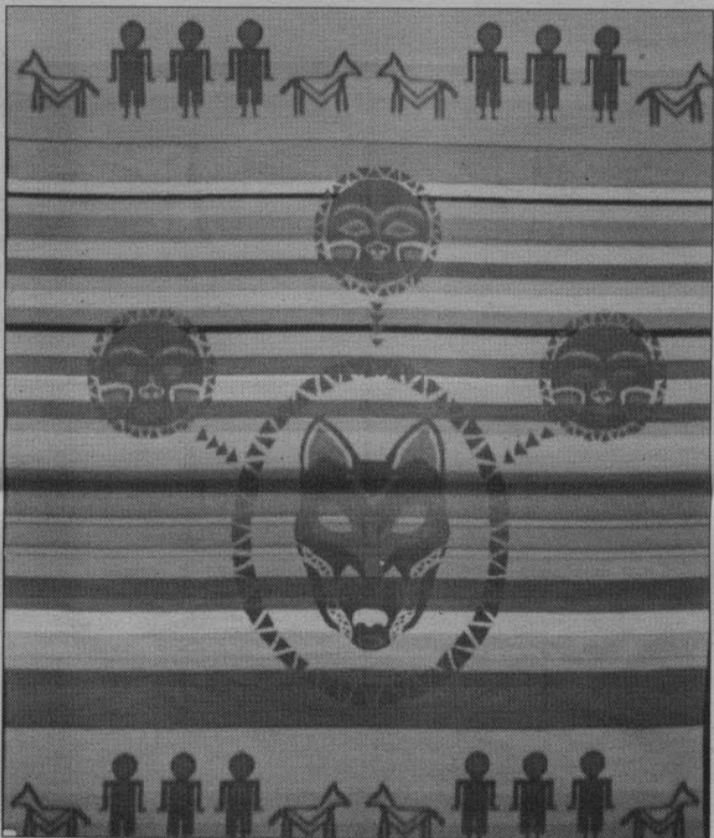
As Jesus came into view on the street, she saw him fall and had a flashback of when Jesus was a child and how she would help him get up from a fall. This memory helped her to go to her child and help him up. This is where Jesus gets strength from Mary to continue to carry his cross to be crucified.



### Back to the Roots

photos by Peggy Isaacs

Art student Kala Otta sketches objects from Lillian Pitt's exhibit in the AHSS Gallery. Pitt, a Warm Springs Native, is influenced by her cultural childhood. "Coyote and the Huckleberry" (below), an original design by Pitt, was used on limited edition Pendelton wool blankets.



## ACADEMY AWARD RESULTS

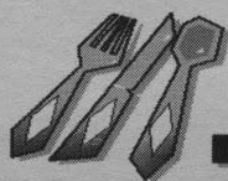
### 'Rings' runs circles around competition

- Best picture: "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King"
- Best director: Peter Jackson, "Return of the King"
- Best actor: Sean Penn, "Mystic River"
- Best actress: Charlize Theron, "Monster"
- Best supporting actor: Tim Robins, "Mystic River"
- Best supporting actress: Renee Zellweger, "Cold Mountain"
- Best original screenplay: "Lost in Translation"
- Best adapted screenplay: "Return of the King"
- Best editing: "Return of the King"
- Best art direction: "Return of the King"
- Best cinematography: Russell Boyd, "Master and Commander"
- Best sound: "Return of the King"
- Best visual effects: "Return of the King"
- Best animated feature: "Finding Nemo"



*chef's choice*

**All Week Long!!**



**COMMONS**

March 3<sup>rd</sup> - March 9<sup>th</sup>



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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Information about plays, movies,  
 books, artwork and other entertaining  
 or artistic endeavors

## CALENDAR

### AFTER DARK

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>The Beer Store</b><br>1557 NW Monroe<br>Corvallis                                     | <b>Mar. 4</b><br><b>Live music, TBA</b><br>Punk Rock<br>9 p.m.<br>\$3/21 & over            |
| <b>Bombs Away Café</b><br>2527 NW Monroe<br>Corvallis<br>757-7221                        | <b>Mar. 3</b><br><b>String Loaded</b><br>Quartet<br>7:30 p.m.<br>Free                      |
| <b>College Center Commons</b><br>LBCC Campus<br>6500 Pacific Blvd.<br>Albany<br>917-4391 | <b>Mar. 5</b><br><b>Culinary Arts Winter Banquet</b><br>Dinner<br>6:30 p.m.<br>\$19.50     |
| <b>Peacock</b><br>125 SW 2nd St.<br>Corvallis<br>754-8522                                | <b>Mar. 5</b><br><b>DJ Cruz</b><br>80s Dance & Disco<br>9 p.m.<br>Free                     |
| <b>Platinum Club</b><br>126 SW 4th St.<br>Corvallis<br>738-6996                          | <b>Mar. 5</b><br><b>DJs Ivan &amp; Lupe</b><br>Salsa<br>10 p.m.<br>\$3                     |
|  | <b>Mar. 6</b><br><b>DJ Zigzag</b><br><b>Liquid Vodka Party</b><br>Hip-hop<br>9 p.m.<br>\$5 |
| <b>Lucky Larry's</b><br>1295 Commercial Way<br>Albany<br>928-3654                        | <b>Mar. 5 &amp; 6</b><br><b>TJ and The Tourist</b><br>Classic Rock<br>9 p.m.<br>Free       |

## Café jazzed by Ruppert's blend

Sheena Bishop  
 The Commuter

A well-known campus face teamed up with a local coffee house to serve up a popular menu with a side of smooth musical stylings last Friday night.

Gary Ruppert, dean of the Arts and Communications Division at LBCC, played jazz piano for two hours to an appreciative crowd at Boccherini's Coffee & Tea House in downtown Corvallis. He has been playing piano for 45 years, although he does not perform publicly as he once did.

"I have backed away from public performances during the last couple years," Ruppert said. "After doing it for so many years it was becoming less fun. I am ready to do it a bit more often now, maybe every month or so."

Ruppert played in a few rock bands during high school, but over time he formed a deep connection to classical and jazz music.

"The feeling from classical is the depth of emotions," he explained. "Other styles of music are certainly emotional, but not nearly to the depth of classical. The feeling from jazz is one of freedom and light-hearted fun."

Ruppert said he appreciates those musicians who have influenced the modern perception of contemporary jazz, especially big band jazz.

"I love the interaction between the various sections of a jazz band," Ruppert explained. "I try to incorporate that into my piano playing. My main influences would have to be Bill Evans and Dave Grusin."

Bill Evans was a jazz pianist often called the "fountainhead of modern jazz piano," who received his big break in 1958 when Miles Davis asked him to play in his



photo by Peggy Isaacs

**Gary Ruppert, dean of the Arts and Communications Division, makes one of his rare public appearances at Boccherini's Coffee & Tea House in downtown Albany, where he entertained the crowd with his jazz piano stylings last Friday.**

Ruppert also has had a hand in the sounds at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where he and his wife attend.

"I played the piano or organ and directed a church choir for 25 years," he said. "I stopped doing it about four years ago. My wife and I sing in a church choir and I substitute for the pianist/organist when she needs a break."

Ruppert has been a dean for six years now, following a 29-year career as an instructor at LBCC. He generally has taught music and speech communication. Even as a dean, Ruppert continues to teach at least one class a term.

"It gives me more knowledge of what the faculty are trying to do when I'm doing it, too," he explained.

Ruppert does not have a set performance schedule, but he does plan on playing publicly again soon.

"Rock and blues can be emotional and fun, but it is not as good a fit for me anymore as classical and jazz," Ruppert said.

band in New York City. Dave Grusin, along with partner Larry Rosen, re-defined sophisticated contemporary jazz with his scores. They also discovered and produced many well-known jazz performers. Grusin is also known for his film scores.

Ruppert said he plays both classical and jazz at home on his 6-foot Mason & Hamlin grand piano. Mason & Hamlin is one of the oldest and most trusted piano manufacturers, he said, with a reputation that dates back to 1854.

"My favorite composer is usually the one I'm playing or listening to at the time, but if I had to list a few favorites it would be Debussy, Gershwin, Chopin, Mozart, Bernstein and Copeland," he said.

## Curran brings back the blues

Peggy Isaacs  
 The Commuter

The blues are back, in Corvallis anyway.

Anyone who has been in the area since the 1970s knows that blues once dominated the Corvallis music scene.

The Peacock on Second Street was a sure thing for the blues. Oh what fun, with all the bikers and their Harleys lining the entrance. After a change in management and over the course of time, it seems that the blues were forgotten.

Corvallis does have its annual summer Blues & Brews Festival, but for folks who appreciate the genre, that summer event may not be enough.

To help fill the void, Tim Morrisette from Platinum Booking and Promotions has stepped in with David Samuel from the Vanilla Sugar Blues Project to bring the blues back to Corvallis.

The first group to be booked was Blind Pig Records's Nick Curran and the Nitelives, from Austin, Texas, who performed

last Wednesday night at the Platinum.

Curran is a 26-year-old musician from Maine. He started playing music when he got his first drum set at the tender age of 3, performing with his dad, who was a band musician. He received his first guitar for Christmas when he was 9 years old.

His first stage show was at age 3, singing "Shake, Rattle and Roll" for his dad's band.

He has been with the Nightlives for four years, although the current band member lineup has been together only for the past year.

They performed in San Francisco last week and went to Portland after the Wednesday night

show to promote their current album "Doctor Velvet," which was produced by Billy Horton in Austin.

Blues legend Jimmy Vaughan recorded with them on the album for a few songs. When asked about working with Vaughan, Curran replied, "cool, 'cause he came in to actually record,

instead of just laying down the tracks. He didn't want to get it over with. He wanted to learn the songs and came to rehearsals and to record with us. That's rare these days."

Vaughan contributed his blues-drenched guitar to Freddy King's "Lonesome Whistle Blues" and traded guitar licks with Curran on "Midnight Hour" by Gatemouth Brown.

**"... (Jimmy Vaughan) came in to actually record, instead of just laying down the tracks. He didn't want to get it over with. He wanted to learn the songs and came to rehearsals and to record with us. That's rare these days."**

▶ Nick Curran



photo by Peggy Isaacs

Lead singer and guitarist Nick Curran from the band The Nightlives ignited a blues-starved crowd at the Platinum Club last Wednesday in Corvallis. Curran, who is based out of Austin, Texas, was nominated for a Grammy Award for the best new blues artist in the U.S., and his band won the WC Handy Award for their new album "Doctor Velvet."