

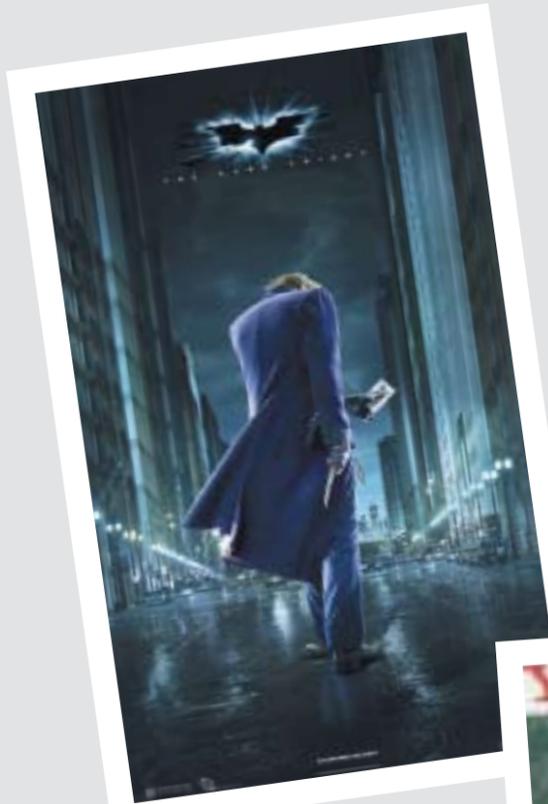
THE COMMUTER

Wednesday
January 7, 2009

Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon

Volume 40 No. 11

Excerpts From 2008



The Dark Knight
Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.



Oil ships stolen, hostages released!
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Jaroh



Microsoft bids for Yahoo!
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Gnal



Government increases civilian surveillance.
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Dayglow



EPA shifts regulations.
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Dante Geek



Bailouts, Bailouts, everywhere,
and not a dime to spare!
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Afagen



Eliot Spitzer and the rest of the
government scandals!
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Carlisle



Prop 8 in California! 6 mos after legalizing gay marriage.
Photo courtesy of Flickr-Kahsco

Thanks to the snow's surprise arrival I, along with so many others, developed a near-lethal case of cabin fever. One afternoon it cleared up long enough for me to get out and snap some photos. I never made it farther than my driveway; I don't move well in the cold. I did manage to catch the snow that had piled up on my winter vegetables and plants. Major credit to anyone who made it out of their house and past their driveways.

- Lydia Elliott



Eve Bruntlett



Lydia Elliott



Eve Bruntlett



Lydia Elliott

I always keep track of all the flowers that are blooming in local parks and gardens, and due to the unusually warm weather right before the snowfall many of the flowers were still in full color. It's rare for one to get a chance to find a red dahlia still open in the below-freezing air. The other flowers I photographed I found at a local park. Those flowers have been some that I was particularly fond of shooting since they were in bloom most of the summer and fall.

- Eve Bruntlett

The Commuter

Editor-In-Chief: Gregory Dewar
Managing Editor: MaryAnne Turner
Newsroom Desk: 917-4451
E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu

CAMPUS NEWS

News about Linn-Benton
 Community College, including
 the Sweet Home, Lebanon,
 and Benton Centers.

ASG election update

Rick Casillas
 The Commuter

The Associated Student Government will be holding elections during the next term and application dates start within a few weeks of the new year. Dates of interest are as follows:

- **Applications for elections available on Jan. 7, with a deadline for entry on Feb. 4.**
- **Voting will take place during the 8th week of winter term, opening on Feb. 25 at 7:30 a.m. and closing on Feb 26 at 11:30 p.m.**

For further details on how to run for office and information on candidates, check the address below to the ASG section of the LBCC website. Further updates on Candidates and election processes will be provided by The Commuter and on the ASG website.
<http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/student-life-and-leadership/asg-elections>

The man behind the food

Hannah Kessi
 For The Commuter

From the fine experience of Linn-Benton's Santiam Restaurant to a high class restaurant in New York, Linn-Benton Chef Instructor John Jarschke has cooked it all. Now the instructing chef at Santiam Restaurant, he uses his experience from fine restaurants to ensure that the food served to students and other guests is of the same fine restaurant quality.

The first of his many experiences was found as chef at a restaurant in Eugene, Oregon, called the Book and Tea Shop. This was a unique restaurant where there were tables placed between rows of books, and customers were encouraged to browse the books and enjoy a gourmet meal. Jarschke recalls that the atmosphere was welcoming, comfortable and classy. He laughs as he recalls his interview at the Book and Tea Shop.

"I went in for the interview and was expecting a brief questionnaire. It lasted 8 hours because I was asked to cook dinner as my interview. My wife called the restaurant, worried, and asked them if I had ever showed up. She wasn't expecting an 8 hour interview, either." Jarschke began his training at Horst Mager Culinary Institute in Portland, Oregon, now Western Culinary Institute, where he obtained his diploma in culinary arts. This gave him the foundational skills that he has applied to a wide variety of restaurants

and the current opportunity to instruct other aspiring chefs.

His main responsibility in the Linn-Benton culinary department is to act as the instructing chef. On an average day he spends his time teaching classes in culinary theory, ordering the food for the restaurant and Commons Cafeteria, and guiding students as they prepare a wide variety of food. He noted on his favorite aspects of his job: "I have the opportunity to learn from my students as they create different dishes. I also enjoy seeing how the culinary industry is changing." He also appreciates the opportunity to cook with exotic foods such as truffles, which the students are preparing to serve at a company dinner that they catered this holiday season.

Jarschke had a recent opportunity in September to travel to New York with the owner and chef of the Sybaris Bistro in downtown Albany. Jarschke was part of a team of four chefs who created a menu of truffles that they prepared and served at the James Beard House in New York, NY. Matt Bennett was the guest chef at this high-class New York restaurant, and Jarschke was a part of his team of assisting chefs. This opportunity is one that Jarschke will always remember, and hopes to have more of the same experiences.

He will continue to enjoy the daily opportunity that he has to train chefs in a fine dining establishment here on campus, where love and care goes into each dish.

LBCC to host luau

Join the Pacific Islander Club this February

JJ Oliveros
 For The Commuter

Roast pork, teriyaki chicken, vegetable chop suey, and tropical fruit salad are just some of the delicious foods on the menu. On Feb. 23, the Linn-Benton Pacific Islander Club (PIC) will host its annual luau in the College Center on the LBCC main campus.

The festivities start at 5 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. Live dancing and food are just a couple of the activities at the luau. "The purpose of the luau is to provide an educational and cultural experience for LBCC students, staff and our community," club advisor Angie Klampe said.

Tickets will go on sale Tuesday, Jan. 15. Last year the PIC used over 250 tickets, after selling 100 and giving away 150. Last year's price was \$10 a person; free tickets were for students with current ID card. Due to the higher cost of foods, the price is subjected to rise. Money will go to further advancement of the PIC and towards the possibility of a scholarship. You can purchase the tickets in the LBCC Student Life and Leadership office.

"We actually do not make money from the luau. We break even money wise," Klampe said. Live entertainment will be provided by Eugene Hula Halau. They will be performing ancient and modern dance moves.

The PIC is a club that shares its culture and spreads the "aloha" spirit to everyone. This club is not just for people of Pacific Islander heritage, it is open to everyone. The PIC also takes time away from planning the luau to help with community service, like volunteering at the winter festival.

Co-sponsors for this event will be the Diversity Achievement Center, Associated Student Government, and the Student Programming Board. The PIC has future plans to raise enough money for scholarships. Meetings for the PIC are held in the Diversity Achievement Center from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. on Thursdays.

OSU-Cascades Campus

Centered in Oregon. Centered on Students.

January 28

Linn Benton Community College Transfer Day

See you on your campus or contact cascadesadmit@osucascades.edu to schedule a personal visit to Bend



Yes, you can complete your degree.

And the place to make it happen is OSU-Cascades, with small classes, personal attention and your choice of more than 20 accredited degree programs from OSU and UO. In most cases, you can apply college credits you've already earned.

- Art
- Business
- General science
- General social science
- Human development and family sciences
- International studies
- Liberal studies
- Mathematics
- Natural resources
- Psychology
- Tourism and outdoor leadership

APPLICATION DEADLINES

FEBRUARY 1 > Fall term priority application/scholarship application

SEPTEMBER 1 > Fall term final application

www.osucascades.edu/admissions

541-322-3100
 OSUcascades.edu

In partnership with University of Oregon
 and Central Oregon Community College.

Oregon State | **Cascades**
 UNIVERSITY | C A M P U S

2600 NW College Way Bend, Oregon 97701-5933

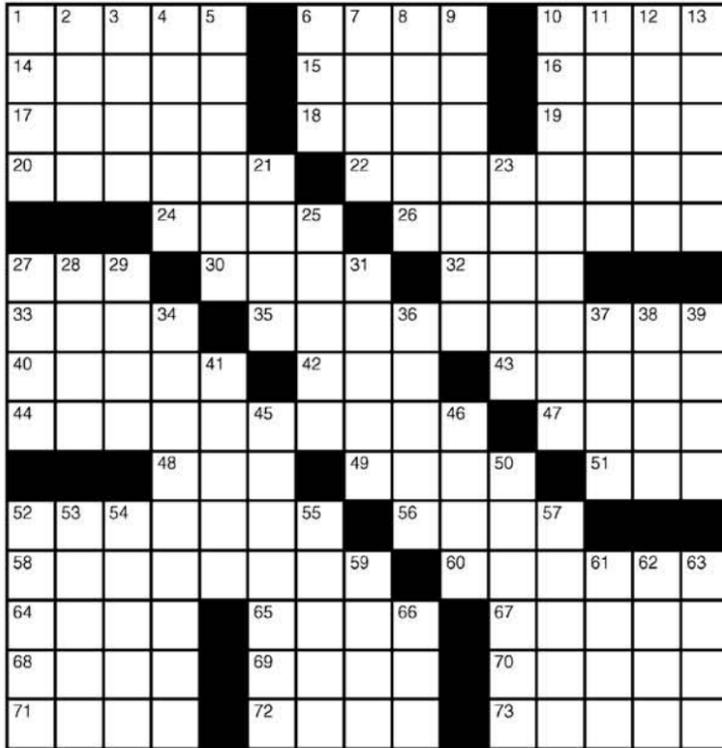
The Commuter
 Editor-In-Chief: Gregory Dewar
 Managing Editor: MaryAnne Turner
 Newsroom Desk: 917-4451
 E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu

SURREAL LIVING

Crosswords, cartoons and some fun facts to brighten your day.

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Medieval oboe
 - 6 Onion covering
 - 10 Lock with a pin
 - 14 Dern or Davies
 - 15 Pakistani tongue
 - 16 As far as
 - 17 Of times past
 - 18 Bum around
 - 19 Mardi ___
 - 20 Pedestal's base
 - 22 Smiling cat
 - 24 Egyptian port
 - 26 Mythic know-it-alls
 - 27 Actor Linden
 - 30 Puccini piece
 - 32 Ms. Gardner
 - 33 Team in a yoke
 - 35 Surrounding
 - 40 Medleys
 - 42 "For Me and My ___"
 - 43 Varnish ingredient
 - 44 Mulch ingredients
 - 47 Singer Turner
 - 48 Silver or Wood
 - 49 End-of-the-week cheer
 - 51 Stitch
 - 52 Dry white wine
 - 56 Ivy League school
 - 58 Rigorous appraisal
 - 60 Smith of "California Suite"
 - 64 "Peter Pan" pooch
 - 65 Where China is
 - 67 Miffed to the max
 - 68 Unhappy
 - 69 Peddle
 - 70 Fight off
 - 71 Facilitate
 - 72 Former spouses
 - 73 Flower holders



© 2009 Tribune Media Services, Inc.
 All rights reserved.

1/7/09

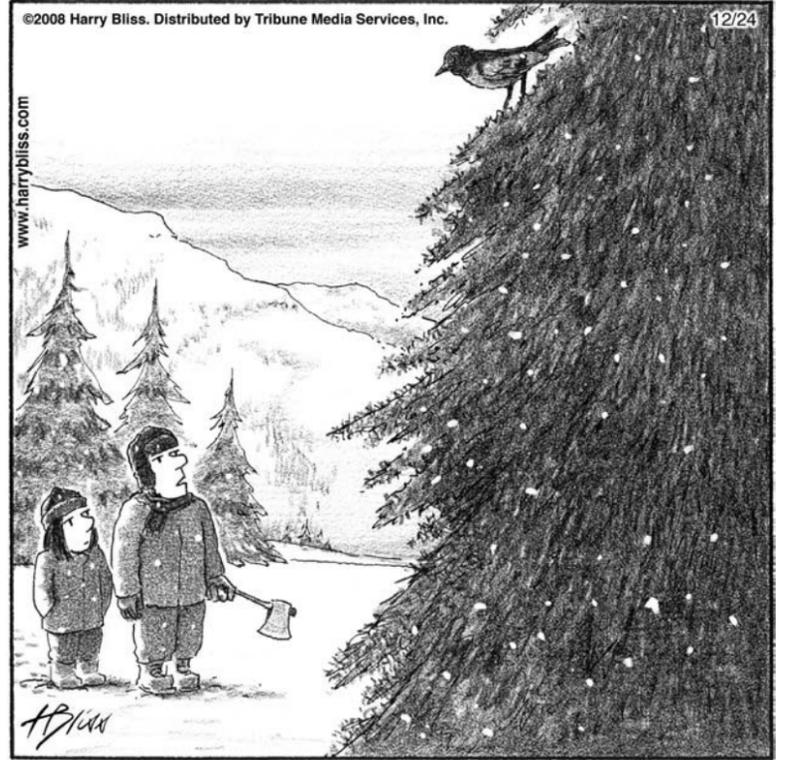
- DOWN**
- 1 Food for hogs
 - 2 Corridor
 - 3 BMW rival
 - 4 Small birds
 - 5 Site of the Palazzo Ducale
 - 6 Big __, CA

- 7** Fast-food magnate Ray
8 Western state
9 Digit
10 First of a line of French kings
11 Month for fools?
12 Gawk
13 False fronts
21 Roll-call answer
23 Take pleasure in
25 Insults wittily
27 Basketball goal
28 Bar in a car
29 "Star Wars" princess
31 Nautical command
34 University in South Bend
36 Lyric lamentation
37 Egyptian fertility goddess
38 Blissful cloud
39 Grind one's teeth
41 Young salmon

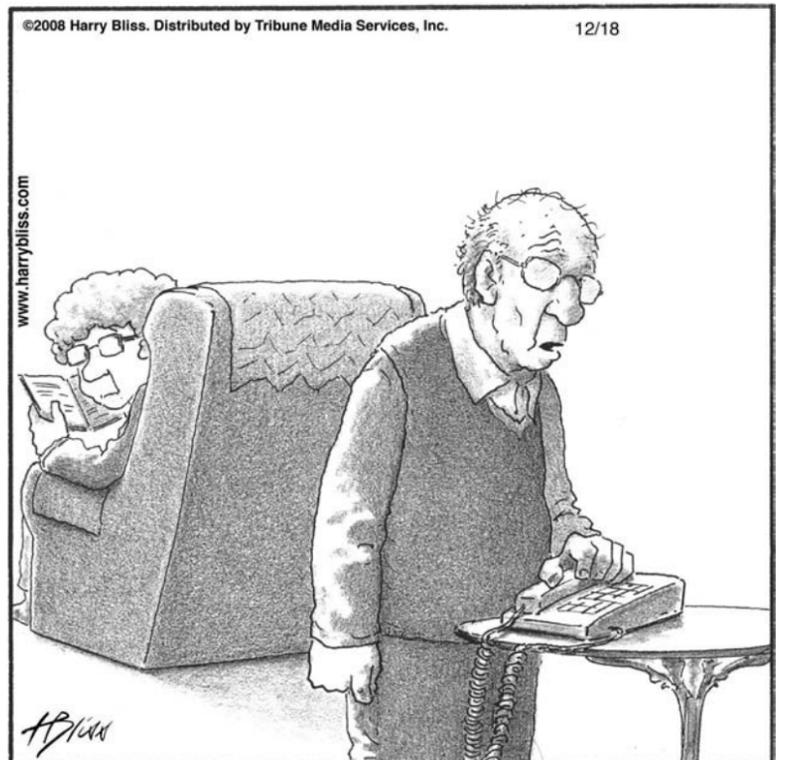
Solutions



- 45** Taking time off
46 Old Thailand
50 Natural talents
52 Canine malady
53 Florida city
54 Congestion location
55 English county
57 White heron
59 Fork part
61 Stare in awe
62 Single thing
63 Adult elves
66 Want __



"This has nothing to do with you ... this is between us and the tree."



"Our broker just informed me that we have to die in two years."



www.gocomics.com/brewsterrockit
 brewrockit@yahoo.com



©2009 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All rights reserved.
 01/02



YOU GOTTA BE @#\$%&* KIDDING ME.

The Commuter
Editor-In-Chief: Gregory Dewar
Managing Editor: MaryAnne Turner
Newsroom Desk: 917-4451
E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Reviews, upcoming events,
and the cure for weekend boredom.

Salem celebrates film

By Sabrina Dean
For The Commuter

Attention the creative of mind, those with camera lenses for eyes, idea people, and anyone with a taste for theater and indie films alike.

Every year, Salem celebrates and builds an appreciation for the art of filmmaking by holding the three-day long Salem Film Festival in April. The year 2009 brings us the fourth annual Salem Film Festival, April 17-19.

"When [Salem does] something that catches on, there's obviously a niche to be filled. Film festivals have, oddly enough, turned out to be a perceived need that is being filled," said Ron Cowen of the Statesman Journal.

The SFF holds a great opportunity for those with skills or an appreciation of the many aspects of filmmaking. Whether you're the person behind the camera, putting together the script, or getting your image on film, it can be a great experience to see others in their craft. You can learn a thing or two and make some connections, even fairly high in the industry according to David Chung, a previous attendee to the festival, looking to submit and attend again this year.

The SFF isn't only about people

sharing their indie projects, patting each other on the backs and making promises to see each other and their next projects the following year. It's also a gathering for those interested in exploring the craft and sharpening their skills.

"The hardest part of filming is scheduling, and finding people who have the time to be in the films," said Jason Angelone, an independent director of Albany. "I'm dedicated, entering two or three films this year."

"Every day I'm in this business I learn more and more about how to make movies from other people who make films," said Chung. "It's stiff competition and it drives me to do better and make better films. It blows me away what they can make with really low-budget technology."

The festival attracts many names that have made it in Hollywood and have been a part of high-budget projects. Actor John Heder ("Napoleon Dynamite") who attended 2006, and screenwriter Mardik Martin ("Raging Bull," "Mean Streets") in 2008, have been a couple of those to make appearances at the SFF.

"Heder also attended some of the festival parties where the general public could mingle and likely get a better chance at talking (or, no, monopolize their time) with the

guy," said an article on the Associated Content website.

Submissions in the past have been due as early as February. They can fall into any of the six categories of narrative, documentary, short, animation, experimental, or international. For each submission a \$15 fee is required. As the current deadline has not been announced it's best to aim for early next year and keep an eye on the SFF Web site (<http://www.salemfilmfestival.com>) or join the mailing list to stay updated.

"I encourage filmmakers to do their best even within a short time, because it makes good practice and can help you to improve for the next year," said Chung. "If you have an idea, you need to get it out there."

The times and schedule have yet to be confirmed, so it's best for those interested to keep watch for updates. Attendees can choose to pay for a three-day pass in the range of \$75, buy a single-day pass that can be between \$35-60, or purchase tickets to the individual events or films for \$5-8.

Music profile: C-Sik

Kris Nelson
The Commuter

C-Sik, 22, lived in Pomona, Calif. until age 5 when he moved to Portland, Ore. He started rapping when he was 14, and at 17 he moved to Lincoln City, Ore. While he was going to Oregon State he started making beats. C-Sik started making songs in 2004, and he dropped out of college to pursue his dreams of music. After making mix tapes he gained much respect musically in Lincoln City.

C-Sik's 23 year-old buddy Norman, aka Lucky, is from San Bernardino, Calif., Lincoln City and Waldport, Ore. He told C-Sik he could rap and sing, and they made their first jam, "You can't see," in 2005. That's when C-Sik 'N' Lucky were born.

After making mix tapes and performing at parties for a couple years, C-Sik found out his girlfriend was pregnant so they moved to Portland for more opportunities. He was making music on his own for

a year until he met Junior through work. Junior, aka Lil Raskal, 27, is from Chicago and San Bernardino. C-Sik got Lucky to come up and record for Raskal's first track, "Playa 4 Life."

Halfway through the recording of their mix tape "Tha Promo," the group name Sik Individuals came together. They later shortened the name to Sik Ones. 'Tha promo' mix tape was completed at the end of 2007. Sik Ones then started selling mix tapes and performing at Studio 503 and car shows to promote their group.

After a 6 month break of C-Sik making beats, Sik Ones started back at it. They are currently completing the "Smoke Outz" mix tape, which is promoting their first album "Smoke Outz LP."

Their music consists of hustlin', slangin' weed, partying, playin' and everything in between. The influences of the group include 2pac, Mac Dre, Spice 1, Keak Da Sneak and Snoop Dog. Sik Ones are currently on C-Sik productions.

Vision Blurry?

LBCC Student Discount
at
Walmart Vision Center
3290 S. Santiam Hwy
in Lebanon
541-258-7251

10% off all eye exams and any complete pair of glasses or year supply of contacts

*Offer not valid with insurance. Must present student ID card at appointment.

Dr. Matt Knecht

Save money, eat well & reduce waste...

START SHOPPING IN BULK!

First Alternative
NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

Check out the Co-op's great prices on bulk salsa, hummus, spices, grains, pasta, instant soup and much more!

South Corvallis:
1007 SE 3rd
753-3115
Open 9-9 Daily

North Corvallis:
NW 29th & Grant
452-3115
7-9 Daily

Wouldn't it be great if the things you really needed in life were free?

If you were to become unexpectedly pregnant today, finding the right help shouldn't come with a price tag.

- Talk with someone who genuinely cares
- Get a confirmation pregnancy test
- Learn more about all available options

At Options Pregnancy Resource Centers we offer personalized care and resources that are absolutely **free, confidential** and **available** at just the right time—whenever you need them.

Since 1986, we're here for you.

 **options**
Pregnancy Resource Centers

possiblypregnant.org

Corvallis
867 NW 23rd St.
757.9645

Albany
409 1st Avenue W
924.0166

The Commuter

Editor-In-Chief: Gregory Dewar
Managing Editor: MaryAnne Turner
Newsroom Desk: 917-4451
E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Reviews, upcoming events,
and the cure for weekend boredom.

Four Christmases is three too many

Rick Casillas
The Commuter

Four Christmases stars Vince Vaughn and Reese Witherspoon as a successful San Francisco-based couple blissful in their avoidance of all things commitment, including regular visits to either parties' divorced parent's holiday gatherings. A monkey wrench gets thrown in their plans however when they get blindsided at the airport by a news camera, right after they're notified of the impending fog that has grounded their flight to paradise. And as is the way in movie land they are suddenly besieged by calls demanding their presence after their faces are aired on T.V.

The rest of the film follows the two as they dutifully drag their feet from one family disaster to the next, reliving the bullies and failings of their collective childhoods. Predictably a wedge is driven between the two, and as a result a slow methodical change of their initial attitudes is born out of

the revelations of their formative years, causing them to reflect on their own relationship and its eventual destination.

Did you note the way I used predictably in the last sentence? Well grow accustomed to it, because it will be a prevailing theme in this review. Not to say it was entirely bad; the central core of any half-decent romantic comedy is always the chemistry that emanates from the two lovebirds drawn together by circumstance and unconventional affection. Vaughn and Witherspoon's relationship was believable and endearing, snippets of a bigger background between the two being fed to the audience, lending some credibility to their coupling and the dialogue exchanged seemed natural and hauntingly familiar.

I wish I could say the same of the all star support cast, which touted names like Robert Duvall, Sissy Spacek, Jon Voight, and Mary Steenburgen. All delivered disappointingly one-dimensional sketches of characters beneath their abilities, mostly

serving as mirrors to bounce plot device and worn adages against. Most of the sight gags and low brow comedic passes come as no surprise as the story follows a linear progression nudged along by heavy handed messages centering around the value of family. A message I found somewhat contradictory considering the plentiful examples of appropriate reasons to avoid such gatherings provided throughout the film.

The two clans are born from generic comedy archetypes, with Vaughn's house comprising of white trash UFC wrestler brothers encouraged by a gruff misogynistic father who mocks Vaughn's "big city" lifestyle and misinterprets his benevolence as pity. We later see the other half of the split is a hippie mother that bakes special brownies, burns incense, and takes a younger partner; who in an admittedly amusing twist is apparently Vaughn's childhood friend, hell bent on being a father figure to his estranged former buddy. Witherspoon

fares little better, her mother a man-hungry cougar enamored with an Episcopalian preacher, and her pushy sister dispenses unwanted advice between breast feedings. Witherspoon's father, played by Jon Voight, was the only character not relegated to cartoon-like status as he served as a transitional figure at the serious turn near the end of the film.

Always on the cusp of becoming an R rated Judd Apatowesque romp, *Four Christmases* instead stumbles through one promising premise after another, knocking over lights and falling off of roofs on cue, giving the film a static feel.

The unfortunate decision to center on a tenuous storyline rather than giving in to the otherwise enjoyable and witty dialogue is a dominant cog in the machine of this film's failure. Instead of giving it the freedom of unpredictability that we see spark up from some of Vaughn's better moments, such as his pronounced and enthusiastic representation of Joseph

in the nativity scene, or Witherspoon's berserker rage being unleashed on children as she palms and throws them against the walls of the moon bounce; we are instead subjected to the slow gradual decline of a lackluster story arc that feels unenthusiastic and forced. An arc that once brought to its predictable conclusion leaves little satisfaction, and sense of splayed misdirection that guides the film as it tries to be several things at once, ultimately only doing a half-assed job at any of them.

Four Christmases is a light comedy, that if entered upon with few expectations will meet them in spades. To say it is without merit would be unfair, but the moments of pleasure are cleverly rationed through the film ensuring that if you go in starved you will only be hungry in the end. If I had some kind of crazy star based rating system I would give it two out of five, but I don't, so find an object near you that you have five of and use your imagination.

Sports profile: baseball coach

JJ Oliveros
For The Commuter

Before meeting the head baseball coach, I patiently waited my turn. As I was outside the office I noticed the numerous news articles along the wall, most of which recognize the achievements of LBCC's baseball program. After five minutes of waiting, I noticed there was no talking in the office. I then poked my head into the office to see if the coach was in there.

"Hey there", said the man behind a desk with scattered papers on it, making it tough to recognize whether the desk was made of wood or metal.

Distracted by his montage wall of past baseball teams, chairs with baseball seat covers, and even pictures of former minor leaguers that played under him, I

could hardly concentrate on him without my eyes wandering around the collage.

Greg Hawk has been coaching the Roadrunners and teaching at LBCC for over 25 years. He has sent numerous players on to universities, the draft, and even the "big show". Hawk also has been a mentor to many different people through LBCC. Besides coaching, Hawk teaches a variety of classes ranging from P.E. to first aid, and of course the student favorite bowling. On a daily basis Hawk encounters many things from talking to players and students, teaching, coaching, and even the occasional friend who stops by to talk. Sitting in his office it was easy to see how busy he was, answering questions, e-mailing, and grading papers.

"Hawk is an amazing influence. He encourages us to work hard and give nothing short of our best, and I think that

is what a winning program needs" said Jake Likewise, freshman recruit.

Playing ball as a kid when it was hit off a tee, Hawk has been around the game of baseball for a very long time. Some of his earliest memories are of shagging baseballs for his father's baseball team, or taking batting practice with that team. Hawk planned on coaching after his baseball career ended which was at a Division II school named Northwestern Missouri State.

"I have always known I wanted to coach, probably since I started high school", Hawk said.

Sitting and just talking about "the game", we exchanged our most memorable highlights. A major highlight of Hawk's was when he saw a team of his achieve more than they thought they could.

Having had the opportunity to watch Hawk while coaching fall ball, it was easy to see that his passion is baseball. He was always willing to answer questions or give the encouraging word to those in need of them during my fall ball opportunity.

As a former college athlete, his competitiveness has not worn off. Right after league play ends, the recruiting process starts, and Hawk gets as many people as he can, from Alaska to Australia. To make the team, everyone competes against each other, making it more competitive to earn the spot.

Students and players know him for either his professionalism, friendliness, or to some his driving to away games.

Coach Hawk plans to be around baseball and mentoring a while longer. "I am 55 and I still feel real young."

GMOs: Good, bad, or just ugly?

Tyler Caskey
For The Commuter

From the creation of the first genetically modified organisms (GMO), there has been a lot of controversy surrounding the subject: Will GMOs help or harm humans?

Much of this debate involves GMO companies advocating that products such as rice with built-in Vitamin A that can help prevent blindness in 100 million children suffering from Vitamin A deficiency, or apples with a vaccine against a virus

that causes childhood pneumonia, reported Kerryn Sakko, a student of Adelaide University. On the other side, people don't really know any long-term effects of GMOs or if consuming them could cause illness. It is important for people to know the pros and cons of GMOs and the possible effects they could cause to humans.

Jonathon Rauch from "Atlantic Monthly" states that already in the USA 60 percent of processed foods in supermarkets have a GM ingredient,

Jim Dobis from the First Al-

terative Co-op in Corvallis said, "The only way to guarantee that products don't have a GMO in them is for them to be certified organic."

People still don't know if proteins made from the foreign genes will be directly toxic to humans and it's hard for consumers or retailers to tell if a GM ingredient has been used in products.

"When a lot of manufactures receive product, such as soybeans, they don't necessarily know where those beans came from." They could be grown

locally in the USA, or possibly in foreign countries.

A lot of questions that critics have have been brought to the table. For example, Jane Goodall, author of "A Harvest for Hope," suggests that GM foods will do harm more insidiously, by hastening the spread of antibiotic resistance in disease-causing bacteria. No one knows how prevalent this may be.

Meanwhile, researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology's Institute for Plant Sciences say that most of the companies performing safety

tests on GM crops are the same companies producing these crops, automatically creating a huge bias.

An international task force has been set up to try and get rid of all GMOs or answer many of these unknown questions.

Dobis said, "The Institute of Food Technology is leading this taskforce and they are slowly making reforms such as not testing new GMI in produce." Dobis is a strong supporter of all-natural, organic foods.

The Commuter
Editor-In-Chief: Gregory Dewar
Opinion Editor: Brandon Goldner
Newsroom Desk: 917-4451

opinion

Submissions to The Commuter:
E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu
Drop-in: Forum 222
 Please sign and keep to 300 words or less.

“Barack the Magic Negro”

Brandon Goldner
 The Commuter

Republican Chip Saltsman wants to be the next chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC), a position that may shape the tone and tenor of his entire party's message and strategy. The main goal for the Republicans following the 2008 elections will be to use that message to bring back certain demographics who've felt alienated by the divisiveness and “do anything at any cost” attitude the GOP leadership has employed since the late 1960's, and more aggressively the last eight years.

Knowing this, the 40-year old Saltsman thought it would be a good idea to send a CD full of parody songs, one of which is titled “Barack the Magic Negro,” to members of the RNC.

He now finds himself on the defensive, as many are ruffled by the inference that our next President was called a “magic negro” by a man wanting to become the leader of the second-most influential political party in the country. “Liberal Democrats and their allies in the media didn't utter a word about David Ehrenstein's irresponsible column,” Chip Saltsman said. “But now, of course, they're shocked and appalled by its parody on the Rush Limbaugh Show.”

To discuss how much validity a Limbaugh broadcast merits would be a waste of time, but it is important to consider what Saltsman's actions (and his claim of a double-standard) mean for America.

Ehrenstein works for the LA Times, and in 2007 he wrote an article which, for the first three quarters, ran through instances of the “magic negro” in pop culture, from Sydney Potier in “Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,” to Michael Clarke Duncan in “The Green Mile.” According to Ehrenstein, who admits he gleaned his definition from Wikipedia, a “magic negro” is a figure that comes out of nowhere to either help a white protagonist, or to assuage that protagonist's guilt. He

concluded his article by saying that most of the attacks against Obama at the time were those of being too articulate, drawing too many people to his rallies, and receiving criticism with grace without resolving to mudslinging. The last sentences summed up his sentiment when he argued that he isn't even “real,” for “if he were real, white America couldn't project all its fantasies of curative black benevolence on him.”

What Ehrenstein meant by “real” wasn't that Obama was somehow phony; it was to say that “real,” as we've come to believe it, means to be damaged. His argument was that if Obama were less gifted or somehow flawed, then he could not serve as a catalyst for changing the way this country views people with skin colors other than medium-pale beige. On one level, the article criticizes Obama for being inauthentic, but on another which resonates just as strongly, you're left with the impression that to attack him in 2007 would have been to latch on to the only thing you had to work with – his strengths – because he simply hadn't shown any viable weaknesses.

We've since seen that there were issues to attack, and his opponents took advantage. His resistance to the Iraq surge, his relationship with a racially inflammatory pastor, his marked inexperience – all of these issues worked against Obama's favor.

But the initial discrepancy between what was an asset and what was a detriment to his character is not a bad thing. In fact it's very good that, even on a national stage, a person would avoid criticism simply for lack of rhetorical cannon fodder. The article that Saltsman called “irresponsible” is actually praise for the man.

With respect to Saltsman's decision to include the CD titled, “We Hate the USA” in the gift basket to RNC members, it's clear that he didn't do so to stoke the flames of racism and fear which licked at the heels of McCain/Palin rallies over the fall. It's also clear that he didn't think about the consequences, and that “Barack the Magic Negro,” along with the other right-wing

parody songs, was only meant to be a joke between friends.

But that's exactly what makes it so disturbing.

If Saltsman and others like him enjoy a laugh at the word “negro” and don't believe that it's anything to think twice about, it should serve as a warning sign to Republicans whose base has eroded in the midst of demographic shifts not seen since the christening of Ellis Island. Whites are slowly losing their majority. Good-ol-boy words and phrases, which went from being the norm, to being unashamedly flaunted, to being proudly protected in a little more than 100 years, are now on the verge of becoming unthinkable utterances for the average American.

This isn't to mention the name of the CD (insinuating that if you aren't a Republican, you hate the country), or the other songs like “The John Edwards Poverty Tour” and “The Star Spanglish Banner.” Making fun of poverty, an affliction inexplicable for a nation with as much wealth as ours, or the constituents who are, in large part, responsible for getting the food we eat to our table (and will one day become the racial majority in America), are very stupid moves. They show a Republican party in the waning phases of influence, whose fear-mongering and exclusion, which carried them for so long, will become the reason for their downfall.

But to them, it's acceptable. The price for remaining relevant on the national stage is not one Republicans are prepared to pay, for to stay representative of the majority of voting Americans would mean to embrace qualities of their Democratic colleagues which have long been mocked: Sensitivity to social climates, being adaptable to changing trends, and becoming champions of causes for oppressed people.

As long as Republicans defend their Jim Crow-era punch lines as the standard for coaxing a cheap laugh from their base, they will find themselves further from the present, aimlessly drifting toward the past where they may become forgotten history.

The Borg stole my winter

Gregory Dewar
 The Commuter

Winter's broken. Or at least I think it is. I'm not entirely convinced that it happened. You see I hear people talk about “bad weather a few weeks back” and there's this cold business. But my heater keeps my house at a sultry 72 degrees year-round. So what really happened?

The last thing I remember, and I have

a fairly good memory, was a sunny day in early December when I looked out the window before loading up World of Warcraft. Now it's a sunny day in early January. Clearly there has been some sort of time dilation, some sort of anomaly that has sapped winter, my favorite time of year, out from under me. Dark forces are at work, my friends, beings of penultimate evil who seek to take our very time from us. Time, the most finite thing in our lives, the very

essence of our life force!

Obviously these first hand accounts are forced memories due to mind control. There never was a winter this year. Mind control so insidious that it could only be the Borg. The Borg are taking over and resistance is futile. It's the 23rd century already, right? With our current level of technology we can never hope to fend them off. So why bother? Let's join the Borg revolution, give me a saw for an arm and a laser on my

head, I'm all about it. And assuming that the Borg aren't the true saboteurs of winter, never having to sleep, just regenerating for a few hours means that these...“time pirates” will no longer be able to steal my winters. And since Borg can time travel, if they try, I'll just go back in time and fuck them up. Of course if it is the Borg, I'm sure my mechanization won't miss winter, anyway.

Captain Rick: fashion on the high seas

Rick Casillas
 The Commuter

Oh sweet tender illiteracy how I long for you, days past where I pointed at pretty pictures and imagined their meaning. I feel creatively exhausted as my last reserves have been dedicated to writing essays and speeches. I think the quality of life could be greatly enhanced if I were to revert back to the childlike innocence of pawing the T.V. screen while I watched Sesame Street and stuffed my face with graham crackers.

But im a big college boy now, time to man up and pick a real subject for this article. Its got to be something fantastic...something topical...something like...pirates! Yes I know, you thought the day wouldn't come, but it has. Pirates have made their eventual come-back to the world, taking pot-shots at passing cruise ships and bring-

ing words like scurvy back into the vernacular of mainstream society. Just say it once out loud. “Scurvy.” It's enough to make you want to gouge out an eye and buy a parrot.

Apparently I'm not the only one taking an interest. In an article in the Washington Post, a journalist talks about her quest to actually find a pirate and interview him.

Chalk this up to another reason to become a journalist: it's a stepping stone to my ultimate goal of joining a pirate crew. I know what you're thinking. I'd make one hell of a first mate, thanks for the compliment. But piracy isn't all fun and games. There's serious business to be had, and I'll be implementing measures to ensure I get picked first when they're making pirate teams at recess.

First, I've got to come up with a cool name. Logic demands it be one part awesome coupled with another part appendage or item

of clothing. So far the short list consists of such worthy submissions as Deckswab Whiskypants or First Mate Sandlehand. Any one of them could be heard on the high seas of Somalia, so it has to strike fear in the hearts of my enemies. That's why I've decided to pick a sweet middle name so that I can alternate it once I make captain (an inevitability with my pirate know-how and cool American aloofness), like Captain Inyourface, or Captain Bloodeverywhere.

What about weapons? Well, I'm a modern pirate to be sure, so I decided on a blunderbuss. Sleek and stylish at a mere two to three feet, the blunderbuss is the pirate's choice weapon for the man on the go. Featuring a mahogany stock inlaid with rare silvers, this is a gun that says, “Hey, I'm a time traveler that can't find my ship, can you help me?” Just the reaction I'm hoping to get out of the public.

And with a mere 2 minutes or so of reloading time I'll be ready to shoot at Saudi oil tankers and cruise ships whenever the need arises.

Unfortunately, its harder to find a cutlass than one might think in this day and age, what with the man getting down on you every time you wander about in public grasping a melee weapon and shouting obscenities at people in the mall. And no matter how much you explain we wouldn't HAVE this problem if they would just let me keep my employee discount at Big Town Heroes, the thing always gets confiscated. I MEAN ALL I WANT IS A SANDWICH OK?! IS THAT TOO MUCH?! NO, I DON'T THINK IT IS. No matter, because I won't have these kind of issues with fascist America once I'm a pirate.

As far as looks go I've been hanging out in the Apple store in Corvallis, to study the expertise of their clientele, and master the

scruffy hipster look that is sure to resonate with my sordid crew. I'm going to buy a big coat, with lots of pockets for booty (that's pirate for diamonds I think) and gold doubloons. I'll be sporting a Tri-point hat as well, which may make my fellow sea farers uncomfortable at first, as it is sure to remind them of British privateers charged with their capture. But after the initial tension disperses, I'm certain it will become a distinguishing feature that will only assist with my slow climb up the corporate plank.

Until that fateful day when I find myself aboard a ship, I will hone my skills attacking small passing vessels, or “cars” if you will, hoping to lose a leg. But enough writing. There's piracy to be had! If you need me I'll be at Disneyland practicing on the rides. Captain Ragingthyroid OUT!