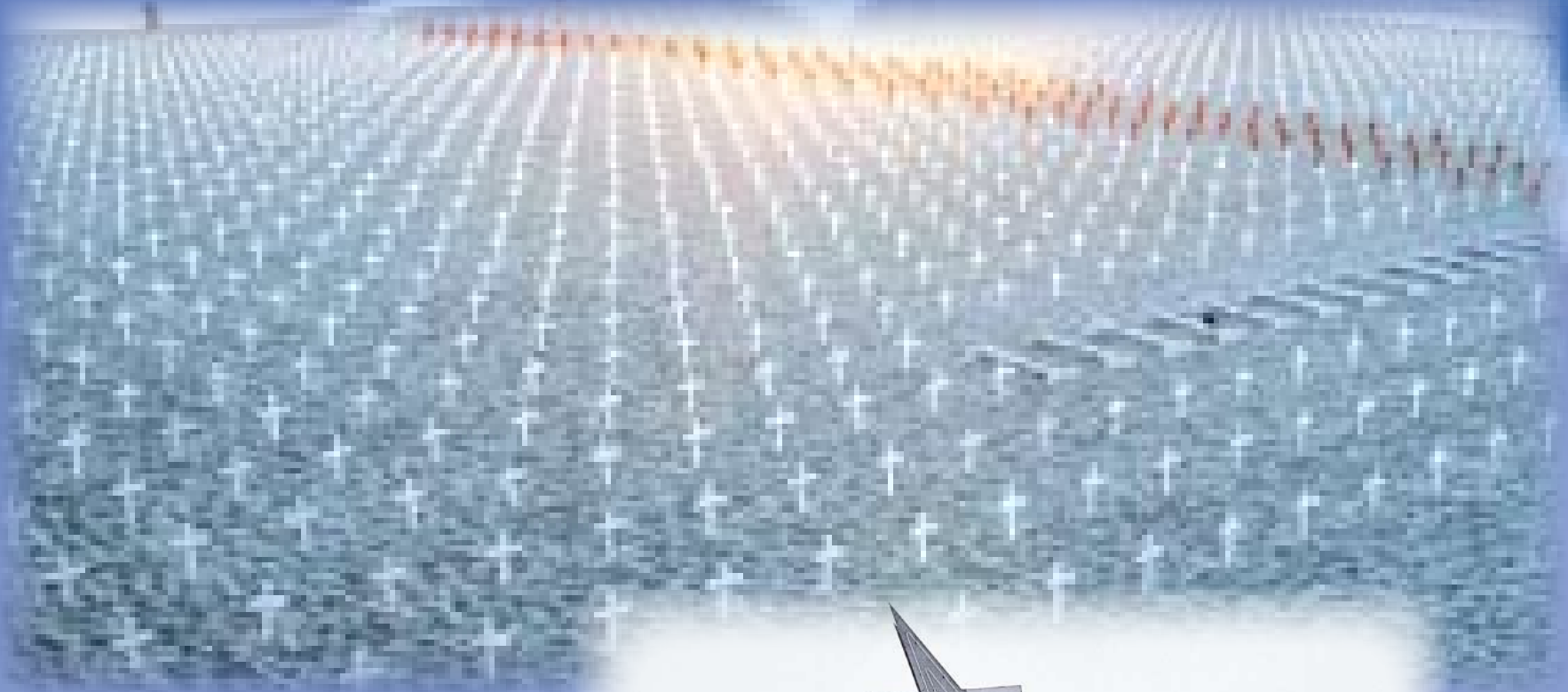


THE COMM

Wednesday,
January 21, 2009

Linn-Benton Community



MUTER

College, Albany, Oregon

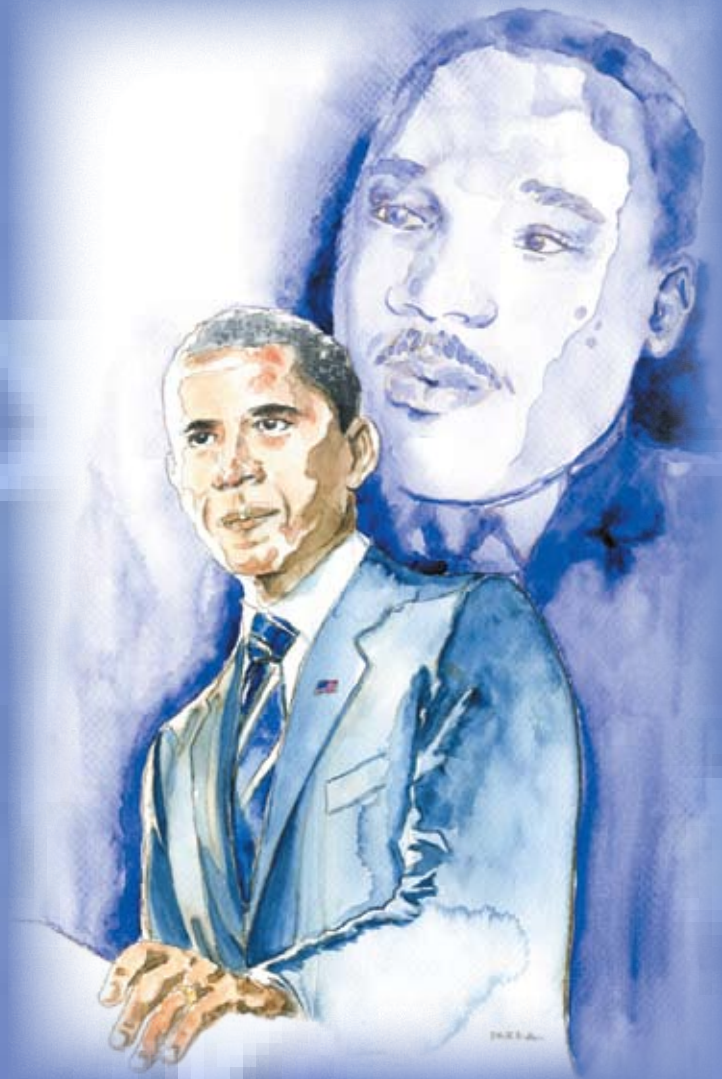
Volume 40 No. 13

Changing of the guard...finally.

Gain Change Along the Way

And too
 I do believe
 in the powerful felicity
 of art
 ...the way it makes you
 draw breath and
 share—mindful—
 some new experience of language:
 world change.
 It reaches people unexpectedly
 and people—lovely!—gain.
 “—I thought I'd never live
 to see the day...”
 they say because the struggle's not yet
 over
 exquisite moment, savor
 borne of common ground,
 and people people people
 —wonderful!—
 made new by goodness newly made.

-taken from a Jan. 29th, 2009 CNN interview
 with Elizabeth Alexander



Endless war carried upon the backs of the people. Hope for our new president to end it. The war of civil rights, to which a giant leap toward quelling was taken yesterday. Bush's oppression: people left their shoes in front of the White House in protest. And finally, the happiness on the faces of people as they look optimistically toward the future. It took forty years to get from Martin Luther King Jr. to President Obama, but the American people did it. This cover tackles many current and antiquated issues in our most recent history. Some sorrow, some joy. All of this overlaid symbolically on the changing of the guard of our country.

Design and compilation by Gregory Dewar



The Commuter

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

LOCAL NEWS

Community news about the mid-Willamette Valley, including Albany, Lebanon, and Corvallis.

Dear Linn-Benton Community College Students,

The Associated Student Government elections are here! If you think you might be interested in getting some of your tuition paid for, meeting new people, becoming active on campus, advocating for your fellow students, learning more about leadership, making change happen, challenging yourself, or just want to have fun, then ASG just might be for YOU! With eight different positions to choose from, President, Vice President, PR Secretary, Business Representative, Humanities Representative, Health Occupations Representative, Science and Technology Representative, and Student Services and Education Representative, I am positive you can find a position that will make a great fit for you!

Depending on the position you may run for, you are required to spend 3 to 5 hours in Student Life and Leadership each week but with the ability to set your own schedule I am sure you can find time for this in between your classes. I know I have. Still not sure if ASG is for you? Come visit with current officers on January 28th in the Siletz room (next to the cafeteria) and let us answer any questions or concerns that you may have! Applications are available TODAY in SL&L next

to Hot Shot Coffee House!

The Associated Student Government and Student Programming Board have proposed some changes to our current constitutions and bylaws. The SPB is proposing that under Article VIII Section A, striking out "Multicultural Activities Coordinator" and be replaced with "Publicity Coordinator". Under the same article and section striking out "one (1) specialist in each of the following areas: campus and recreation, health and recreation, series events, -center events, -political activities and intramural sports" be replaced with "six additional board members". The ASG is proposing under Article V Section A, the addition of "Arts and" to the beginning of Humanities.

We will be holding hearings for students to come and ask questions or express any concerns they may have about the proposed changes in the SL&L January 21st and 28th from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Students will be allowed to vote on the proposed changes in the upcoming ASG elections.

Sincerely,
 Hannah Gzik
 President
 Associated Student Government
 asgpres@linnbenton.edu

LBCC's own attending inauguration

Blair McMackin
 The Commuter

On Jan. 20, 2009, Barack Obama was inaugurated into the office of the U.S. presidency. This tremendously historic event was witnessed by two LBCC teachers and three LBCC students who were lucky enough to be there in person.

Robert Harrison, Callie Palmer, Amanda Halama, Toni Snow, and Randy Herron attended the inauguration. I had the chance to sit down with Harrison and Palmer to get some information on their adventure.

When I asked Harrison, one of the college's history teachers, what he believes Obama would do for the United States, he replied, "First I believe that he will pass a big stimulus package to give the country a boost

and help turn the economy around. He will help lead the green revolution. Obama has his goals, but will be willing to compromise to get things done." Harrison also said, "I've been so disappointed at the last eight years. That's why Obama is so exciting." I asked Harrison how he felt about Bush and he replied, "I don't think he was capable of doing the job." It's easy to see the mess that's been left for Obama, but thankfully this is America, where as long as we have the proper leadership we'll have a chance to turn ourselves around.

When I sat down with Callie Palmer, the LBCC faculty consultant for multicultural issues, she talked about how the events of U.S. history affected Obama's chances to win the presidency. For example, Martin Luther

King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech was a huge step in the right direction. However, Palmer did state, "I don't think we've reached post-racial politics like the pundits claim".

Not only is Obama's inauguration exciting enough, but he's got a great cabinet of top advisors that he's bringing with him. "Hillary Clinton is a great choice for secretary of state," said Harrison. Palmer was also excited for Joe Biden, whose wife was a community college teacher as well. "She will help us out," said Palmer in reference to LBCC and community colleges around the nation.

There will be a presentation held by Dr. Harrison, Palmer, Halama, Snow, and Herron sometime in late February, though an exact date has not yet been set up.

Classifieds

They just make cents. Place an ad today with The Commuter at commuterads@linnbenton.edu

Deadline: Ads accepted by 5 p.m. Friday will appear in the following Wednesday issue. Ads will appear only once per submission. If you wish a particular ad to appear in successive issues, you must resubmit it.

Cost: Ads that do not solicit for a private business are free to students, staff and faculty. All others are charged at a rate of 10 cents per word, payable when the ad is accepted.

Personals: Ads placed in the "Personals" category are limited to one ad per advertiser per week; no more than 50 words per ad.

Libel/Taste: The Commuter will not knowingly publish material that treats individuals or groups in an unfair manner. Any advertisement judged libelous or in poor taste by the newspaper editorial staff will be rejected.

Help Wanted:

Census Takers (#6951, our local area) 2009 is a census year and the government is already hiring people. Become a census taker by calling toll-free 1-866-861-2010! You have to call to be tested. Pay is \$14-18/hr DOE.

Crater Lake Summer Jobs (#7062, Oregon) Time to start thinking about summer jobs!! Beautiful place to work for the summer!!

Medical Transcriptionist (#7069, Corvallis)

If you have completed Transcription training and one year of experience or education, this is your job! The hours are on call and schedule varies. \$9.95-12/hr

Mastercam Programmer/CAD Tech (#7067, Salem)

This full-time position wants college-level courses in Mastercam & CAD. 2-year degree preferred. \$30-33,000/year starting.

Other Stuff:

Pregnant? Free pregnancy test. Information on options. Non-pressured. Confidential.

Options Pregnancy Resource Center.
 Corvallis 757-9645. Albany 924-0166.

www.possiblypregnant.org

CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY TRAINING PROGRAM. Become a Certified Hypnotherapist. The Howard L. Hamilton School of Hypnotism will take you from basic through advanced in 20 lessons in a time frame that is convenient for you. Upon completion, you are qualified for membership or certification the The National Guild of Hypnotists and The Oregon Hypnotherapy Association. Pay as you go at \$75.00 per lesson. (541) 327-3513

Front Cover Credits:

Top Left: "(pause)" by (kevindooley)

Bottom Left: Protesters from Code Pink and other groups hope to send a parting shot to the Bush administration by throwing their shoes, on Monday, January 19, 2009, a day before the the 56th Presidential Inaugural near the White House in Washington D.C. (Gabriel B. Tate/MCT)

Top Right: 300 dpi SW Parra color portrait of Democrat Presidential nominee Barack Obama shadowed by the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (The Fresno Bee 2008)

Left Middle: Standing in front of the former Lorraine Motel, the site of Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination

on April 4, 1968, Memphis sanitation workers Elmore Nickelberry, 76, center, and his son, Terrence, left, hold a replica of the placard used by strikers in Memphis, Tennessee. (Carl Juste/ Miami Herald/MCT)

Bottom Middle: People celebrate before President Obama's inauguration. (MCT)

Background: Changing of the Guard. This is a patriotic, symbolic, and historic collage of photos of what's behind the presidential inauguration ceremony. George W. Bush is handing over the reins to Barack Obama on January 20, 2009, Inauguration Day. by (BL1961)

THE COMMUTER'S STAFF

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

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The Commuter encourages readers to use its "Opinion" pages to express their views on campus, community, regional and national issues. Letters should be limited to 300 words or less. The Commuter attempts to print all letters received, but reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, libel, privacy concerns and taste. Opinions expressed by letter writers do not represent the views of The Commuter Staff or the College. Deliver letters to The Commuter Office, Forum 222 or at commuter@ml.linnbenton.edu

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 Managing Editor: MaryAnne Turner
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 E-mail: commuter@linnbenton.edu

SURREAL LIVING

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

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Light wood
 - 6 English bloke
 - 10 Fortas and Lincoln
 - 14 Fictional ID
 - 15 Top-drawer
 - 16 Anthracite, e.g.
 - 17 Frolics
 - 18 Mooring place
 - 19 Schlep
 - 20 Nautically nauseous
 - 22 Brought into harmony
 - 24 D.C. VIP
 - 25 Gets more profound
 - 26 Oscar-winning Italian director
 - 30 European eagle
 - 31 Actress Falco
 - 32 Blast letters
 - 34 Tension
 - 39 Move slyly
 - 41 Long period
 - 43 Inasmuch as
 - 44 Hussein of Iraq
 - 46 Director Craven
 - 48 Fine, black stuff
 - 49 Viscous liquid
 - 51 Certifies under oath
 - 53 Lie back
 - 57 Pekoe, e.g.
 - 58 Edmond and Conan
 - 59 Renowned
 - 64 Spirit
 - 65 Stiff collar
 - 67 Dike
 - 68 500-mile race
 - 69 Antisocial
 - 70 Wipe out
 - 71 Sense organs
 - 72 Risked getting a ticket
 - 73 Things to avoid

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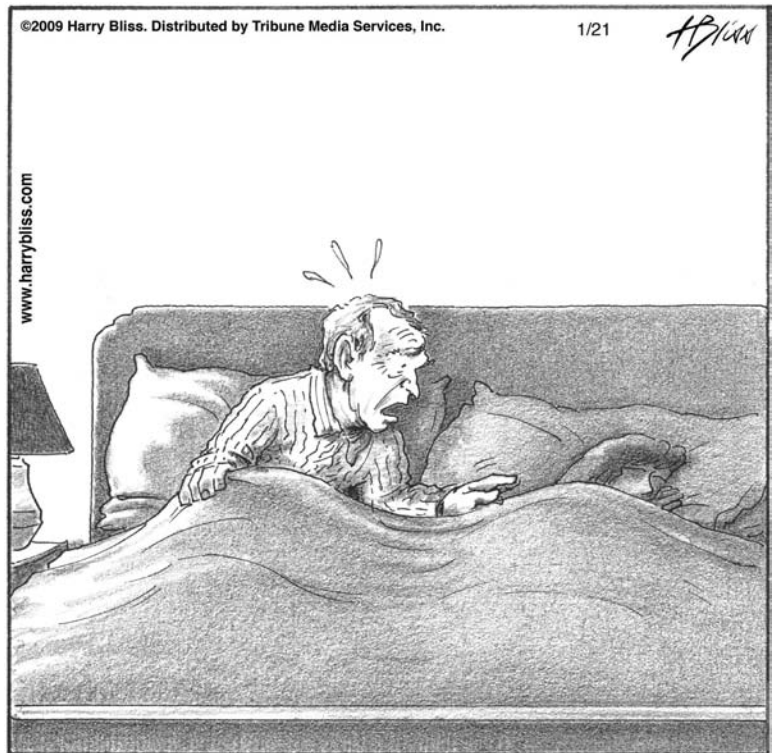
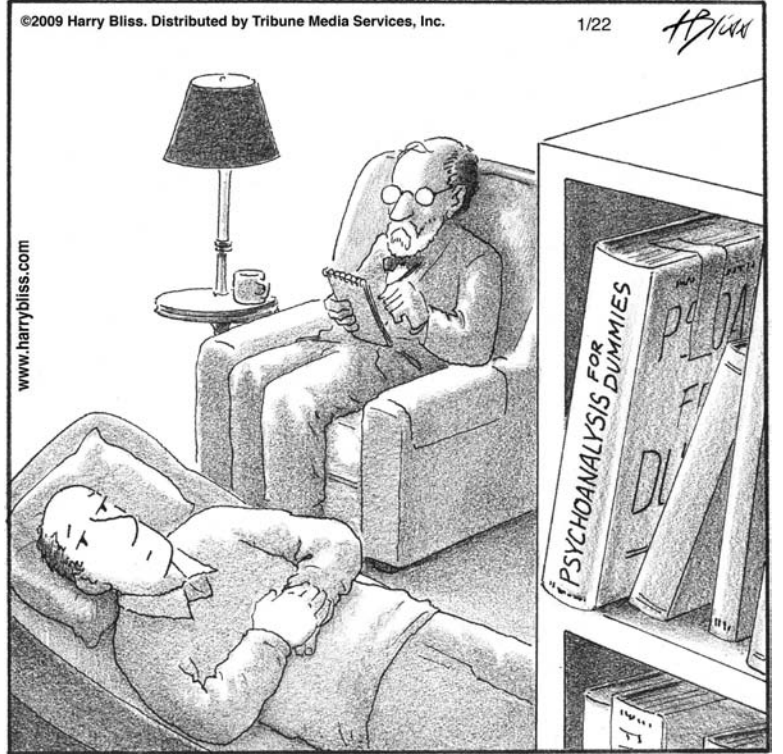
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1/21/09

- DOWN**
- 1 Obstacles
 - 2 Soap additive
 - 3 Succotash bean
 - 4 Drains
 - 5 Italian pilgrimage site
 - 6 Second half of a golf course
 - 7 Australian joey
 - 8 Cross a border
 - 9 Rocks on the edge
 - 10 Throw a scene
 - 11 American frontiersman
 - 12 Rusted through
 - 13 Toboggans
 - 21 Smallest change
 - 23 Camping equipment
 - 26 ___ up (admit)
 - 27 "Giant" writer Ferber
 - 28 Made stuff up
 - 29 Star part
 - 33 Pull behind
 - 35 Float up
 - 36 Adam's grandson
 - 37 Highlander
 - 38 Collectors' groups
 - 40 Couric of TV
 - 42 Made tidy
 - 45 Good behavior
 - 47 Pipe part
 - 50 Conserve one's strength
 - 52 Followed
 - 53 Comic/actress O'Donnell
 - 54 Black
 - 55 Rough
 - 56 Tomlin and Pons
 - 60 Notorious fiddler
 - 61 Bayh or Hunter
 - 62 Snug spot
 - 63 Golf shop giveaways
 - 66 Keats piece

Solutions

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A	B	E				R	I	T		S					



"Laura! Laura! Wake up - I just had the worst nightmare!"

MoreOnTV

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Valentine's Day Flower Sale

Show people your appreciation & affection!
 Flowers will be delivered on campus February 12 between 8 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Who: YOU!
What: Buying flowers for your loved ones or co-workers
When: Jan. 29 - Feb. 11, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: Student Life & Leadership Office (1st floor, Student Union)
How much: \$2 for one flower or \$10 for six flowers

Linn-Benton COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 LBCC is an equal opportunity institution.

Sponsored by the LBCC Student Programming Board.

Tuxedos provided by Mr. Formal

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.

The Weekly Burger: the publication inside a publication!

James Scales
The Commuter

There are not enough of the most delicious patty-shaped meat-stack creations; the mouthwateringest, tastiest, and (insert word here meaning so fantastic it can't be described in one word) creations known to man (or at least me, but its only me who matters because I have the column). So, I bring to you a weekly burger! (Also available online with more pictures!)

Spammy Breakfast Burger

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef (if you grind it yourself, more power to you)
 - 1/3 cup soy sauce (Kikkoman is my style, not too dark but powerful enough)
 - Salt, pepper (optional: black peppercorns)
 - 3-4 tablespoons whole butter (unsweetened is best)
 - 1/2 can o' Spam
 - 3 whole eggs
 - 6 slices of cheddar (I had nice medium Cheddar atop mine)
 - 6 slices whole wheat bread
- Optional: ketchup and mayonnaise

Procedure

In a metal bowl, put your ground beef and form a small well in the center, then pour in your soy sauce. Fold the meat and fully incorporate your soy sauce. Crack some black peppercorns over the top of it, just enough to form a light layer of black specks across the surface. Incorporate. Form into three balls and, while not pressing hard, form them into patties.

In any pan you have big enough to fit them, drop in about a half stick butter with medium heat. As soon as the butter is at the point right before being completely melted, lay in your patties. While the patties are cooking, just let them be, don't fuss with them at all and they will be happy to sit there and sizzle away. If your pan is too hot and you start to see flecks of flame from the frying butter, knock the heat of your stovetop down just a touch.

Now is a good time to get the rest of your prep done. Grab your can of Spam and slice off half of it, throw the other half covered into the fridge (you wouldn't want to waste it). Make six slices about a 1/4 inch thick. Scoot the SPAM to the edge of your NONPOROUS (NOT wood, preferably plastic or other laminates) cutting board and let them be. Check your burgers, and if you are getting nice caramelization, then it's time to flip. If not, it won't be too much longer. Slice your six pieces of cheese. Give your burgers about three minutes per side, depending on how thick you left them. The center should be a little pink at this point.

Now it's time for the transport device, otherwise known

as bread. I usually will go for a bun above all else, but this is a nice burger for toast. Smother your burgers with ONE slice of cheese each and start cycling your bread through your toaster. By now the burgers should be done, or dang close to it, and your bread should halfway finished. Lay one burger with nice, melty cheese on each piece of bread.



Throw in your Spam slices and turn up your burner to the lower end of high. Let it cook and get a nice browned color, similar to bacon, on both sides, pull it off and lay two pieces on each burger topped with cheese. Then here comes the hardest part of this burger. Crack the three eggs into a pan, trying to keep them separate, and break their yolks. They will cook rather quickly and most

likely stick to your pan. To prevent the sticking, throw down another tablespoon of butter. Pull 'em off and stack on your meaty-cheesy pile. As far as condiments go for this one, a very light layer of mayo and some ketchup will do you just great. Stack that last piece of toast on each of your burgers, and enjoy.

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January 28

Linn Benton Community College Transfer Day

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- 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

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OSUcascades.edu

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

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Northwest Christian University announces a new competitive scholarship for transfer students with a 3.5 transferable GPA or higher. \$2000 per year, guaranteed renewable. Find out more and apply by visiting www.northwestchristian.edu/admissions/Transfers.

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opinion

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

Fired up and ready to go end poverty

Charles Sheketoff
 For The Commuter

The morning after the election, I watched a video of Barack Obama telling how, on a rainy morning last June, Edith Childs of Greenwood, South Carolina, energized a room full of people with her chant, "Fired up! Ready to go!" The chant became a signature of the Obama campaign.

With the chant still echoing in my head, I turned to a blog post by an advocate I've admired for years, John Bouman, who is president of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. Noting that "the State of Poverty is America's most populated state — 37 million people," the Shriver Center recommended a 12-point plan to confront poverty.

In reading over the Shriver Center plan, I realized how relevant it is not just to the new Obama administration but also to the new Oregon legislature.

About one in eight Oregonians today lives below the federal poverty line, which is the same share as 40 years ago. If assembled in one place, Oregon's poor would comprise the state's second largest city, bigger than Eugene and Salem combined.

Those numbers may seem depressing, but the Shriver Center's plan got me fired up and ready to go.

Here is the Shriver Center's 12-point plan and the steps Oregon's 2009 legislature can take to tackle each of them head on:

Strengthen the Legal Foundation for Civil Rights and Racial Justice. Improving access to lawyers for our poor would help strengthen the legal foundation for civil rights and racial justice.

Establish Affordable Quality Health Care for All. The legislature should breathe life back into the Oregon Health Plan so that it can get closer to its goal of coverage for all working poor adults. Add to that expanding coverage to all Oregon children and we would at least be making progress toward affordable health coverage for all.

Guarantee Economic Safety for People with Employment Challenges. Oregon's unemployment insurance system needs to be brought into the 21st century by adding coverage for part-time and contingent workers. We also need to enact paid sick leave and family leave insurance.

Invest in the Public Good Through Fair Budget and Tax Policies. The state's revenue shortfall threatens critical public structures. This revenue problem must be met with a revenue solution, not cuts to vital public services.

Preserving our Nation's Rental Housing. We should realign our public investments in housing to support affordable rental and owner-occupied homes. The legislature should redirect resources that now subsidize wealthy individuals who purchase large homes to poor and near-poor families who do not have the affordable housing they need to allow them to succeed in life.

Create Redemptive Opportunities for People with Criminal Records. Voters said "no" to a draconian "lock 'em up" scheme on the November ballot. The legislature should respond by providing treatment and job training opportunities that help reduce violence and recidivism and increase community safety.

Increase Economic Mobility Through Lifelong Education. Intel has noted that one reason the company moved to Oregon in the 1970s was Oregon's "K-life education system." Investment in an education-for-life system, from preschool through adult education, would enhance economic mobility for Oregonians.

Link Economic Development to Workforce Development Opportunities. Our economic development practices need transparency and accountability so that we do not squander resources on jobs that pay little and offer few benefits. We also can't afford to give more tax breaks to businesses that lay off their Oregon workers and leave the state.

Advance Low-Wage Workers by Making Work Pay. It's time to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit to make work pay for low-wage workers with children.

Build and Protect Assets for Financial Stability and Growth. We can make sure people being assisted in public benefits programs are allowed to acquire assets, and we can develop mechanisms so more Oregonians can save for retirement.

Protect Access to the American Dream for Immigrants and Refugees. All Oregonians ultimately pay more for health care when we deny health care to people because of their immigration status. Barring college doors for undocumented students penalizes innocent victims of a failed immigration system and destroys the American Dream.

Ensure Economic Opportunity and Safety for Women and Girls. We should build safer and more affordable housing for victims of sexual and domestic violence, create a better trained workforce in the childcare industry and develop a more affordable childcare system.

These goals are achievable. I'm now "Fired up! Ready to go!" confront poverty. Are you?



Protesters rally against the Israeli invasion of Gaza at OSU.

(Irrelevant to story)

Photo by Angela Lemhouse

Winter 2009 Academic Success Seminars

Sign up on SIS or drop in!

FREE

My Friend is Hurting-How Can I Help?

Are you, or someone you care for, feeling: anxious? stressed? depressed or suicidal? Come to this helpful seminar to learn about the warning signs and coping strategies. For more information, and to sign up, visit SIS under Study Skills, or call Michelle at (541) 917-4782.

- **JANUARY 26** Benton Center, BC-105 12:00 - 12:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 2** Albany Campus, T-215 12:00 - 12:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 10** Lebanon Center, LC-218 5:00 - 5:50 p.m.



Help Me Remember This Stuff!

You can harness your brain to remember more, better, faster! Active learning strategies are the secret power. Topics include: How memory works, why we forget, and what's learning style got to do with it? Learn strategies to help you remember what you read, how to prepare for tests, and campus resources that can help you succeed.

- **JANUARY 20** Benton Center, BC 120, 5 - 5:50 p.m.
- **JANUARY 21** Albany Campus, WH 225, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
- **JANUARY 26** Lebanon Center, LC 206, 4:30 - 5:20 p.m.
- **JANUARY 28** Sweet Home Center, SHC 102, 4 - 4:50 p.m.

Better Notes + Better Tests = Better Grades

Apply the powerful note taking and study method covered in this workshop and watch your grades improve! Students who use the note taking study and self-test methods presented in this workshop report that they understand and remember more of what they read and get better grades.

- **JANUARY 27** Benton Center, BC 120, 5 - 5:50 p.m.
- **JANUARY 28** Albany Campus, T 215, 3 - 4:15 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 2** Lebanon, LC 205, 4:30 - 5:20 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 4** Sweet Home Center, SHC 102, 4 - 4:50 p.m.

No Stressin' From Testin'

Would you like to know what it takes to walk into a testing situation feeling confident? Test-taking can and should give you the opportunity to glow. This seminar will share strategies that you can use to overcome test anxiety and show off what you know. Come find out how to make test-taking a positive experience.

- **FEBRUARY 3** Benton Center, BC 120, 5 - 5:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 4** Albany Campus, WH 225, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 9** Lebanon Center, LC 205, 4:30 - 5:20 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 11** Sweet Home Center, SHC 102, 4 - 4:50 p.m.

Tips to Overcome Procrastination

Procrastination can keep you from your goals. Come learn the underlying causes and tips to successfully overcome it.

- **FEBRUARY 10** Benton Center, BC 120, 5 - 5:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 11** Albany Campus, WH 225, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 23** Lebanon Center, LC 205, 4:30 - 5:20 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 25** Sweet Home Center, SHC 102, 4 - 4:50 p.m.

Prepare for Finals Without Cramming

Juggling due dates for papers, projects, and finals? There's a way to do this without losing your sleep or sanity—even if you've been procrastinating! (Bring all of your assignments and due dates to get the most out of this workshop.)

- **FEBRUARY 17** Benton Center, BC 120, 5 - 5:50 p.m.
- **FEBRUARY 18** Albany Campus, WH 225, 12 - 12:50 p.m.
- **MARCH 2** Lebanon Center, LC 207, 4:30 - 5:20 p.m.

Linn-Benton
 COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Success Seminars are organized by the Learning Center. For more information and to sign up, visit SIS under Study Skills or call 917-4684.

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The Commuter
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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

Let that be your last battlefield

Gregory Dewar
The Commuter

There's an infamous episode of Star Trek's 3rd season. Episode 15, to be exact: "Let that be your last battlefield" filmed in 1968. As a signifying response to the end of an era, an era where civil rights were fought for with more than just ideals, it is fitting.

Gene Roddenberry, a true humanitarian, who always believed in the best of humanity and what it could become, shows us what beast's hatred creates.

In it, a young and charismatic political leader in exile runs from a horribly racist law enforcement offer from the opposing political regime. The difference? One is white on one side and black on

the other, the other is black on one side and white on the other, just reversed. And because of that, they were willing to kill each other.

As the plot continues, they return to their home planet, the leader in captivity of the officer. When they arrive, however, they find their world destroyed. The prisoner escapes and the officer pursues on the ruined planet's surface. Hatred so pure and feral, that the last two surviving members of a race are willing to kill each other.

On that planet, an entire race of people eradicated themselves over skin color. And in another reality, that could have been Earth. Roddenberry questions the futility of it all through Captain Kirk. As the episode draws to a close, Captain Kirk muses how obtuse it is to hate someone because of the way they look. First Officer Spock merely comments that it is, of course, "illogical."

Sometimes I feel as though I am at a disadvantage when it comes to civil rights. I do not

know what it is like to grow up as a black person in white America in the 1960s. Nor do I know what it is like in the 1990s. I'm white, male, and middle-class. And there are those who would try to make me feel guilty for that, even if I have never had a racist thought in my life. Though we've all had racist thoughts, even if we hated ourselves for thinking them.

I do know that there are unifying experiences to humanity, experiences that transcend the actual details of the matter to become common. I know what it is like to feel hatred. I know what it is like to feel love. I know what it is like to believe in something so strongly you are willing to die for it. I have been willing to die for it. I know what it is like to be willing to lay down your life for freedom. I have been willing to do it. I also know forgiveness.

And most importantly, I know compassion. And while I may not have had the same experiences as you, I have had the same

feelings as you. If I can't say what it's like for someone to be racist to me, I can pat you on the back, look you in the eye, and tell you that I sympathize, because I know what it's like to be abused. I know what it's like to have someone hate me because of the American flag sewn onto my shoulder, like a signet of misery. I will never know what, exactly, you have gone through, nor you, I, but we both remember what it's like to feel pain that deeply. And thus, we have a humanitarian and honest understanding, and sympathy, and there is nothing to stop us from being an emotional support network for one another. The freedom we've fought for or chased is the same freedom.

I have the compassion to extend that to you, sincerely. Because the human experience applies to us all, whether we're black or white on the left side, we're still human beings on the "right" side.

Thank you.

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Soups: Cream of Broccoli and Won Ton

Thursday

Dishes: French Dip with Fries, Hazelnut-Arugula Pesto Pasta with Grilled Chicken and Thai Vegetarian Stir-Fry*

Soups: Cream Roasted Chicken and Garlic Soup with Tomato*

Friday

Chef's Choice

Monday

Dishes: Grilled Pork Chop with Sauce Robert, Irish Lamb Stew* and Sweet and Sour Tempeh with Rice*

Soups: Chicken Noodle and Cream of Tomato

Tuesday

Dishes: Reuben Sandwich with Coleslaw, Chicken Gumbo with Creole Rice and Grilled Vegetable Pizza with Pesto and Goat Cheese

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SPECIAL FEATURE



Colin Walsh
For the Commuter

Local skaters around the Willamette Valley now have an awesome new skate park to hit up, night or day. The Harrisburg skate park is 10,000 square feet and located at 530 Smith St. in Harrisburg.

The grand opening was on Dec. 7, 2008. The designer of the park and owner of Dreamland skate parks, Mark "Red" Scott, was there for the opening ceremony. It included a BBQ, sweet music, ribbon cutting, professional skateboarding exhibitions, and free skateboard products tossed out for tricky maneuvers.

One of the greatest features at the park are the lights that run until 8:45 during the Winter and are rumored to run all night throughout the summertime.

The park offers anything from a beginner two-foot bowl to the bigger five-to-nine-foot bowl with about one foot of vertical on the nine-foot section.

Photos by Colin Walsh



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Obama to shut down Gitmo?

Cody Anderson
The Commuter

"Just in: President-elect Barack Obama will sign a bill into action on his inauguration day that will shut down Guantánamo Bay". When I saw this on the news I almost screamed, "what is Obama hoping to accomplish by shutting down Gitmo?" Is this confirmation that he is indeed "in bed with terrorists", or is he doing what he thinks is moral and right?

Guantánamo Bay is located in the Guantánamo province, just off the south end of Cuba. The naval base was established in 1898 and the United States assumed control of the area in 1903 under the Cuba-American Treaty. Since 2002 the United States has used the area for a detention camp that houses suspected and confirmed terrorists. Currently there are 255 prisoners in captivity.

Liberals have complained for years that the treatment of prisoners at Gitmo directly violates the Geneva conventions. In order to make that bold of a statement, you must fully understand Article 3 Sections 1 and 2 of said conventions. If you don't fully understand these sections, here they are for your knowledge. Article 3 states that in times of war the two 'conflicting parties must adhere to the same set of criteria for the treatment of prisoners of war; this includes cruel treatment, torture, murder, and

torture. Oh! Wait, did that state that both parties in conflict must adhere to the same criteria? I believe it did. The Terrorists do all of the prohibited actions stated above, including the taking of hostages. Since the terrorists violate the Geneva conventions, they could be legally executed. So we are being gracious in the least.

Now the big question: if Obama is going to shut down Gitmo, what is he going to do with the prisoners of war in detention? So far Obama plans to release some detainees and give the rest U.S trials; isn't that kind of hard to do when the people you plan to release don't have a country to go to that will house them? If you release these detainees and they have nowhere to go, they will go back and do exactly what they were captured for: terrorism.

Obama, in my opinion, is making a very misguided decision in this matter; we have the terrorists in Gitmo for a reason: to prevent them from rejoining the terrorist organizations and another 9/11 occurring. I don't agree with Obama or his policies, but that doesn't mean I want him to crash and burn as a president. If Obama is going to shut down Guantánamo, he should do it right; he should give fair trials to all detainees. If he does that, he doesn't violate the constitution and still treats detainees with the little respect they deserve.

Gitmo needs to close

Brandon Goldner
The Commuter

There is an opinion piece published in this issue about the closing of Guantanamo Bay that I feel deserves a response.

To begin, author Cody Anderson asks, "What is Obama hoping to accomplish by shutting down Gitmo?" He then explains that perhaps it's because it's what Obama "...thinks is moral and right," and says "...Liberals have complained for years..." about the treatment of detainees.

Guantanamo Bay is a complex issue, but what isn't under dispute is that some people there are, indeed, innocent. Is it right to hold people for crimes they did not commit? And should a right to a speedy trial apply only to our citizens, or should it extend to all people we have direct control over?

An article by the Center for Constitutional Rights tells the story of 17 men ordered by the US to be released after spending 7 years in Guantanamo without having committed a crime. The men are originally from China, but fled to Afghanistan. They ended up in Pakistan in 2001 after fleeing artillery fire in Afghanistan. When they arrived, they were welcomed and fed by people who then turned them over to the U.S. for significant bounties.

As this story can be more thoroughly told by those more educated and informed than me, allow yourself to be directed to another article, this one published by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. This one details the various ways in which these men, with no factual charges against them, have continued to be illegally held captive by the U.S.

With respect to Guantanamo as an institution, it has held captive people accused of doing something, but never having the opportunity to see the evidence held against them. This goes against our US constitution. Some have been held there as many as 7 years. This is also in violation of the constitution. Add to that the fact that some of these people are innocent, and... well, you begin to have an idea of why this institution is seen to degrade both our morals and our standing in the world (and doing so illegally, too).

So why does Obama want to close Guantanamo? In short, because the function it serves is wholly un-American.

Anderson continues by citing the Geneva Conventions as a reason for ire against the prison, and asks us to first become familiar with them ourselves before passing judgment. Browse <http://www.genevaconventions.org/>, and go to the section that deals with torture. In Anderson's argument, he cites Article 3 Sections 1 and 2 to make the case that torture is only forbidden if the enemy does not torture you. But looking at the first chapter of the first convention, the third article states plainly, "Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms... shall in all circumstances be treated humanely... To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever... (a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture..." It goes on to explain that these people are also afforded "...all the judicial guarantees which are

recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples..."

Using that same website, you find there are other examples of torture being addressed and prohibited by any country involved with the Geneva Conventions. This absolutely includes the United States. It doesn't matter who the person is; if they are not armed or attempting to take our life at the very moment which we take them captive, they must be treated humanely (i.e. not be tortured), and they must be given the same judicial rights as "civilized peoples." Assuming we in the U.S. are civilized, that means those in Guantanamo should be given the same fair and speedy trial as we in the U.S. are entitled to. But to wait 7 years and to not be able to defend yourself because you're not presented with the evidence, even if you are guilty, is wrong, and the Geneva Conventions support this.

One final point to defend: Anderson asks, "isn't that [releasing detainees from Guantanamo] kind of hard to do when the people you plan to release don't have a country to go to that will house them?"

Yes, it is. Especially in the case of the 17 innocent men who can't go back to their home country for fear or persecution. That's why the court ordered for their release into the U.S.

But, Anderson says, "If you release these detainees and they have nowhere to go, they will go back and do exactly what they were captured for: terrorism." Unless they're innocent. In which case they will struggle to assimilate into a society that is strange and foreign to them. If they are guilty, the proper thing to do is to present them the evidence which was used to capture them in the first place. Give them a lawyer, and hold a trial. If they are found guilty, prosecute them accordingly. If they are not, it's up to the U.S. to provide them with the most humane and reasonable option for either returning home, returning to a different country, or coming to live here because they don't have anywhere else to go.

Some of the arguments Anderson presents hinge upon the assumption that the people there have done something wrong. But not all of them have. Some are completely innocent, given up for bounty by people who, like them, had little or nothing, and saw a way to feed their family. It's understandable and forgivable.

But what is not forgivable is for a nation such as ours to ignore an internationally accepted agreement to treat human beings as such, and to subject those under our control to standards different from the ones to which we hold our citizens. It's equally unacceptable to continue to detain those who've been proven to have never committed a crime, their only trespass to have an appearance that lends them guilt by association. It isn't just or fair to hold a person for a crime for an indefinite period of time with no chance to appeal. It's not right to keep evidence, if there is any, from the defendant in order to diminish their ability to defend themselves.

Guantanamo Bay should and will be shut down for more than the injustices that continue to stare us in the face. It smacks of hypocrisy, and gives nations who don't agree with us another reason to hold their resentment close. It shows everyone that we, the United States of America, only believe in spreading democracy, freedom, and peace when it suits us... but not when it doesn't. And this, as everyone should acknowledge and accept, is fundamentally un-American.

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PERSPECTIVES: What did you think will be the first thing Obama will do when he becomes president?

 Abigail Lundberg "He will help out our country economically."	 Steve Anderson "Enslave Republicans."	 Fox McAllister "Rebuild the foundation of the economy, and try and save the jobs that are in loss and create new ones."	 Minnie Phillips "Economic stimulus."	 Michelle Evans "I don't know what he'll do. What I would like to see him do is give a stimulus package to the community."
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Compiled by Lydia Elliott. Photos by Lydia Elliott. The views expressed in Perspectives do not necessarily represent the views of The Commuter staff.

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Obama-nation

Rick Casillas
 The Commuter

I have a picture one of my sisters made hanging on my door of Barack Obama. It's signed in cursive in the bottom right corner beneath the note, "Best wishes - Barry," and his face is appropriately decorated with a saloon style mustache and soul patch. I walk by that thing every day, and I can hear him in my head, with his intermittent pauses and perfect tempo akin to comedic timing dispensing nuggets of wisdom to me. Today he told me to wear a hat or I would catch a cold, but I got sick anyway. I feel fantastic regardless, however, as the simple pleasure of

tower a little too high. Don't get me wrong, I love where this is going. I pray to my Obama picture every day that he continues the path I believe him set upon and, in the grand tradition of Clinton realizing his ideas weren't working, will move to the middle of the two parties and become simply a pretty good president rather than a terrible one. It would be in the interest of us all to strike some kind of equilibrium between extremes. But I am held in constant wonder of this product of our superficial understanding of politics. I have hope in Obama; that he will regain that fervor he seemed to have not more than a few months ago, and redirect it further towards



"Obama faces difficulties to be sure, but I ask you, what president hasn't?"

Rick Casillas

witnessing Obama's slow, methodical back-peddling towards centralism sustains me. The playing up of the insurmountable obstructions to the success of our nation so as not to set our expectations too high, literally drawing comparison (as many have parroted since) to our current economic state as being that of the great depression; it reminds me of those kids who have the sun perpetually in their eyes, who "haven't played in awhile so they might be rusty."

Obama faces difficulties to be sure, but I ask you, what president hasn't? Where's the vigor from the trail? The demands for Osama bin Laden's head as early as October 7th have been replaced with cautious optimism for his isolation, in Obama's recent interview with Katie Couric. His cow-towing to leftists through the immediate dismantling of our conflict in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay are suddenly fraught with complications and a blurry timeline, as reported by the Orlando Sentinel. I'm starting to have some faith in the man through his lack of conviction. It's common practice to vamp up distribution of wishes when you're bargaining the public for the White House, but Jesus 2.0 built his

realistic objectives instead of the fluff and fast numbers he was promising to get elected, that he does not let perception and opinion dictate his actions and that he continues to stray from his previous pattern of pandering to the lowest denominator.

My question is not what his plans are, as we all knew he wasn't going to be the man he was last year once his seat was secure, but what are yours, America? Where are the cries for transparent government and questioning of authority when the government is your own? I imagine no one is eager to bandwagon against a president until they're sure everyone else is on their side first. I won't judge too harshly since many of those proudly displaying "impeach Bush" bumper stickers on their cars are too busy looking around to make sure they're still in the crowd to follow the news; but it will be interesting to see how many of those disappear once the headline skimmers catch up, who will choose proud ignorance or cowardice and hypocrisy if Obama doesn't end up being the savior you who adore him need.

Roe v. Wade

Lydia Elliott
 The Commuter

This week marks the 36th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court case, Roe v. Wade. Despite our considerable advancements in the fields of technology, medicine, and the struggle to end poverty, America has been left behind in the up-hill battle for women's rights. Today, a woman's right to choose is still not safe, and the outcome of Roe v. Wade is in serious jeopardy.

Many of us are fortunate not to remember the dangerous years before this case went to court in the early 1970s. Before then, abortion was illegal in the US, and a woman's "choice" was often a dangerous back-alley procedure that posed a serious risk to the woman involved. According to Planned Parenthood, in 1965 (eight years before Roe), 17 percent of maternal deaths were due to unsafe and illegal abortion attempts. Today, with abortion legal, that number is only 0.3 percent.

When the Supreme Court handed down its decision, it ruled that the laws that existed in almost every state prohibiting abortion were unconstitutional. Their review of our Constitution and decades of civil law concluded that for the government to interfere in an individual's decisions about procreation, marriage, and other aspects of family life to be unconstitutional, and that a woman's right to choose motherhood deserved the highest level of Constitutional protection. Justice Harry Blackmun, the author of Roe v. Wade, stated that the decision was "a step that had to be taken as we go down the road toward the full emancipation of women." And we are as close as ever to full emancipation. Since

Roe, women's lives have greatly improved. We are no longer at risk from botched abortion attempts, but free to make our own reproductive choices. We are free to participate equally in the workplace and our economy. We can pursue education and career goals that were impossible before Roe. And we are free to fight back against those who wish to overturn Roe and return to the days of government control over our health and well-being.

In 2005, Congress appointed two new members, both nominated by former President Bush: Justices John Roberts and Samuel A. Alito. These well-known pro-life believers have been tipping the balance of power in the courts ever since, and have brought us closer than ever to overturning Roe. Two years ago the Supreme Court banned abortion in the second trimester, with no stipulations protecting the woman's health (Gonzalez v. Carhart and Gonzalez v. Planned Parenthood Federation of America). This decision, in support of President Bush's push for the criminalization of abortion, has placed the

woman's health and well-being must always be the priority.

To protect the health of women in our country, the government must make abortions legal, safe, and accessible.

Women are allowed to access abortion services with little or no restrictions in 70 countries, with more than 60 percent of the world's population within them, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The Netherlands, which offers no restrictions and free abortion services, has one of the lowest rates of abortion in the world. By contrast, Latin America has highly restrictive abortion laws and one of the highest rates of abortion. These countries also have a much higher death rate for pregnant women seeking illegal abortions. In Uruguay alone, 48 percent of maternal deaths are from botched illegal abortions, says the WHO.

Government restrictions on abortions do not keep them from happening, they only force them underground, and into dangerous conditions.

Men and women in America must continue to fight for reproductive freedom. The choice



"To protect the health of women in our country, the government must make abortions legal, safe, and accessible."

Lydia Elliott

health of women in America in the hands of politicians, not doctors and patients. With this encouragement, anti-choice legislators and activists have launched a wave of pro-life legislation intended to make abortions harder to attain. These new laws include restrictions on the length of the pregnancy, make women return to the abortion provider numerous times, and force women to suffer a delay prior to receiving an abortion. These laws have been designed to overturn the most important part of Roe, that a

to be parents must not lie in the hands of government officials, but within our own hands. Sarah Weddington, speaker, advocate, and attorney for the landmark

Roe v. Wade case in 1973 said, "Reproductive freedom is not free. Those who believe in it and believe it should be the law of the land must rise to its defense politically, in public debate, and in support of pro-choice organizations."

Her words couldn't be more true today.

Expectations weigh heavily on new president

Lori Tingle
 For The Commuter

On January 20, 2009, our country inaugurated the first Black President in United States history. This day marked a milestone for the human rights movement, and people celebrated nationwide, but now that Barack Obama has taken his position as the 44th President of the United States there are many of us eagerly awaiting his plan to save us from slipping into the worst economic depression since, well, the Great

Depression.

This is what President Obama is facing as he takes over the White House. Over two million homeowners lost their homes last year due to massive layoffs throughout the country. Unemployment rates are at 7.2% nationally; this is the highest they have been in twenty-five years. The Obama team and congressional democrats have crafted an \$825 billion stimulus package, \$550 billion of which is to go towards fixing roads and bridges, funding schools, research for alternative energy,

healthcare benefits, Medicaid, unemployment benefits, and food stamps. \$275 billion is set aside for tax cuts.

This is all supposed to create employment and revive our damaged economy. President Obama is also up against the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, and talks of a cease-fire are not looking good. The Pentagon is readying itself for President Obama's plans to end the war in Iraq and have announced a 16-month pullout plan. Barack Obama has also announced that he will be closing Guantanamo Bay,

although not immediately; the plans for closing the prison are in the works. He will also be ending the military "don't ask, don't tell" policy, stating that we are losing good soldiers and wasting government money to kick homosexuals out of the military for stating their sexual preference. As a nation, we are all hoping that Barack Obama is making all the right decisions. Unfortunately, he really has little room for error because a whole nation and its high expectations are weighing him down.

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opinion

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Please sign and keep to 300 words or less.

Supreme court ruling changes how justice system works

Brandon Goldner
 The Commuter

On Wednesday, Jan. 14, in a 5-4 decision along ideological lines, the Supreme Court ruled that evidence gathered illegally is admissible in court.

This appears to conflict with the letter and intent of the fourth amendment, which states, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated..."

In the past, the word "unreasonable" has been, among other things, interpreted to mean illegal. This is to protect people from being brought to trial though frivolous accusations using either false or illegally obtained evidence. Jan. 14's ruling was made in regards to a 2004 incident in which Bennie Dean Herring was pulled over because an officer believed Herring had a warrant issued for failing to appear on a felony charge. While his person and his vehicle were searched, Herring was found to be in possession of methamphetamine and a firearm, for which he was arrested. Just

minutes after, the officer learned the warrant was no longer valid, but it had not been removed from the system due to a database error.

The Supreme Court's ruling means that the subsequent charges made against Herring will stand, regardless of the fact that he was pulled over without violating the law.

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Roberts stated, "to trigger the exclusionary rule... police conduct must be sufficiently deliberate that exclusion can meaningfully deter it, and sufficiently culpable that such deterrence is worth the price paid by the justice system."

Something resembling the exclusionary rule originated in English courts in the mid 18th century, and later because the basis of the fourth amendment. This rule states that evidence obtained through manipulative techniques such as torture or coercion, or evidence not obtained lawfully, should be excluded from the courtroom. As practiced in the US, "the exclusionary rule was adopted decades ago," said Stephen Ensor of the Corvallis law firm Ringo, Stuber, Ensor and Hadlock. "Only after [its adoption did] it be-

came apparent that nothing short of it could guarantee our rights under the 4th Amendment."

For the majority, Justice Roberts further stated that "letting guilty and possibly dangerous defendants go free [is the] price paid by the justice system" for upholding the exclu-



"This appears to conflict with the letter and intent of the fourth amendment..."

Brandon Goldner

sionary rule at all times, and that judges should evaluate that price for themselves on a case by case basis.

In dissent, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote that the majority "underestimates the need for a forceful exclusionary rule and the gravity of record keeping violations." Justice Bader, along with Justices John Paul Stevens, David H. Souter and Stephen G. Breyer, continued by saying that law enforcement is heavily dependent upon electronic recordkeeping, and an error with such records led to the arrest of the man involved with the case in

question.

The court's latest decision will have lasting implications. For example, a person could be stopped by a police officer, be struck and thrown to the ground, and have used against them in court whatever items the officer may find on the

While the majority's decision may have been made with the best interests of the country in mind, it's impossible to quantifiably weigh the benefits of ignoring the exclusionary rule against what harm it may cause.

Asked his opinion on the ramifications of the ruling, Ensor said, "the government has been lobbying ever since [the adoption of the exclusionary rule] for a so-called 'good faith' exception," like the one described by Justice Roberts. "Prior courts recognized the futility of this approach. The Bush court, however, has tended to water down your right to be free from unreasonable governmental intrusion and will likely continue to go down this path."

Countless other voices will add their opinion to what will likely become an unsortable pile of praise, arguments, defensive remarks and criticism. But what we do know is that the founders intended our nation to be one which follows its constitution to the best of our abilities. History will decide whether the Supreme Court has done so in this case.

The woman in the laundry room: part 3 of 3

Brandon Goldner
 The Commuter

"No... Sorry, we don't have any room." I had my bearings about me again. "I think maybe I should call the police."

"No. Don't do that. They don't wanna hear it. But maybe you could take me to the mission out east on Pine?"

There was no Pine Street in Corvallis, but there was in Albany. I balked again.

"I think I should call the police, and they could give you a ride out there."

She became angry. "No! I'm not gonna go if I have to go with them. I guess you'd rather me just freeze to death!"

With that, she walked back down the stairs and out the door.

We weren't sure what had just happened, but I did call the police. They asked where she went. I went outside to find her, but she was gone.

Corinne and I were still unnerved after I hung up. It should have been an I-told-you-so moment, but it wasn't. We were both just stung by the fact that a mentally ill woman had thrown our (albeit meager) attempt at kindness in our faces.

Corinne said it best. "A woman like that is damaging. She shouldn't be allowed to just be out on the street."

We both wondered why there weren't facilities that could keep a person in that state safe and warm, but before we could get too far there was a knock on the door. It was a police officer, to whom we told the story, and he went on his way. According to him,

the overwhelming majority of homeless are out there because of their own decisions. After seeing the woman in the laundry room, I figured he was wrong.

We were almost getting ready to settle down again when Corinne shouted, "That's her! There she is!"

"No fucking way."

But sure enough, across the street, in the orange haze of a sodium streetlamp, shuffled the figure of an old woman in an off-white coat carrying a handle of plastic

"We were getting ready to settle down again when Corinne shouted, 'That's her! There she is!'"

Brandon Goldner

bags. I grabbed my phone and ran down the stairs, calling the police again. It was only about 15 seconds from window to street level, and I looked towards the post office expecting to see her easily. But she wasn't there.

The dispatch operator was asking me how long it had taken me to get down there, and I told him. He then asked if I could see her now. "Goddamnit, what the fuck?" I said.

He again asked if I had a visual. "No," I said, and apologized. Dispatch told me they'd send the officer back down, and he hung up. I was so confused. I went across the street and looked in the bushes along the post office. I ran down towards water-front and looked north down the alley. I had

no idea what had happened.

Then I had it. The lights inside the post office were on; one section of it is open 24 hours to access lock boxes and the automated postage machine. I opened the door and went in. My heart was pounding. I felt like she was going to jump from behind a corner with a knife and stab me for ratting her out. I walked slowly and looked under the table, between the lock boxes. Nothing.

Then I heard a rustling. It sounded like crumpled plastic bags. I went to the furthest end and peeked around the corner just enough to see a pair of knotted hands and legs near the floor. I didn't know if I should say, "There you are!" as if it were a game. The ridiculousness of it was overwhelming.

There was no other way out but the way in, so I went outside and waited. A minute later the police car drove near and I flagged him down.

"She's in the post office."

"Post office? Perfect."

He rolled down and parked outside, and I went back to our building. I climbed the first flight of stairs, not knowing if I had done right or wrong.

I rounded the hallway and went up the second set. At the top, I paused and peered into the laundry room. The light was still on, and I went to shut it off when I noticed the blanket, the 2 dollars and the note. "Thank you."

I gathered it all up, threw the switch, and heavily made my way back down the hall.

Submit!

Both letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome. Letters should be limited to 250 words, but columns can be longer. Contributors who wish to submit columns are asked to first contact the editor to arrange for space in the next issues.

The Commuter attempts to print all letters received, although we reserve the right to edit for grammar and length. Letters that raise libel, poor taste or privacy concerns will not be printed.

Opinions expressed by columnists and letter writers do not necessarily represent the views of The Commuter Staff or Linn-Benton Community College.

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 Please sign and keep to 300 words or less.

IS IT WORTH IT?

Brandon Goldner
 The Commuter

Everybody wants to look good. There isn't a person among us who doesn't have a favorite and least favorite facet of their image, or who wish that they could change something about their appearance that's always bugged them. Maybe you've even been made fun of because of your hair, your eyes, or your big nose. But how far are we willing to go in order to satisfy our desire to become acceptable? And are we educated enough to know the damage we subject our bodies to in the process?

On Dec. 24, 2008, the FDA approved Latisse, a drug intended to make ones eyelashes grow longer and thicker. The active ingredient in Latisse, bimatoprost suspended in an ophthalmic solution, is also marketed as Lumigan, a drug designed to lower intraocular pressure (IOP) in patients whose IOP is elevated, particularly for those who suffer from glaucoma.

The clinical trial for Latisse involved 278 adult patients who used the product for four months while under study, and any side effects were documented and considered before the FDA approved it. But while the drug does seem to increase the size and fullness of eyelashes, there are complications which may give some consumers pause.

On the FDA-approved package insert for Latisse, you'll find that it may cause an itching sensation in the eyes and/or redness, which was reported by approximately 4 percent



of patients. It continues by saying that Latisse may cause the eyelids to darken or to become irritated, dry or red. In fact, on the website for Latisse (www.latisse.com), there are pictures which show the results of using the product over the course of three months, and there appears to be an irritation or redness of the eyelids which develops over time on at least on the participants.

Looking further, the full prescribing information provided by the FDA on the New Drug Application (NDA) states, "...there is the potential for hair growth to occur in areas where Latisse solution comes in repeated contact with the skin surface." The NDA, however, does not accompany the package insert which is included with the product. The NDA also urges doctors to tell their patients "...not to apply to the lower eyelash line," though an explanation for this recommendation is absent. It is clear that there is the potential for hair to grow thicker and longer in places where the patient may not want it, such as on the cheek directly adjacent to the upper eyelashes or other areas where repeated accidental contact may occur.

Risk for darkened eye color, pregnancy complications and vision impairments

While these risks may be acceptable for most, there are others which are far more serious. The NDA for Latisse – which, again, does not come home with the consumer – warns, "Increased iris pigmentation has occurred when the same formulation of bimatoprost ophthalmic solution (Lumigan) was instilled directly in the eye." This means that if the solution used in Latisse comes in contact with your eye, there's a possibility that it can make your eye color darker.

It continues by saying that this "may not be noticeable for several months or years," and any changes in eye color are permanent. But the package insert for Latisse doesn't mention this information. It's left up to the doctor's good faith to let the patient know of this possibility.

The NDA also states that while "there are no adequate and well-funded studies of bimatoprost ophthalmic solu-



tion 0.03 percent administration in pregnant women," it was found that, in very high doses in rats and mice, "peri- and postnatal pup mortality was increased, and pup body weights were reduced." The NDA adds, "Latisse should be administered during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus." Again, this information is not included on the Latisse package insert.

Cystoid macular edema is another condition which has been reported by patients as a result of treatment with Lumigan, which shares the same active ingredient as Latisse. This condition is essentially a single or multiple cystoid areas which fill with fluid and cause retinal swelling or edema. While in many instances the condition is painless and has few symptoms, there is a possibility of the person afflicted to experience blurred or decreased vision. This risk is included on the NDA for Latisse, but is once again absent from the package insert.

Even more unsettling is the fact that the NDA provided for Lumigan reports that between 3–10 percent of patients experienced, in descending order of occurrence, "...ocular dryness, visual disturbance, ocular burning, foreign body sensation, eye pain, pigmentation of the periocular skin, blepharitis (itchy eyelids), cataract (clouding of the eye lens), superficial punctate keratitis (watery, itchy eyes sensitive to light), and ocular irritation." Many of these ailments were not included with any literature associated with Latisse, despite the two drugs having identical active ingredients.

Latisse's intended use and consequences

Going over Latisse's website, it's found that most of the side effects and warnings found in the NDA and the package insert were readily available if one looked for them. But while most prescription medications serve some legitimate medical purpose, there were also many claims of superficial cosmetic advantages. But it is true that some people have eyelashes that are dangerously too short or too few



"...there's a possibility that it can make your eye color darker...and any changes in eye color are permanent."

Brandon Goldner

in numbers. This condition is called hypotrichosis, and according to the American Hair Loss Association, it's "...the term dermatologists use to describe a condition of no hair growth." The NDA for Latisse says its intended use is "...to treat hypotrichosis of the eyelashes," so it's clear that this particular pharmaceutical was approved with – at the least – the assumption that it would treat a real medical condition. But Latisse's website looks, feels, and has language that reads more like a beauty or cosmetic advertisement.

Under the testimonial portion of their website they include the advice of not an ophthalmologist or even a general practitioner, but of "beauty expert" and "definitive brow expert" Anastasia Soare. They also have patient testimonials, and while one of them does address a legitimate medical concern, the other 3 were closer to this one, left

by Jolynn, which read, "My eyelashes got so long, the tips of my lashes hit the lenses in my sunglasses!" This type of response associates Latisse more closely with mascara than it does with prescription medication.

Despite Lumigan and Latisse being essentially the same drug that's applied to similar areas of the body, there are far fewer warnings for Latisse. Unfortunately, many of those warnings are not included on the FDA-approved package insert that consumers get to take home with them. It is up to the prescribing doctor to go over all of the possible side effects with the patient. And while Lumigan is a drug intended to help patients with a condition that could affect their livelihood, quality of life, and ability to see, Latisse is a drug that is marketed as a cosmetic, and the company that produces Latisse, Allergan, admits as much. Chief Executive David E. I. Pyott was recently quoted in the New York Times as saying, "If you think about it in terms of luxury, it's four dollars a day." The price may sound comforting if you're dealing with a life-altering condition, but referring to a drug with so many documented risks as a "luxury item" is disheartening at the least.

What it all means

There are certain trade-offs that consumers consider when buying a product, and there are always inherent risks when one is taking pharmaceuticals. But the company seems to make light of the fact that what you're spreading on your eyelids could possibly cause pain, vision distortion, or harm to your unborn child. On top of that, it's impossible to say how many more potential customers there are for a drug intended to be used cosmetically (Latisse) compared with one intended to treat glaucoma (Lumigan), which affects 3 million Americans. And it's no stretch to say that, in a nation with over 300,000,000 people, there are many more potential customers who simply want better eyelashes than there are suffering from glaucoma. Since that's the case, and many times the amount of people using Lumigan may use Latisse, it's unfortunate that Latisse was approved after only being

"We as individuals have to decide if 'longer, fuller, darker lashes' are worth the risks..."

studied on 278 people. It's likely that, by increasing exposure by marketing and distributing the drug to the public, many more problems will arise than the FDA could foresee from such a small initial sample size, or even from the total number of people currently using Lumigan.

But it is true that, like it or not, our society is ever-more vigilant of asserting control over how we project ourselves to others: How we smell, how we dress, and how our body looks are all things which many of us consider many times every day. Despite this, it's very important that we don't unintentionally harm ourselves in the process, even while we do need to make some sacrifices in order to satisfy our jobs or the generally accepted norms of our society. Latisse is far from being the only prescription medication with serious potential side effects, but it's up to the consumer to decide if the risks from using it are worth whatever good may come from its results. To be able to do that, the consumer needs to be informed of all the risks that come with using any given product. Are we doing enough to keep people safe? Can we rest easy that we know everything about our prescription medication that we need to know? In this case, we as individuals will have to decide whether it's worth risking pain, vision irregularities, and permanent changes in eye color just to have, in Latisse's own words, "longer, fuller, darker lashes." Assuming the public is educated, the answer will only come when the drug is packaged, marketed and sold to those who wish their appearance to be more of what it is not.