

THE COMMUTER

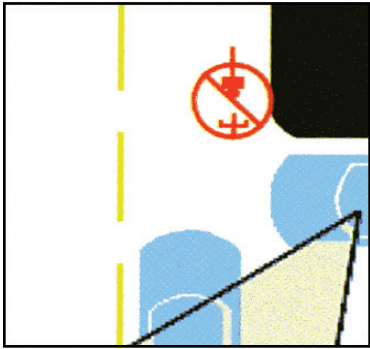
Wednesday
May 13, 2009

Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon

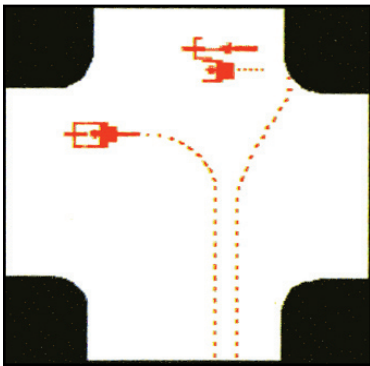
Volume 40 No. 27

National Bike Month

We have devoted this cover to assist bicyclists in becoming more aware of cycling safety rules.



Never ride against traffic:
-Motorists are looking left for traffic, not cyclists on the wrong side of the road. Wrong way riding cyclists are twice as likely to get in an accident as those riding with traffic. It's against the law to ride against traffic.

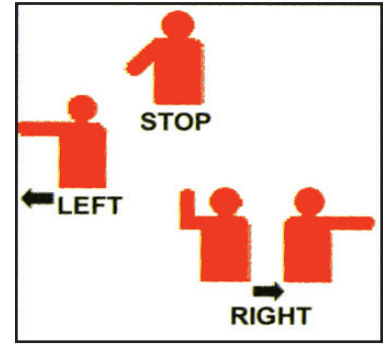
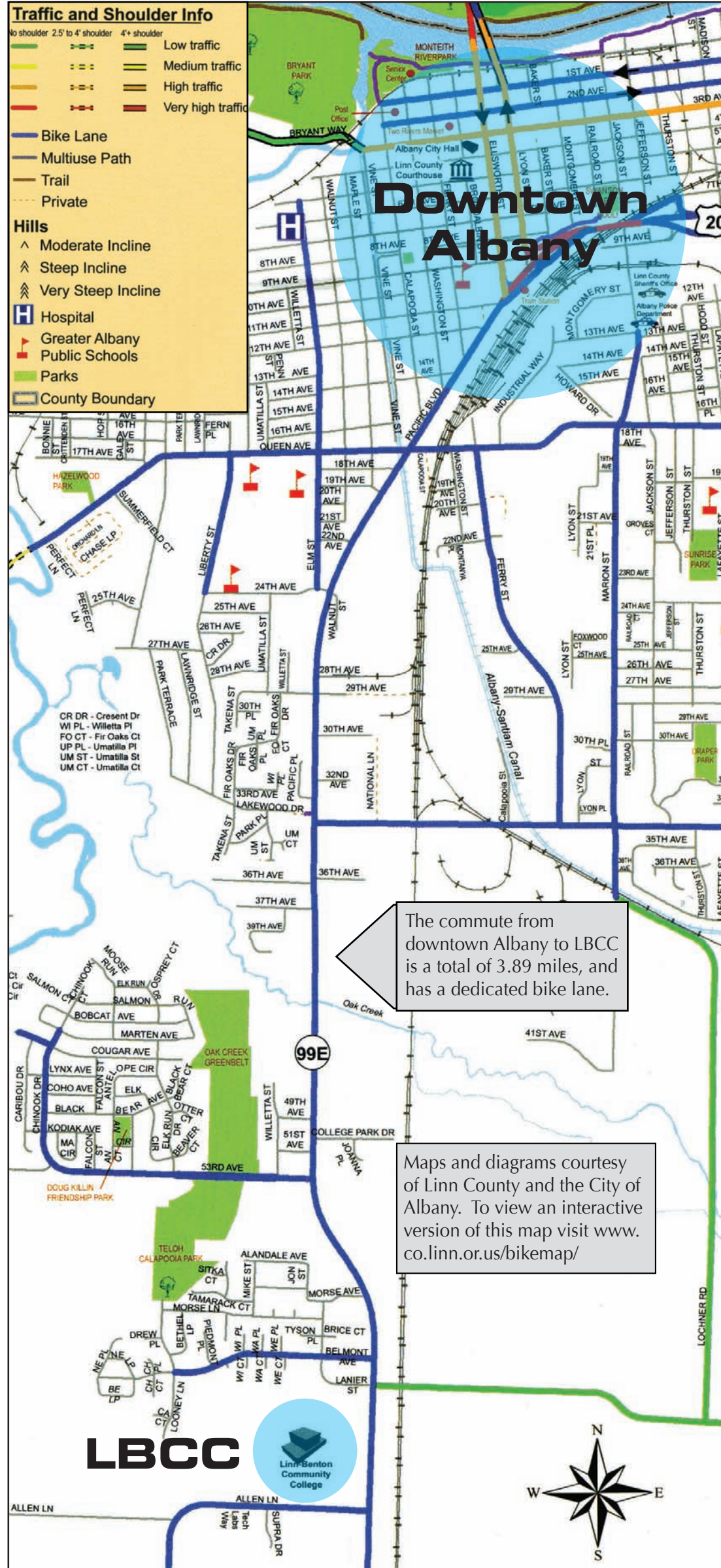


There are two ways to make a left turn:
1) Like an auto, signal, move into the left lane and turn left.
2) Like a pedestrian, ride straight to the far side crosswalk, and walk your bike across.

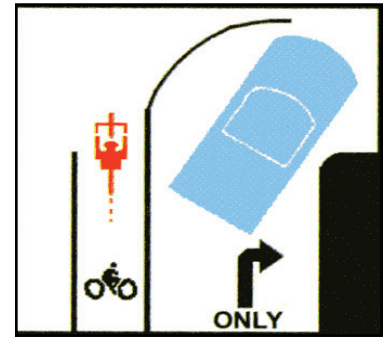


Wear a helmet:
-Make sure your helmet is American National Standards Institute approved to protect your head from injuries.

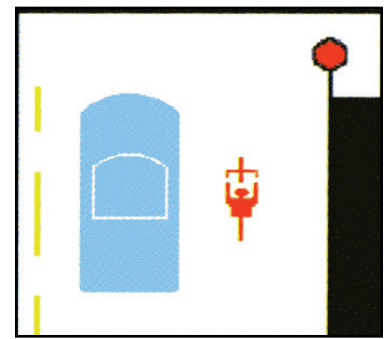
Be visible:
-Riding at night is dangerous because it's difficult for motorists to see you. Pedals with reflectors, reflector tape, leg lights, and spoke reflectors increase visibility of the rider. You must also display a white light visible 500 feet to the front, and a rear reflector visible up to 600 feet.



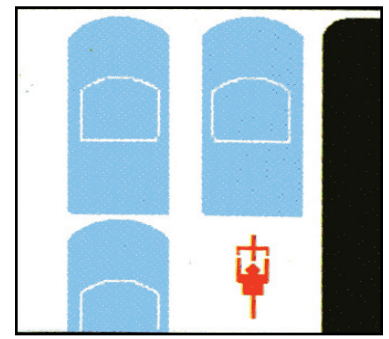
Use hand signals:
-Hand signals tell motorists what you intend to do. Signal as a matter of law, courtesy, and self protection.



Follow lane markings:
-Don't turn left from the right lane. Don't go straight in a lane marked right turn only.



Obey traffic signs, signals, and laws:
-Bicyclists must obey the rules of the road if they are to be taken seriously by motorists. Be visible, predictable and flow with the traffic stream.



Ride in the middle of the lane in slow traffic:
-Get in the middle of the lane at busy intersections whenever you are moving at the same speed as traffic.

I want to ride my bicycle!

Max Brown
The Commuter

May is the League of American Bicyclists' National Bike Month, and May 15 is the official "bike-to-work day." The league has a number of resources on their site to help individuals promote bicycling, such as presentations, safety tips, and informational packets on how to set up your own bicycling events.

Not many stores around the area have events surrounding bike-to-work week, Gregg Rouse says it's because this is their busy season. Rouse says, "bike week is all year round" for them, so they don't do much different during this time.

He does hope more people get into bicycling because of the month. He suggests anyone who wishes to get into cycling, whether it be for leisure or commuting, pick up a bike map for their city. Albany and Corvallis offer these maps for free, and you can find them at most bicycle shops.

The Corvallis Bicycle Cooperative offers a number of services to people hoping to get into bicycling, or improve their already existing knowledge. They offer classes to teach individuals about bicycle repair



Photo by Max Brown

Mark Willhoit works on his bicycle at the cooperative.

and maintenance. They also offer a build-a-bike program. This is where you build two bikes and get to keep one for yourself. The other bike goes to the bike cooperative. Greg Dinkens, who works at the bike cooperative, says this is good because it helps to teach people how to keep their bikes in working order so they can ride more.

Dan Herford of Cyclesolutions, a bike store in Corvallis, feels cycling is safe, fun, healthy, economical, comforting, and more. "I think it's good for people to realize bikes can be an answer to multiple problems with commuting," he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest two hours and 30 minutes each week of "moderate-intensity aerobic activity" for an average adult to get important health benefits. Important health benefits are: reduced incidents of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. It can also improve mental health and cardiovascular fitness, according to the League of American Bicyclists. Why not get that exercise while commuting to school or work each day?

Helpful links for cyclists:

www.bikely.com

www.mvbc.com

www.bikeleague.org/index.php

Letter to the editor:

By Vernon Huffman

Please remember that a bicycle may be operated by a child or a severely disabled person. They have a legally protected right to use the public roadways, and they threaten nobody by doing so. Your licensed privilege to operate a motor vehicle, however, may be lost if your driving presents a threat to bicyclists or pedestrians. If it seems unfair that the rules only restrict cars, remember whose lives are most at risk and why drivers must behave responsibly.

Even if you have extensive experience with safe bicycling, it is not your job to teach bicyclists how to ride safely, and a moving car is never a good training platform. You should expect bicyclists to behave erratically, so drive cautiously at all times. Save your teaching efforts for your own family, preferably by bicycling along, so you remember how the world looks from the cyclist's perspective.

Imagine the worst case scenario.

What would happen if the bicyclist you are approaching in your car gets distracted by traffic, hits an obstacle (there's lots of debris on roadways), and splays all over the pavement in front of you? Will you be able to stop safely, or will you add injury to insult by driving over her head?

The drivers' manuals of every state gives clear instructions for driving around bicycles and other slow moving vehicles. You are to maintain a safe distance, slowing as necessary, until you can safely pass on the left of the bike. Stop if necessary to prevent an accident. Under all circumstances, you are solely responsible for keeping bicycles and pedestrians safe from the vehicle you operate.

What is a safe distance? Under no circumstances should you drive within four feet of a bicycle. If you need to follow a bicycle until it is safe to pass, stay back at least one car length for every 10 miles per



Photo by Max Brown

Bike racks at the North Store of the First Alternative Co-op.

hour. Use the four second rule. As the bike passes something, count at least four seconds before you pass the same marker. Err on the side of greater distance and slower speed.

There is no need to sound your horn. The odds are extremely good

that the cyclist is aware of your car, but you may not be aware of obstacles the bicyclist is avoiding. Take a breath and slow down. Impatience causes accidents. Please drive safely if you must drive at all.

PERSPECTIVES:

How often do you ride a bicycle, and why?



Hanna Smith

Medical Transcription

"I used to ride all the time just for fun, but now I don't have enough time. I am always in a hurry."



Melissa Brown

Pre-Dental Hygiene

"Two to three times a week. It's mostly so I don't have to drive and use the gas."



Diego Banuelos

Graphic Design

"That's the only way I get around besides the bus. I ride 15 miles a week for work. At first I didn't think I needed a car, now I realize how expensive it would be to maintain one."



Shannon McNally

Transfer Degree

"I never ride a bicycle. I live so far away from anything."



Derick Calder

Undecided

"Like maybe once a month if I can't use my car. I would rather ride the bus."

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News Editor: Ryan Henson
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CAMPUS NEWS

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

Valley Writers series

Max Brown
 The Commuter

The Valley Writers Series event for this term will be held on May 21, at 2 p.m. in North Santiam Hall, room 208. The event will host Alison Ruch, a short fiction author and writing instructor at LBCC. The event is free and open to the public.

According to a press release, Ruch will discuss her short fiction, themes she likes to explore, and what gives her inspiration. She will also read one of her short stories and answer questions. If there is time, she will also coordinate a short fiction writing activity.

Jane White and Lucette Wood coordinate the series. The series has been going on at LBCC for over 15 years according to Wood. Each term the series hosts accomplished writers to discuss their work with students. Wood said, "The Valley Writers Series

was created to inspire our students and enhance their literary awareness and creative literary arts." She also noted that this is the only program on campus to broaden students' exposure to the literary arts.

Ruch has written a novel about a comic book artist entitled "Comic Toast." She is also working on a collection of short stories, and a non-fiction about Willamette Valley wine makers. To read some of her wine articles, visit www.avalonwine.com.

The series used to host two events each term, but it recently had its funding cut. According to Wood, the English department is committed to continuing the series. Right now they are looking at ways to raise funds. As of now, the Foundation is operating on emergency funds.

For more information, contact either Jane White (whitej@linnbenton.edu) or Lucette Wood (woodl@linnbenton.edu)

The Commuter wins awards!

Gregory Dewar
 The Commuter

The Oregon Newspaper Publisher's Association (ONPA) held their annual collegiate day at OSU on May 8, 2009. Entries were accepted between March 24 through April 10. 11 colleges participated with a total of 111 registrants and 485 entries in 21 categories. 139 Awards were given out, including 63 first place awards.

Judging this year took place online, and feedback was given in a digital text document instead of the usual sheets.

The Commuter this year won four awards in division three: The Commuter got first place for best Web site and second place for best cover design. I achieved second place for my editorial: "WTF:ASG." Lydia Elliott, photo editor, got second place for her photos of President Obama's visit to Albany last year on the campaign trail. Brandon Goldner, former opinion editor, got second place for best sports feature for his story about sneaking into a Blazer's game in Portland.

I also moderated a panel that included three professional journalists about online journalism, Web site moderation, and the future of the industry.

The journalists that sat on the panel were: Kevin Harden, Web editor for Pamplin Media group which owns 18 newspapers in Portland, Pam Cytrynbaum

who is OSU faculty for New Media and Communications, and Dan Shyrock who is the Digital Media Director for The News-Register in McMinnville.

Other sessions that were hosted included: a session on internships, a session on open records/meetings and legal/ethics, design, sports writing, and an advisor roundtable. The day began with breakfast and a welcome speech and ended with the awards ceremony, in which the winning works were presented on a projector and rounds of clapping and applause followed. At the end, one representative was sent up to collect the awards and for a photo opportunity.

The day ended with an open house for The Daily Barometer, OSU's student newspaper.

Have a hankering to take home some of this glory next year? There are great opportunities for aspiring journalists at The Commuter including road trips to a variety of conferences: one each term.

This year we also went to the Society of Professional Journalists conference at the University of Oregon and The Associated Collegiate Press (of which we are a member) conference in San Diego.

If you have any interest in journalism or just like to write or take photos, I strongly encourage you to apply to The Commuter for the 2009-10 school year, pick up an application in F-222 or at Rob Priewe's office at F-112. You'll be in for a year of fun and learning opportunities.

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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In conjunction with HIV/AIDS Awareness Week,
 LBCC's Student Life & Leadership Presents:

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May 27, 2009
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
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- Rebekka Armstrong
- Rey Cordova
- Kalee Garland

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LBCC is an equal opportunity institution. For disability accommodations, call 917-4789. Submit requests 4-6 weeks before the event.

Linn-Benton
 COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Photo by MaxWendt

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CAMPUS NEWS

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Legal eagle says legalize drugs

Democracy Club hosts anti-drug war speaker

Ryan Henson
 The Commuter

Years ago, Jim Doherty was a prosecuting attorney, and put people in jail for their use of drugs. Today, he says we should legalize those drugs.

Last Wednesday in F-113, LBCC's Democracy Club sponsored a speech by Doherty, a legal consultant and representative for Law Enforcement Against Prohibition. He believes that drugs and drug addiction are a social and medical issue, and that they should not be handled in the criminal justice system but with a regulatory and educational approach.

"A lot of people, myself and the other members of LEAP, who worked as drug enforcement agents and as undercover agents, worked for years thinking we could fight our way out of the problem. It just doesn't work," Doherty said.

According to Doherty, the war on drugs has done nothing to curb drug addiction, and that we spend nearly \$61 billion a year of taxpayers' money. He used examples of the United States' attempt at alcohol prohibition, and the current situation in Mexico, to make the point that criminal-

ization fuels the black market, creates an opportunity for huge profits, causes wide spread violence, and fills our prisons with people caught on non-violent possession charges. Despite the government's efforts, he says, "drugs are cheaper, more potent, and as accessible as ever."

"It's not like drugs are hard to get. For some kids it's easier to get marijuana than it is to get cigarettes," Doherty said. "So, what have we accomplished with our drug war? We aren't keeping drugs away from people. What we are doing is screwing up people's lives."

According to Doherty, his organization doesn't make specific recommendations for the nature of the regulatory policies needed, and that states will need to experiment individually to find out how they can establish a policy that reduces the harm and helps protect their communities.

He asked those in the audience to think about what would happen if drugs were available in state stores and state medical clinics. He says that, if heroin were available at state medical clinics, addicts could get pure doses so they do not overdose and would have access to clean needles, helping prevent the

spread of HIV and Hepatitis C. In addition, the move would put a stop to the illegal drug industry.

"What's going to happen [if drugs were regulated]? The drug dealers are going to be out of business. The black market is going to be gone," Doherty said.

The key to stopping drug abuse in our country, according to Doherty, is not by throwing people into jail, but by shifting the money from the criminal approach to more counseling and rehabilitation services for the addicted and more educational resources for our youth. Right now, Doherty said, we are spending 20 times as much on criminal costs than on rehabilitation.

"As a society we need to help people if they're abusing drugs, and we are not helping them if they are going to jail. We are de-socializing them," Doherty said, "If they aren't criminal when they go into jail, they come out as criminals."

Not all in attendance agreed with Doherty's views, and questions arose to whether or not the costs for rehabilitation were less than incarceration. Another student wondered if these policies would discourage addicts from



Photo by Ryan Henson

Jim Doherty listens to a student's question.

seeking recovery.

Robert Harrison, the faculty advisor of the Democracy Club, says that what Doherty was saying is a viewpoint that we should

consider because so much of what we hear promotes the war on drugs. "I thought this was a way to bring more balance to the issue," Harrison said.

Do you agree or disagree with our current drug policies? Take our survey online at <http://commuter.linnbenton.edu>.

THE COMMONS FARE

5/6-5/12

Wednesday

Dishes: Prime Rib with Popovers*, Coquilles Saint-Jacques a' la Parisienne (Scallops with mushrooms and cream sauce) and Tofu Stir-fry with Broccoli over Rice*

Soup: Billy-Bi (Creamy mussel soup) and Beef Vegetable*

Thursday

Dishes: Hungarian Chicken (Braised chicken with a creamy paprika sauce), Sushi/Sashimi* and Spanakpita (spinach and feta cheese filling wrapped in crispy filo dough).

Soup: Chili Mac and Cream of Broccoli

Friday

Chef's Choice

Monday

Dishes: BBQ Country Ribs*, Moroccan Chicken (salted lemon)* and Omelet Bar*

Soup: Saffron Chicken* and Vegetarian Vegetable*

Tuesday

Dishes: Spice-rubbed Beef*, Coulibiac (Layers of rice, salmon, spinach, mushroom, chopped egg baked in puff dough) and Portabella Polenta with Vegetables, Mascarpone Cheese, and Sun-dried Tomato Pesto*

*Gluten-free

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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

Star Trek vs. Star Trek:

Boldly going nowhere...

Greg Dewar
The Commuter

Everything you loved about Star Trek doesn't exist in this movie. The witty banter, the science, the technology, the thoughtfulness: that's all been traded in for cool explosions, beautiful people, one-liners, and quick action.

To put things in perspective: I was one of four people who wore Starfleet uniforms to the movie, that's how much I love Star Trek. What you are about to read comes from the heart. I also have really low standards for movies, in fact, I harbor no expectations: I've seen so many bad ones.

This movie was a shining chance to give us a look into the early lives of our favorite Starfleet officers from the original series, but instead of doing so they create an alternate timeline where none of the things you watch during the movie mean anything. They're not actually the characters you like from the show; they're the non-evil twins. If you were going to essentially just throw everything Gene Roddenberry did to the wind, why not make up your own original series? As a stand-alone movie, it's not really that bad. But as a Star Trek, it's probably the worst of them all, and unfit to be thrown in with the first 10. The fact that it's called "Star Trek", as I pointed out in last week's article, as if it were the end—all be—all of Trek movies seems laughable. Sadly, this alternate universe ended on a positive note, and it very well may carry on to sequels.

Acting choices seemed okay: Simon Pegg as Scotty was an amazing pick, and one I would've made myself. Everyone else was acceptable. Zachary Quinto, who played Spock, looked the part, but had a hell of a time acting it.

Uhura, Sulu, and Chekov are all given more prominent roles (which is very welcome); however, McCoy seems to take a back seat as a useless character who's just there to have someone wearing a blue uniform on the bridge. Kirk felt believable, but then, in this universe, it's a different Kirk, who is somehow the same personality-wise. Spock on the other hand does a 180 and is a hyper-emotional guy who gets in fights.

The Enterprise looks like a cross between the CBS re-done Enterprise and the Enterprise from the sixth Star Trek series "Enterprise." Old school, yet somehow hip and modern. Apparently in this universe, it isn't the starship Enterprise, it is the warship: the fight scenes that it partakes in look like something out of Star Wars when a Star Destroyer opens fire: zillions of little red lasers fly out of the front of it from any number of pop-up turrets—something the "real" Enterprise never had, and never would have had if Roddenberry were still alive.

The movie panders to the average, low-brow moviegoer, i.e. the non-Trekkie (I'm looking at you, Rick). In an early scene a pre-pubescent Kirk is driving a Chevrolet Corvette while blasting the "Beastie Boys", and ultimately sends it flying off a cliff just for the sake of being cool. In another early scene he does the opposite of what Kirk in the original series would have done: he doesn't sleep with the green girl. It's written so that he can't, but why would you write it that way? In another strange twist, Uhura and Spock are in love and make out in front of Kirk. In a poorly constructed scene McCoy explains that when his ex-wife left him she took

everything but his bones, which is supposed to explain why that's his nickname. Well, what about the flesh on your bones, son? Or that forceful, overly worked "southern" accent? In an even stranger twist, Uhura is given a first name: something she never had in the original series or the first six movies.

The entire premise of the movie doesn't feel very well thought-out. The main bad guy is a Romulan who doesn't look like a Romulan (he looks more like a Reman, but not close enough) back from the future to destroy the Federation. He has very few lines, no combat scenes, and is utterly two-dimensional. Nothing is ever known about him except that at one point he says he was a miner with an honest job, and had a wife who died when his home planet was destroyed. Just sounds weak doesn't it? It's even weaker when it goes on for an hour and a half.

Throw in hyper-fast action scenes, almost too fast to see what's going on (which seem to be trendy these days), and for some reason whenever a starship goes to warp it sounds like a gunshot or a sonic boom. Also, there's no visual representation of starships going to warp, it's just instant. They're in normal space and then they're in warp after you hear a deafening crack. It's like magic or something, which, for all I know, may very well *BE* what drives this ghoulish universe.

The entire way Star Trek works is re-written. Kirk inherits the Enterprise in a totally different manner after going from cadet to captain in an hour. To cap it all off Leonard Nimoy narrates the ending where William Shatner normally said at the BEGINNING: "These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise..." and it felt okay, but at the same time, it just felt awkward, like almost everything else in this movie. It seems like director J. J. Abrams can do no right.

The movie was fairly funny, and seemed to capture a lot of the jovial atmosphere of all the series; however, a lot of the true Trek jokes were delivered in an almost punishing way to which no one laughed. A lot of stereotypical lines and things you've heard a million times pop up, but they just felt all wrong (and the audience seemed to sense this).

I went into this movie giving myself a lobotomy: I tried to like it. However, afterwards, I was so speechless by how bad it was that I didn't talk for over an hour, until I had to order some shrimp.

Why does everything I love have to be taken, "Hollywoodized" to make money, and then pimped out? I guess it just goes to show: you can't fight Hollywood, though anyone who's ever talked to me knows I try. So many of my favorite things have been made into awful movies... some part of me just wants to give up, turn my mind off, and become as dumb as the people who are satisfied by this crap so I can get some enjoyment out of it.

If you take the movie for the explosions and the humor, it is enjoyable. If you actually love Star Trek and care about the universe, it is a travesty that I hope to high hell is "retconned." If you don't like Star Trek: watch it. If you have ever enjoyed Star Trek: pretend this movie doesn't exist, you'll be better off for it.

Just another run of the mill Hollywood action movie with a big title to get your money: one and a half incorrectly portrayed Starships out of five.



Movie posters courtesy of
CBS/Paramount Pictures

Giving her all she's got!

Rick Casillas
The Commuter

"Star Trek," the latest film in the signature science fiction television-based series, blew through theaters last weekend, grossing \$72.5 million and receiving critical praise. Produced and directed by J.J. Abrams, the mastermind behind such hit or miss wonders as "Lost," "Cloverfield," and "Alias," the film recants the origins of key characters from the Star Trek universe, retelling the history of the original crew and their ambitious beginnings. Sure to enrage die-hard fans of the iconic figures depicted in earlier series, the movie boldly goes where no Star Trek film has gone before: becoming a successful enterprise and a lucrative piece of work that broadens the niche wide enough to let non-Trekkies in.

"Star Trek" does for the series what the last few James Bond films have done for its own franchise, breathing life into a dynasty that has been in steady decline since the death of visionary founder Gene Roddenberry, and essentially revitalizing an animated corpse. "Star Trek" goes beyond watchable, keeping you entertained and interested the entire time, drawing you into a surface plot entirely propped up by characters and twists; a fun, fast work-horse of a movie that blends beautiful imagery and snappy dialogue into a sublime mixture.

Casting essentially made this movie; characters were likable, engaging, and showed depth and promise I had never seen from the original series. I'm no fan of Kirk, as evidence shows if you read last week's paper, but this movie made me a fan. Chris Pine was the epitome of Kirk without the bad acting: cocky, brazen, and wholly irrepressible as a force of bullheaded leadership and 'leap before you look' style captainship. Zachary Quinto essentially reprised the role of Sular from "Heroes," but thankfully, thoughtful and calculated happens to also align with Spock's description. Simon Pegg is brilliant as Scotty, and Karl Urban fits into the suit of Dr. McCoy effortlessly. My one chagrin is Eric Bana, who I had always thought a capable and selective actor, playing the flat, lifeless nemesis of the film, "Nero," who exists purely as a wall for plot to bounce off of. His effectiveness on screen was negligible, and it was a damn shame to waste such a prime acting slot on a character that might have carried the gravitas and menace of Kahn, the Borg queen, or even Gul Dukat.

Another film foible was the borderline, hackneyed plotline, which may have seemed fresh and original a decade past, but by now has been run through at so many angles by every imaginable series, including Star Trek, that it's become tired to the point of exhaustion. The issue with time travel and its abuse has always been the destruction of suspension; if there are no rules then there is no tension, no pleasure derived from breaking them. And although "Star Trek" did its best to liven up a tried and true premise with arresting special effects and clever turns, it still fell somewhat flat despite the effort.

Neither of these problems detracts from the consummate victory that is "Star Trek," and with rare exception (I'm looking at you, Greg) all in attendance left the theater satisfied. If up to this point you have been waiting for a break in the line of devoted fans encircling the franchise, do yourself a favor: jump in the starship while you still can and see this movie. It provides a superlative example of what science fiction space opera should be, and lays the groundwork for the continuation of a legacy 40 years in the making. I give it four Romulan mining ships out of five.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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

Math Limerick Contest Winners

Student Category Winner:
 Aaron Kopperman

There once was a girl named Renee
 Who tried writing pi all the way
 By the millionth straight hour
 She cried with such power
 "These numbers just won't go away!"

Staff Category Winner:
 Jeff Davis

A math challenged gal from Bombay
 Read her homework and sighed
 with dismay
 With her skills second rate
 She considered her fate
 And got help from the Help Desk
 that day.

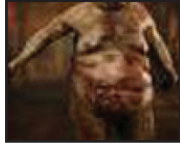
Congratulations to Aaron and Jeff!
 Prizes await you in the Learning
 Center

Video Game Release this week:



Star Trek: D-A-C X360
 Release Date: May 13, 2009
 Star Trek: D-A-C is a top-down action shooter based on J.J. Abrams' motion picture.

Pirates vs. Ninjas Dodgeball Wii
 Release Date: May 14, 2009
 Roam freely around six arenas, and settle the age-old question in the classic sport.



Killing Floor PC
 Release Date: May 14, 2009
 Killing Floor is a co-op survival horror shooter available for download through Steam.

ZEN Pinball PS3
 Release Date: May 14, 2009
 ZEN Pinball is the first pinball game to debut on the PlayStation Network and features local, online, and worldwide tournament multiplayer.

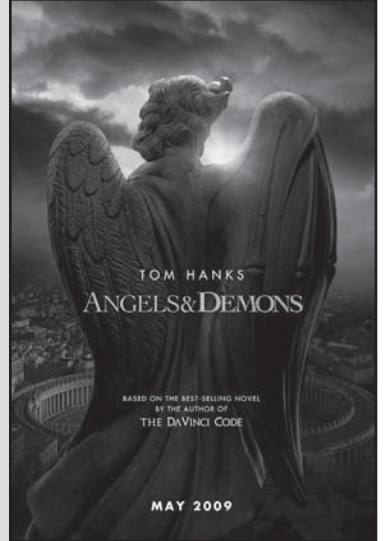


Hinterland: Orc Lords PC
 Release Date: May 15, 2009
 Hinterland: Orc Lords is a seriously enhanced and updated version of the role-playing combat and strategic base-building game.

Movie opening this Friday

Angels & Demons

Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) is back, this time discovering evidence that an ancient brotherhood known as the Illuminati is coming back with a vengeance against their longtime enemy, the Catholic Church. The Illuminati had sworn to get back at the church for the brutal treatment they had received, and the time is now to exact that revenge. Langdon teams up with Vittoria Vetra, the daughter of a murdered physicist, running through catacombs, cathedrals and crypts to discover how to save the entire Vatican from destruction.



Courtesy Imagine Entertainment

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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

JUNE 1
 Summer term application deadline

SEPT. 1
 Fall term application final deadline



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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.

The nation that cried "pig!"

Rick Casillas
The Commuter



Succumbing to pandemic fear is a lesson we as a nation refuse to learn over and over again. The latest entry in the long line of shameful displays belongs to swine flu, the

newest incarnation of global ignorance that has for the last few months been driving down sales of pork and lashing an innocent industry with hype and consumer terror. Despite the best efforts of food safety officials to disconnect the relation between the two words and sedate the public's concern, nothing seems to help. Many still wear their idiocy across their mouths as they don white masks (which do NOTHING against the strain) in an effort to prevent the dreaded swine flu which has taken around 50 lives worldwide as of Sunday. Fifty lives, compared to the 36,000 in the United States alone that die annually from the regular flu, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

I would even wager you have a better chance of being eaten by a shark or getting anally probed by an alien than catching and subsequently dying from swine flu. On our very own campus, we have notices that promote safety precautions, giving tips like wash your hands and don't come into contact with other people. Common sense, really, but not the kind that gets posted every year around this time. The issue and problem that secretes from this media-induced frenzy is that all of our thrashing and hand wringing always ends up doing more

harm than good. If you recall within the last 6 months we had a similar scare with lead-based toys. Despite not a single reported incident of death caused by the toys themselves, we still dismantled an entire industry out of baser instinct and unfounded fear.

But, hey, at least we're not grossly over-reacting by ourselves! In Egypt, a country on the cusp of being first world, about 300,000 pigs were slaughtered as a precaution against a disease that has nothing to do with swine of any kind. Mexico is cancelling soccer games and closing restaurants everywhere to curb the flu rather than dealing with drug cartels systematically taking over their country. Travel advisories and fancy titled councils desperate for a purpose have been meeting the world over to discuss and waste funding and time on the flu. What's worse is that we are asked to praise all of this build-up as preemptive and decisive action leading to convenient excuses to avoid embarrassment that come in the form of "well imagine how bad it WOULD have been if we hadn't freaked out unnecessarily."

Despite the media's mishandling of the topic, the responsibility for keeping our society in check, as always, falls to us. Problematic then that too few are willing to take up that responsibility, instead continuing our pattern of living in a reactive world, where actions and extreme responses are triggered by emotion rather than logic. But it's never too late to turn back and begin using your heads instead of your hearts. I have faith in you, America. Stay apprehensive and eat a pork chop. Fight against this onslaught of media coverage and hug a pig, or your mother, or just cough on someone you love. Just don't stay indoors and live a bacon-free existence over an epidemic that doesn't exist.

They don't make 'em like they used to...

Greg Dewar
The Commuter



When was the last time you repaired anything that broke? When was the last time you actually had something break that could be

repaired? I often look back over the history of technologies and see how things used to be built to last, or to be serviced: the end result would be continued service.

In today's mass-market (but lost mass-production) world, if a part breaks you replace the part. If enough parts break you replace the entire machine. There was a time (way before my time, obviously, I'm just waxing) where you could actually take a part out of a transistor radio and fix it yourself. Try tearing apart and fixing any electronic device today, you'll probably need a lot of PCB and solder to get the job done, if you even can.

The genesis of all this is that I'm selling a car, and my grandfather wanted to take parts out of it and keep them in case a different car broke down. What I had to explain to him was that this wasn't the '50s; cars weren't produced with enough parts in common or bulk technologies that you could cannibalize one vehicle to repair the other. Hell, if you look under the hood of two different vehicles in the same size range, chances

are their engines aren't remotely the same shape or size- from the same company.

Essentially if you had two devices that are similar in function and one breaks, you cannot use the other to fix it. The companies don't want you to do that. If you repair something that breaks, they make no money. If you replace by buying another one from them: bingo! You've earned the trait: capitalism!

I'd like to go back to that idealistic time I read about in history books where mass production truly meant mass production. Instead of 800 factories producing 800 unique and non-interchangeable parts, you have 100 factories producing the same part for a variety of machines. This makes parts cheap, this makes repairs cheap, this prevents so much useless machina from filling landfills. We're no longer a mass-production society, but a specific-production society. The more specific and anal retentive you can be, the better it is for the company... just not anyone else.

It'd be better for the environment, and it'd be better for the consumer. And in times like these when capitalistic faith is at an all-time low, you companies out there might want to start building up a little consumer brand loyalty and faith.

Barring all that, I'd settle for repairing an electronic part without having to do enough research to be an electrical engineer at the part's manufacturing company.

Or if you're going to make stuff so specific and unrepairable, at least make them last...

Demons: dreaming of our own enemies

Greg Dewar
The Commuter

Why do demons always enter our fantasies? I got to thinking about Tolkien the other day, and the Angmarim and Men of Rhudaur. What would possess an entire population to become "evil" and side with the forces of Mordor? Obviously, they don't think they're evil, or if they do, they don't care. Their way of life is fine for them. Is it a charismatic leader, or a religion? Or possibly just greed? Perhaps you've just had a leader so long that you trust them, and accept their white lies.

Still, you've got to realize allying with Sauron has no benefit, it's not like he's going to uphold his end of the bargain when your usefulness has worn out; you'll just become slaves or a lower class.

Then it hit me. The Third Reich: an entire population swayed into unspeakable acts by one man and his closest advisors.

How easy it must be to simply be "following orders".

So then I began to posit: "maybe this other side in the 'war of the ring' might not be so black and white." It might not even be about evil at all. Certainly, the German people are not evil. Could you hate every German in 1946 when things were calming down? Little girls and old men? Maybe they had no idea of the truth of what was happening. Maybe they just went along with it.

Similarly, maybe the "evil" races in The Lord of the Rings don't have the larger picture of what's going on in mind. Or they're so snowed by the promises made to them that a few casualties here and there are acceptable. Nationalism can be a potent catalyst.

Tolkien wrote "The Hobbit" in 1936. It contained nothing so dour and unspeakable as Mordor in it. It was a generally light-hearted fantasy romp about unlikely heroes and

dragons, with an almost-war thrown in. This almost-war part is what interests me, because it is racially driven. In 1936, the Third Reich was fast approaching the height of its power. A racially-driven war was about to begin. Tolkien, in his fantasy, almost wishes that war to never occur.

Tolkien began writing the Lord of the Rings Trilogy and the Silmarillion in 1937, and it was initially published in 1954. One has to wonder about how, subconsciously or not, something as prime evil as Sauron got into his novels. The vast forces and power he commanded, coupled with his control of annexed and allied nation-states, seems oddly reminiscent of the Third Reich.

I think that his fantasy demons were merely replicas of real-life demons thrown into an ambiguous world where they can be just as black and white as you want them to: none of the social distresses leftover

from World War II existed in his trilogy.

It's interesting to examine why our fantasy villains mirror real life villains, while our fantasy heroes are absolutely outrageous. In our minds, I believe, that we want to conquer what we can't in reality. When the war of the ring was over, it was over. Sure there was some generic cleanup and leftover pockets of goblin and orc resistance, but it was done, it ended as a real war would like to.

The social implications are gone, evil has been vanquished and the world can breathe again. There is nothing leftover to deal with like the complex issues that took hold over Berlin after it was captured: the Berlin Wall, for instance.

Think back to the last few stories you've partaken of: what drives the generic bad guy? I'm not talking about the absolute villain here. I'm talking about the "henchman." Is it religion, like in so many of

our Middle East-based stories? Is it religious fanaticism, like so many stories about cults and religious grey areas? Is it power, like in our stories about Communism and the former Eastern Bloc? Think about your favorite fantasy or sci-fi stories. Think about the Empire in Star Wars- committing genocide on entire planets- so many willing soldiers...and why? Think about the Borg in Star Trek: assimilating people to add to their collective, because they feel their way of "life" is superior, or the territorial expansion of the Jem'Hadar.

Now think about just how black and white all of it is portrayed. All of these evils have one thing in common: they're loosely based off of the atrocities in our own past and present. They have another thing in common: they're all dehumanized to the point of no redemption. In these stories, like in reality, is anything really that black and white?

The Commuter
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SURREAL LIVING

Crosswords, cartoons and classifieds to brighten your day.

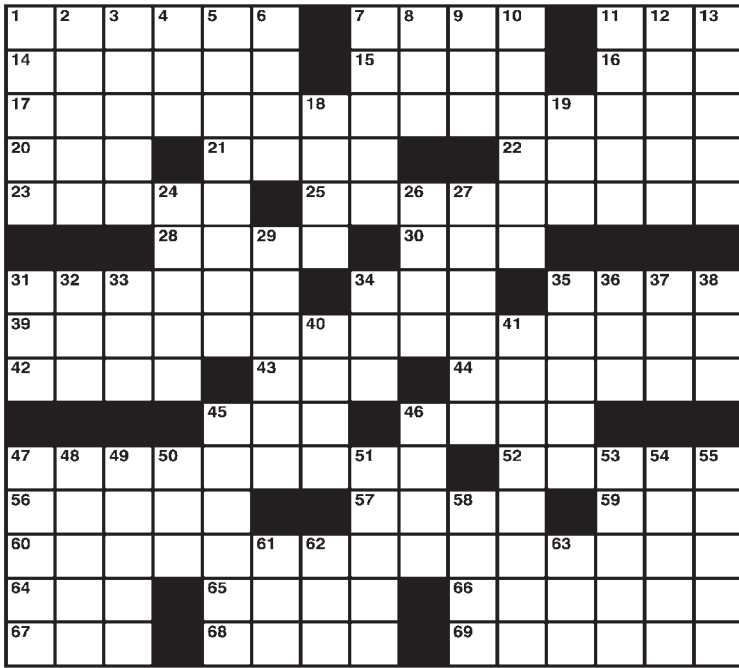
FOR RELEASE MAY 13, 2009

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Patches, as a lawn
- 7 Grass houses
- 11 Cool ___ cucumber
- 14 Appetizer follower
- 15 Place serving links
- 16 Rocker Vicious
- 17 Beetle Bailey's boss
- 20 Fund for later yrs.
- 21 Puritanical
- 22 Superman player
- 23 Migrant
- 25 Quasimodo's milieu
- 28 Kissers
- 30 Western treaty gp.
- 31 Remove the chaff
- 34 American ___, North Dakota state tree
- 35 "Yay me!"
- 39 Swiss Miss, e.g.
- 42 Times to call, in ads
- 43 ___ sequitur
- 44 Horror film creature
- 45 Nuclear agency estab. under Truman
- 46 Sign of traffic impatience
- 47 Physician of 1930s-'40s films
- 52 Puccini heroine
- 56 Postage meter unit
- 57 Guns & ___ magazine
- 59 Fish oil source
- 60 German dessert, American-style
- 64 Bk. before Numbers
- 65 Shaw's homeland
- 66 Dorm cohort
- 67 "... the set of sun": "Macbeth"
- 68 Will of "The Waltons"
- 69 Word that can follow the first word of 17-, 25-, 39-, 47-, or 60-Across



By Laura Sternberg

5/13/09

DOWN

- 1 Amber, e.g.
- 2 Juanita's January
- 3 Ex-NFL coach Hank
- 4 URL ending
- 5 Like Chicago-style pizza
- 6 Scorch
- 7 "I'll take a card"
- 8 Sounds of uncertainty
- 9 Weighty weight
- 10 Wears proudly
- 11 Obliquely
- 12 Utensil with a mesh bottom
- 13 Freud contemporary
- 18 Penpoints
- 19 Vintage wheels
- 24 Smart fellows?
- 26 Recline lazily
- 27 Birthday preparation class?
- 29 Used one's cell
- 31 With 38-Down, employment termination
- 32 Hwy. lane type
- 33 Rd. or st.
- 34 Long time
- 35 Pace of a piece

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

D	O	N	S	B	T	E	A	M	S	P	A	M			
E	M	I	T	L	U	C	C	I	P	E	S	O			
R	E	N	O	A	C	O	R	N	R	A	S	P			
A	R	T	L	I	N	K	L	E	T	T	E	R			
I	T	H	I	N	K	T	E	E	T	H	E				
L	A	S	G	E	N	T	E	E	L	R	U	M			
A	G	R	A	N	A	T	I	O	N	A	L	D	E	B	T
P	R	E	S	S	C	H	A	R	G	E	S				
T	I	L	H	O	T	S	E	A	T	C	P	A			
S	P	A	D	E	R	L	A	G	O	O	N				
P	E	A	N	U	T	A	L	L	E	R	G	Y			
M	E	S	A	D	R	O	M	E	T	O	R	O			
A	X	E	L	O	A	T	E	R	A	N	O	N			
P	O	S	T	G	L	O	R	Y	T	A	M	E			

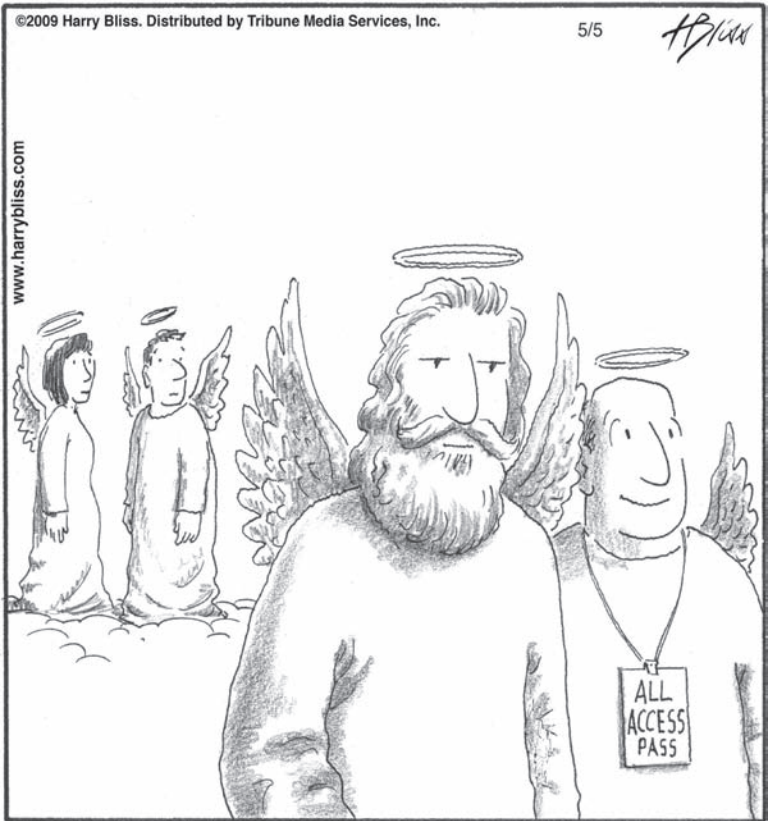
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5/7/09

- 36 UN delegate
- 37 502, to the Romans
- 38 See 31-Down
- 40 Caesar's TV sidekick
- 41 In direct confrontation
- 45 Brew container
- 46 "I've Gotta ___": 1969 hit
- 47 Paso ___: two-step
- 48 Commander
- 49 Rogue
- 50 Former RR watchdog
- 51 Not as common
- 53 Rogue
- 54 News analyst Roberts
- 55 "Doe, ___": song lyric
- 58 Car sticker abbr.
- 61 Old annoyed cry
- 62 Miner's objective
- 63 One on a beat



"In my day we didn't have video games - we had cigarettes!"



CLASSIFIEDS

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

You can sign up at www.linnbenton.edu/go/StudentEmployment to look at student & graduate jobs. *For more info about the opportunities listed below, please see Carla in Student Employment in the Career Center (Takena 101).

CNAs/Caregivers (#7267, Albany) If you like working with the elderly, these positions offer full-time, part-time and various shifts.

Laundry Aide (#7270, Albany) Part-time, weekends and on-call opportunities exist for this posting which would provide extra money for a student.

Maintenance 3—HVAC Technician (#7273, Corvallis) If you can provide journey level maintenance services for the school district, this job is for you. They are looking to hire ASAP!

Seasonal Truck Drivers (#7277) & Harvester Operator (#7276) Are you looking for summer work? This Albany company is taking applications starting June 8 for full-time seasonal work!!

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