

# THE Torch

Independent Newspaper of Lane  
Community College

*it's time to vote*

*Special Election May 20*

**VOL. 55 EDITION 3**





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## The MatchBox

By The Torch Staff

Welcome to the MatchBox Column, we're glad you could make it.

It's no secret — we love *Eugene Weekly*. If you've ever flipped through their free print edition, out every Thursday, you've probably come across their commentary column *Slant*. Students at *The Torch* have been asked (repeatedly) to do something similar, so here it is: *MatchBox* — like *Slant*, but more student-focused, and focused squarely on things that matter for the population of Lane Community College.

- **Where did April's print issue go?** Good question. It's not lost — just...delayed. We decided to upgrade from eight pages to twelve, onboard new staff, and invest in training so that Editor-in-Chief Kat Tabor and Managing Editor River Shepherd don't burn out trying to make this paper happen on their own. Trust us, it's worth the wait. Please help us welcome Rye Butler-Corbett, Amy Prince and Fern Dimick to the team! We're still hiring — work-study and freelance positions available. Hit up [torcheditor@lanecc.edu](mailto:torcheditor@lanecc.edu) if you want in.
- **More on the board elections.** The LCC Board of Education election is heating up, and ballots for the May 20 special election should already be in your mailbox (or your recycle bin — go fish it out, please). Student candidate Devon Lawson isn't pulling punches. This week, he told *The Torch* he was "disturbed" after his opponent received an endorsement from Darin Harbick — he described as a far-right figure known for opposing HB 2002, Oregon's 2023 bill protecting gender-affirming and reproductive care. "When I saw my opponent endorsed by right-wing MAGA State Representative Darin Harbick, I was disturbed," Lawson says. "This is the same person whose relatives stormed the Capitol on January 6th, and who actively opposed a 2023 Oregon House Bill which protected vital reproductive and gender-affirming care services for Oregonians [HB 2002]. Freedom of education is on the ballot May 20, and voters deserve to know which candidate will stand by their values and who won't." Lawson has centered his campaign in direct opposition to sitting board member Julie Wiesmann, criticizing her role in the December 18 appointment process. Wiesmann told *The Torch* she

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THE **Torch**

abstained on principle, stating that as someone who was herself appointed in July, she felt "unqualified to vote" and that the decision should be left to voters.

- **LCC SPA finishes Macbeth.** Shout-out to the Student Production Association for pulling off a powerful run of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Directed and adapted by local actor, director, and theater creator Paul Dunkel, the show brought blood, betrayal and bold performances to the LCC stage. Bravo.
- **Miss the Sneaker Ball?** Sneakers, mocktails, and serious vibes. The Black Student Union and Student Government Association took over the second floor of the Center Building for the first-ever Sneaker Ball — and yes, it was a whole moment. Dat Boi DJ Smuve brought the beats, the food was free, and the energy was high. The Torch tips its hat to BSU and SGA for kicking off what we hope becomes a legendary LCC tradition as they have plans to continue this next spring.

Drama? Always. Democracy? Hopefully. Match lit.

## Want to Know How Your Car Works?

SUMMER 2025

AM 141 - Automotive Basics & Maintenance

Join us and gain hands-on skills to maintain and repair your vehicle like a pro!



By the End of This Course, You'll Be Able To:

- Identify major automotive components and their functions.
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- Use diagnostic tools to troubleshoot common problems.
- Apply repair techniques to fix car issues.
- Maintain a safe, professional work environment.

Term: Summer 2025  
 Days: Tues/Thurs  
 Times: 8 - 11:50 am  
 CRN: 10435

For more information, contact:  
[BTAdmin@lanecc.edu](mailto:BTAdmin@lanecc.edu)



## Community

By River Shepherd

Community.

That's the only reason I'm still here.

Between spring term 2023 and now, I've met so many people here at Lane Community College who are helping me save my own life.

They are doing that by helping me see that my own life is worth saving.

Forgetting for the moment about my 'progressive' physical disability – which has no cure – the cure for my suicidality and general self-harming tendencies all comes down to having a wider community around me who cares about and supports me. This, vitally, is along with medication and therapy.

The meds and therapy were never enough by themselves. The community piece was incomplete for a long time in my life.

When I looked up one day and realized I had begun to build my own community here at Lane, I was skeptical that any one of these people actually cared about me as a person and not simply as a worker, student, classmate or obligation of some kind.

I found out they do mean what they say a few months ago – around mid-January – while fighting through my latest and strongest bout of suicidal ideation in some time.

Winter term started rough. It felt like there was no way I could do and be everything I'd committed to; felt like nothing was worth it because everything dies anyway. Life felt too exhausting to continue, and I didn't want to ask for help – just needed everything to stop immediately.

So I dropped all my classes, even though it was past the refund deadline. I emailed my supervisor to quit my work study job, and did the same to the advisor of *The Torch* co-op.

Then I went for a drive. Ending up at the McKenzie river, I was overcome with the urge to walk into the cold, violent flow and let it take me. No one knew where I was; it would have been so easy.

Something held me back (thinking of my dogs – they can't understand).

Telling myself I would come back in one month after getting my affairs in order and making arrangements for the dogs, I went back home, "just one more month" repeating in my head the whole way.

The next day, four people on campus turned me around.

Initially just going back to *The Torch* to return a camera, the advisor and then-editor ended up talking to me for some time. They were kind and understanding about me leaving school, though they put the bug in my ear that they were thinking of making me Managing Editor in spring term. (*Why would they say that? Did they actually believe in me?*)

As I was leaving campus, Mike Walker stopped me on the sidewalk and asked me how I was. Blurted out that I'd dropped all my classes and when pressed about it, admitted why. "Sounds like you need to talk to Rebecca," he said, and steered me into Building 4 to see Rebecca Ramos, the benefits navigator working on CARE drop-in that day. That conversation with Ramos changed everything.

Less than 24 hours after dropping them, I was back in all my classes. My job took me back enthusiastically, as did *The Torch*. I was honest with the people I needed to be honest with about what had happened. Told them how CARE was advocating for me in the situation that had triggered me into crisis in the first place, how I'd come up with a plan for staying in school, and that I was sorry for inconveniencing everyone.

Something surprising came of that – instead of judging me, the people in my support system on campus actually showed genuine care, understanding and concern for my well being. Some shared their own struggles, which helped me feel a whole lot less alone. Many also shared things that they enjoy about having me around. This was vital for me to hear (or read, in the case of emails).

Instead of rejecting their help or disbelieving them when they told me good things about myself (which I used to), I started choosing to accept their help, their kind words, and their belief in my abilities in good faith.

This combination of factors and choices has made the past couple of months life changing for me.

*Lane* has been life changing for me.

Every student should know that it's worth the risk to ask for and accept help, to build honest relationships with the people around them, and to cultivate their own community here.

We are all worth it.

*If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis or having thoughts of suicide, you can call or text the national suicide hotline at 988. On campus, the Mental Health and Wellness Center located in Bldg 18 Rm 101 has FREE counseling services for LCC students, along with other mental health resources. While CARE located in Bldg 4 Rm 210 is not a mental health crisis provider, they can help you find ways to meet your basic needs and can help if you are having trouble accessing the services and resources you need at LCC and in the community.*



Illustrated by Kat Tabor

## The Wrong Turn That Changed Everything

By Kat Tabor

It is an honor to be part of such a pivotal moment in history by serving as editor-in-chief of *The Torch*. I'm deeply grateful for this opportunity, passed down to me by those who saw something in me before I even saw it in myself. I intend to cherish it — just as I've cherished every moment on this team.

If you're a Lane Community College student with even the slightest interest in writing, storytelling or truth-seeking, I invite you to give journalism a shot. We are always looking for more reporters and writers. Whether you've dreamed of being a journalist or just want to try something new, there is space for your voice at *The Torch*.

I joined the paper in October 2024 by complete accident. I walked into the wrong door and ended up talking with then-editor Chandlor Henderson and faculty advisor Camilla Mortensen. Within minutes, I was writing. That wrong door changed the course of my life — permanently. Journalism became my passion, my purpose and my career.

Because of *The Torch*, I've had opportunities I never imagined. I'm proud to be the first Lane Community College student to be awarded the Snowden Journalism of Excellence Internship — a highly competitive, paid program that places student journalists in professional newsrooms across Oregon. This summer, I'll be working with the *Columbia Gorge*

**LCCtorch.com**

*News* in Hood River for a 10-week placement. This milestone would not have been possible without *The Torch*. I truly would not be where I am today without it.

This year, we're also honoring *The Torch's* legacy by bringing back one of our classic logos — just in time for the return of our print editions. Print is more than paper; it's a powerful way to bring the voices of our students and campus together in one place. By reviving this tradition, we're not only celebrating our past, but building a stronger future for student journalism at Lane.

In addition to my work with *The Torch*, I'm also proud to help uphold *The Denali*, our literary arts magazine. We're currently accepting submissions of student poetry, artwork and creative writing for both the magazine and a new column in the paper. To submit, email [denali@lanecc.edu](mailto:denali@lanecc.edu) — we'd love to feature your work.

So if you're standing in front of a door and wondering whether to open it — do it. You never know where it might lead.

If you'd like to join us at *The Torch* or write a letter to the editor, please reach out to [editor@lcctorch.com](mailto:editor@lcctorch.com). I would love to hear from you.

Gratefully,

*Kat Tabor*



## Protecting Our Community

An open letter to President Bulger and LCC administrators

By Jeremiah Powers

Dr. Martin Luther King asserted that **“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”**

I ask that our school administrators not be complicit in their silence.

I would like to commend our school administration's respect for the rule of law. However, the rule of law has shown to be ineffective at protecting communities.

ICE has acted without warrants or due process to remove students, sometimes forcefully from campuses across the nation. In our own state the University of Oregon had four student visas temporarily revoked without explanation. It can be theorized that they were vocal with their disagreements about certain political events on the global stage. This is not a crime, nor a valid or legal reason to revoke legal status to be in this country. This is a systemic silencing of free speech.

Similarly OSU had 13 student visas revoked. It can be said that these students were asked to “self deport” while their visas were revoked but what if they had chosen not to? These institutions have conveyed volumes with their silence in supporting their students.

Will Lane Community College do better?

In a communication dated Feb.10, President Stephanie Bulger wrote to the Lane Community College faculty, staff, and student body that “While we all continue to monitor and

respond to the changes, it is our goal to maintain a welcoming climate where all feel safe and supported.”

With recent events on both the federal and local levels I am calling on you to revisit this commitment and clearly define what steps you are taking to defend our community. President Bulger cited procedural updates and very vaguely addressed personal status concerns in this Feb. 10 email which I will list and respond to below:

### “Procedural review and updates

— Revisions have been made to the procedure on building access to include the designation of public and private spaces. Generally, ICE may not take enforcement action in designated private spaces without a judicial warrant.

— You may begin to notice signage placed at College locations to more clearly designate public and private spaces for the public.

### Personal status concerns

— All College employees have documented status in compliance with applicable employment law; however, there may be some employees with temporary protected status who have concerns about that status being terminated by the Department of Homeland Security. If this situation describes you, please talk with your manager or with Vice President for Human Resources Shane Turner to confidentially share your concerns and discuss options and resources that may be available.” — President Bulger

The federal administration has invoked the alien enemies act to remove individuals with legal status from our country without due process, nor respect for the rule of law. Is it Lane Community College's belief that new signage and building access procedure revisions will provide a significant barrier if ICE does choose to act on our campus? If these measures do not protect our students and staff what recourse can the college take? What measures will the administration take?

I ask you to **clearly define** what measures this institution's administration is currently taking, or willing to take to protect our students, faculty, and staff.

Please, communicate openly and specifically. Don't pay lip service to your students and employees. We deserve more than just boilerplate statements that leave more questions than answers.

I ask for more **open dialogue** between the administrators of this college, students, faculty, and staff to address the concerns of all those who are expected to view our campuses as a safe space.

Please, hold open assemblies that will dictate how faculty, staff, and students are expected to respond to threats to their civil liberties. Make these sessions open to the student body, involve the Student Government Association in shaping these policies for the betterment of their constituents.

I ask if you respect the rule of law that you respect every person's right to due process and tell us what **tangible** measures are, or will be implemented to ensure that due process is indeed provided.

Please, explain to your students, faculty and staff if ICE comes to our campus and invokes an executive mandate without a judicial warrant to attempt removal of a student or employee what will be the administration's response? How is public safety expected to respond in defense of students, faculty, or staff in these circumstances?

What if individuals claiming to be ICE attempt to abduct persons from our campus but refuse to identify themselves or provide credentials, as has been reported to be the case in other instances? How will the administration and public safety respond at that moment? Will they act in defense of their students and employees? How far is the administration willing to execute its authority against unidentified and unlawful assailants?

These are answers we all not only deserve but should be entitled to if you truly hold our safety and well-being in as high regard as you have claimed.

Your Student,  
Jeremiah Powers



Headshot Courtesy Of Jeremiah Powers

## The Torch is our flame, so let's keep it lit

By Rick Bella Torch Editor-in-Chief, 1974-75

It's been a long time since we last spoke — 50 years, in fact. But I want to tell you how excited I am to learn that The Torch is again alive and well at Lane Community College.

Over the years, I'd lost track of The Torch, incorrectly assuming that LCC regarded its role as essential and would protect it. I thought the institutional and political groundwork laid by the late Pete Peterson, journalism instructor and Torch advisor from 1971-2002, would make the campus-focused media complex forever safe.

I was wrong.

I was distressed to learn last year that The Torch had fallen on tough times. It had become all but financially orphaned and was teetering on the edge of oblivion.

But then, I was elated to learn that Camilla Mortensen, Eugene Weekly's editor-in-chief and a University of Oregon instructor, had begun teaching journalism again at Lane while serving as The Torch's advisor.

I was over the moon to hear Camilla had recruited former Torch Editor Chandler Henderson to return for a second tour of duty and revive the struggling operation.

And now, I am very happy to see the reins have been turned over to Editor-in-Chief Kat Tabor and Managing Editor River Shepherd. They are a good team — energetic and dedicated to making the organization strong online and in print.

Kat and River have assembled a solid team of reporters, a photographer and a cartoonist who cover everything from academics and the arts to politics and sports.

Together, they regularly feed an easy-to-navigate home

page (<https://lcctorch.com/>) and maintain a social media presence while still putting hard-copy print editions into the campus newspaper boxes.

Of course, The Torch offers invaluable co-op internships to budding journalists who want to sharpen their skills and get real-world experience at writing stories.

At the same time, working at The Torch can help non-journalists learn how to research a topic, distill the information and express it clearly.

The Torch also informs students — and faculty members — about the ever-changing politics, programs and people on the LCC campus. That, in turn, facilitates the campus conversation, empowering readers to help shape the environment around them. This is exactly why democracy needs strong journalism to keep it vital.

At LCC, it can mean holding the Board of Education accountable for its decisions and its decision-making processes.

It can mean shedding a wider, brighter light on successful new programs as yet little known beyond small circles.

It can mean giving voice to people and personalities too often overlooked in the daily grind.

In short, The Torch can be the mirror, flashlight and hammer for the entire campus.

I say that with confidence because The Torch was all those things for me, giving me the basic tools to forge a 40-year career in Oregon journalism.

In the fall of 1974, I arrived at LCC to study journalism and finish some lower-division credits after a health emergency knocked me out of the University of Oregon. Because The Torch was on shaky ground, I soon was drafted to become editor and restore stability. With the help of an eager staff and wide support, we turned everything around.

The following year, I returned to the UO and became managing editor of the Daily Emerald while working as a part-time correspondent for United Press International. After that, I worked for the Springfield News, Eugene Register-Guard, Oregon Journal and The Oregonian, where I put in 33 years as a reporter, editor and columnist. I'm proud to say I won a bunch of awards along the way.

But I never forgot where I got my start.

In fact, it still feels as though The Torch gave me wings and taught me how to fly. After that, where and how high I flew was up to me.

The Torch is LCC's eyes and ears. It can spot change — good and bad — before it lands at our feet. That gives everyone a chance to react, to take part in the democratic process.

Most of all, however, The Torch is LCC's voice, part stage, part trumpet and part microphone for the entire campus.

It's a joy for me to hear those voices again, in the place where I first learned how to speak.

Rick Bella

[rickbella@comcast.net](mailto:rickbella@comcast.net)

503-913-4199



Headshot Courtesy Of Rick Bella

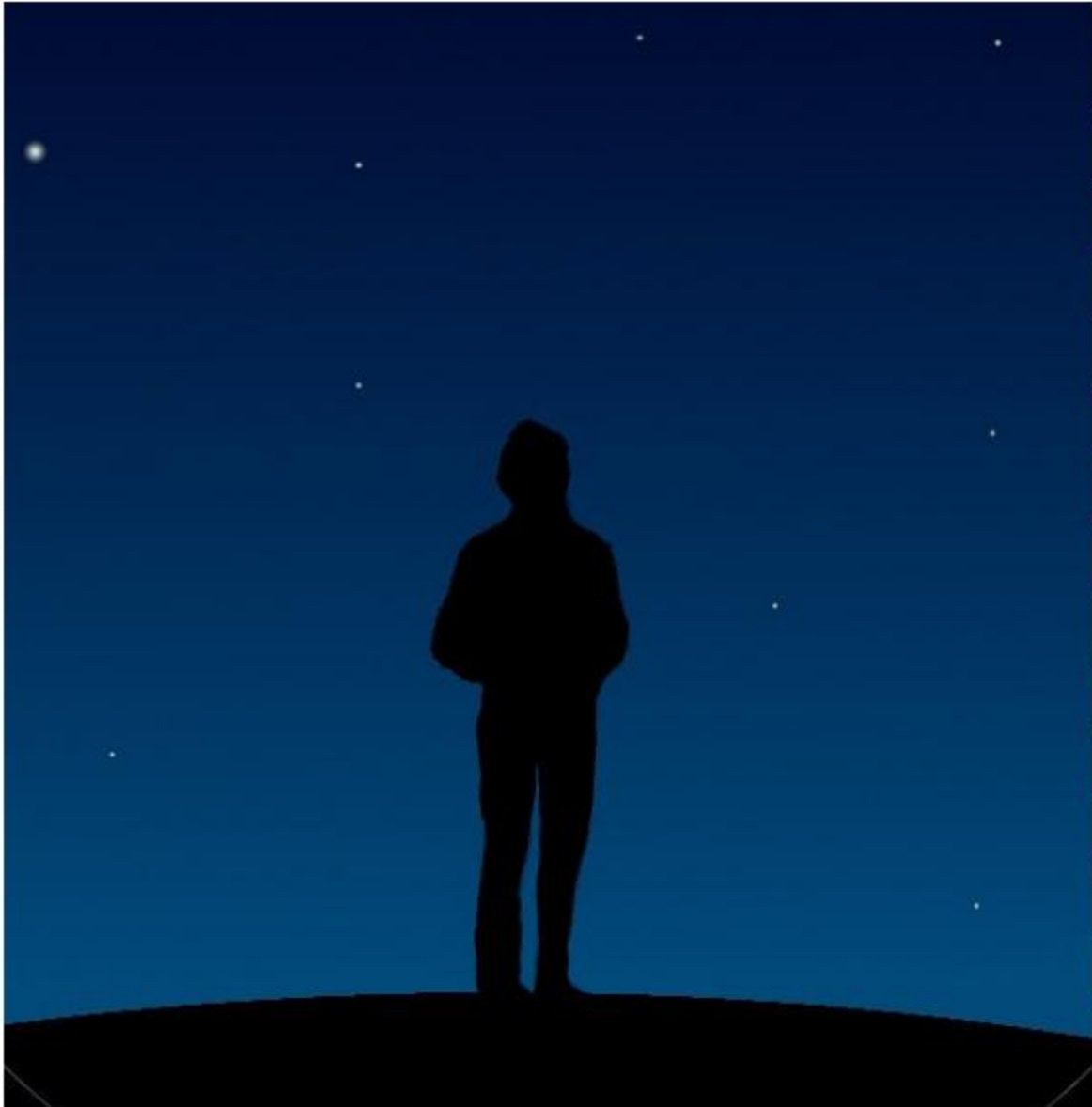


Stand up

By River Shepherd for Denali

Who will warn us of the hurricane  
Fast approaching ravaged shores  
Who will warn us of the rainfall  
Unprecedented as it pours  
Who will track the changes  
On this earth so rare and blue  
Constant decimation  
What the fuck are we to do?  
Stand up for our neighbors  
Stand up for our rights  
Stand up for our climate  
And fight the good long fight  
We won't bend to fascists  
We won't hide away in fear  
Won't let them take away  
Our vital tools to steer  
The fate of our nation  
Our world and our lives  
Depends on our ability  
To reject blatant lies  
We can't give up now  
This is only the start  
Voices joined together  
Being brave and taking part  
Is what will turn the tide back  
Is what will break our fall  
Is what will scare the fascists  
Is what will make them stall  
So join in now together  
To end this break-neck race  
To end this cult of genocide  
Of consumption out of pace  
With what the earth can give  
And what our hands should take  
We cannot turn a blind eye  
When all lives are at stake.

Written in honor of all public servants and scientists who have lost their jobs due to DOGE and the Trump administration, in particular the climate scientists and meteorologists at NOAA.



Stargazer By Robin Tabor



Rough and Raggy Road

By Victor Ivanov for Denali

It's a rough and rocky road  
When your nose is to the grindstone  
When your day starts before the early bird gets the worm  
and at night, the path is lit by burning the midnight oil  
So many times, you'd wish the journey was over  
Then looked back and remember how far you'd come  
Every plateau, a place to rest and take a breath  
Over every hill and through the valleys  
Brimstone and fire will not stop you  
But through them your steels have sharpened  
and you'll have learned just how heavy is the head that wears the crown  
So as the ink dries on the last page of the epic  
You may feel the journey is over, yet, a new one has already begun  
And every life lesson learned, and heartfelt connection made upon the way,  
will be with you on the next rough and raggy road

Earth or bust

By River Shepherd for Denali

When people speak of cities and states  
as if they'll still be here  
in 300 years, give or take  
I wonder if they understand  
that our Earth herself  
is only water and shifting sand  
forever caught in orbit by  
gravity, we can't fully decipher  
our planet's so special  
yet we continue to knife her  
you and I: smaller than dust  
so don't tell me you can know  
that this city won't go bust.

dear mr president,

Rye BC for Denali

A monotonous tone echoes throughout the country.  
We stand shell shocked  
a misogynist erases our names  
In the Name of protecting women.  
“Gender” is being replaced with sex  
Many of the “women” he speaks of  
do not want this protection  
but what about our trans sisters - Are you protecting them as well?  
Of all the catastrophes to address;  
poverty, exploitation, violence, inequality  
Why spend so much time  
Erasing words from national documents and websites  
...forbidding pronouns from emails...  
Why be so redundant?  
“Out of sight out of mind”  
does not work here.  
We will never stop existing  
You cannot erase existence.  
Dear Mr president,  
No one will stop talking about us.  
*Because we will not stop talking.*



By Amelia Hampton

This piece features an images of a Okapi, a Bali Mynah, and an Iguana.





Community supporter at LCC town hall with U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle — photo by Sophie Armenti

mer Rep. Peter DeFazio and Max Richtman, president and CEO of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, visited Lane Community College to discuss recent changes to Social Security and voter activism. On February 2, Rep. Jeff Merkley visited South Eugene High School to address political activity in Washington, D.C., and the importance of community engagement in politics. Both representatives emphasized the importance of participating in the election process, highlighting the decrease in voter turnout in the most recent elections.

Among the most closely watched races are four open seats on the Lane Community College Board of Education. The Torch has published detailed profiles of each LCC board candidate, available at [lcctorch.com](http://lcctorch.com) under the “Candidate Profiles for the 2025 LCC Board of Education Election” tab.

LCC Board of Education – Candidates on the Ballot:

Zone 1: Jerry Rust, Jeffrey Cooper

Zone 3: Julie Weismann, Devon Lawson

Zone 4: Austin Fölnagy, Richard Andrew Vasquez



Illustrated by Jade Wilkerson

# AI and the Future of Job Security

## Will jobs be replaced by artificial intelligence?

By Michael C. Sherman

With the rise in popularity of artificial intelligence (AI), the fear that this new technology will replace jobs has sparked a discussion about job security. Similar to when computers were first made commercially available, the internet became a standard, and robotic technologies were

# Special Election Ballots Hit Mailboxes Across Lane County

By Kat and Robin Tabor

Ballots for the May 20 special district election are now arriving in mailboxes across Lane County, launching a wide-ranging vote that spans more than 200 contests. Voters will decide on key leadership roles across school boards, education service districts, fire districts, water commissions and more.

The Oregon Voters’ Pamphlet has also been released, and town hall meetings have been held across the state in the lead-up to the election. On April 23, U.S. Rep. Val Hoyle, for-

Position 7 At-Large (2-year term): Jesse Alejandro Maldonado (unopposed)

Additional school board elections will take place in districts across the county, including Eugene 4J, Bethel, Springfield, Fern Ridge, Junction City and others. Because these are district-based races, voters will only see contests for the districts in which they reside.

Several fire and school districts are asking voters to approve funding measures, including:

Measure 20-370 (Crow-Applegate-Lorane School District): Would renew a five-year local option levy to sustain staffing and educational programming.

Measure 20-368 (Junction City School District): A \$40 million bond to enhance school safety and expand facilities, with a \$6 million state match if passed.

Measure 21-232 (Lincoln County School District): A \$73.3 million bond proposal to upgrade infrastructure and expand vocational education.

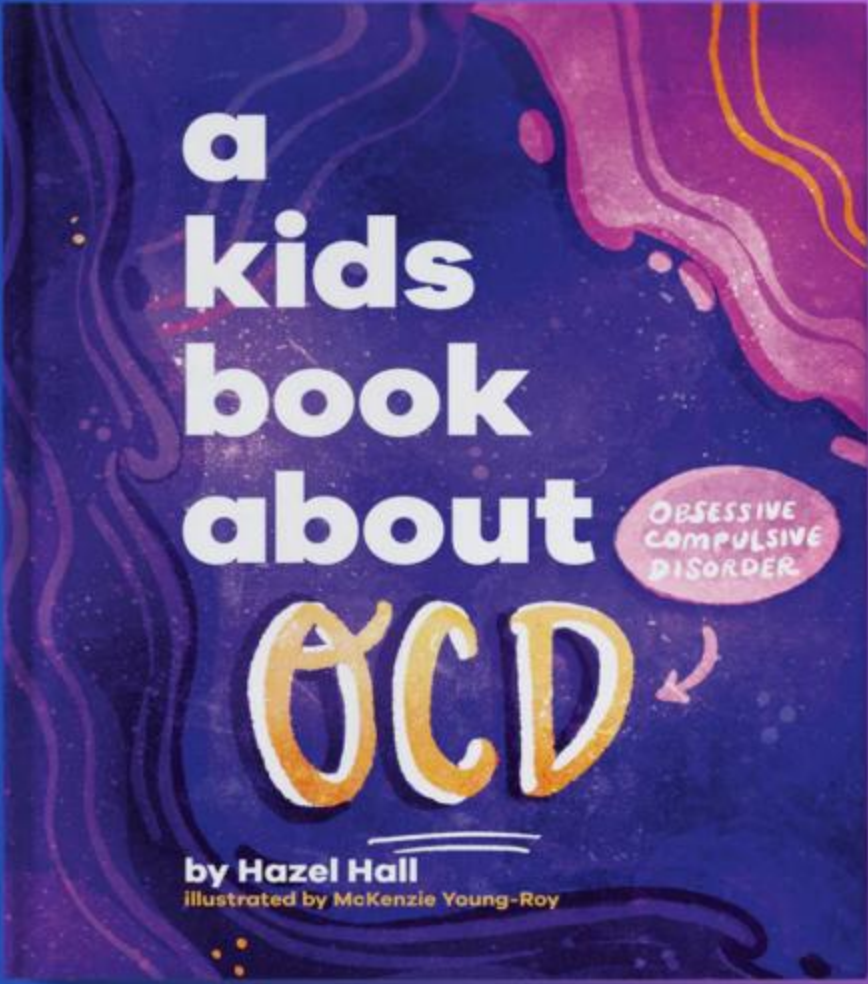
Measure 20-367 (Lowell RFPD): Would enact a five-year operational levy to support emergency staffing and equipment.

Measure 20-369 (Santa Clara RFPD): Seeks to renew a local option tax for general fire district operations.

These measures come at a time when the recently introduced fire service fee has sparked community concern. Residents have voiced concerns over possible reductions in hours, layoffs and even closures at essential public services like the Sheldon Recreation Center, Amazon Pool and the Eugene Public Library.

As the situation unfolds, *The Torch* will continue reporting on the fire fee’s local impact. Community members with tips, stories, or perspectives can email [torcheditor@lanecc.edu](mailto:torcheditor@lanecc.edu). Letters to the editor and guest viewpoints are also welcome.

To read the complete Lane County Voters’ Guide and check which races and measures will appear on your ballot, visit [lanecounty.org/elections](http://lanecounty.org/elections). Ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 20. Postmarks do not count. For drop box locations, visit [oregonvotes.gov](http://oregonvotes.gov).



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introduced — today, some jobs are at risk of being replaced by AI technology.

Speaking with faculty members from multiple departments at Lane Community College (LCC) and an analyst from the State of Oregon’s Employment Department, a similar sentiment is echoed: while many jobs will be impacted and specific tasks eliminated, for now AI technology will be used in a supporting role, rather than as a replacement for people altogether.

The jobs that are most secure from AI require hands-on interaction. Faculty from vocational programs offered at LCC, in fields such as diesel technology, manufacturing and construction, expressed that employment demand for people is growing faster than students enrolling in their programs. Instructors from each of these departments project that AI will not replace people in these fields without huge advancements in robotic technology. While they agreed AI will be involved in the future of these industries, it will be just another tool in their belt.

Other career paths outside of the trades that are unlikely to see a reduction in the workforce include careers that necessitate one-on-one interactions. Many roles within health care, such as nurses or EMTs, are unlikely to be replaced. Fields that have a high level of security are people working in social services. These are the types of positions that need people to be present, both physically and empathetically.

Erin McGladrey, with LCC’s Social Sciences, Social Services and Education career community spoke about how they train people to work with: “Major social conditions like housing, food insecurity, racism/homophobia and other forms of oppression, substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, mental health, crisis intervention, youth empower-

ment, refugees and immigrant support, etc. This is in-person, one-on-one or group work — not much AI.”

Henry Fields, an analyst for Oregon’s Employment Department for Lane and Douglas counties, said, “When I’m helping advise people who are in high school or college, who are trying to think about what comes next, there are certainly things that are markedly in decline that are associated with technology.” Fields continued, “The demand for people that have problem solving and analysis skills is consistent, economy wide. Communication and teamwork, these sort of human-oriented skills, that whatever passion or industry they find themselves in, will always be needed. Developing those skill sets, alongside that content knowledge is crucial, as well as a familiarity and comfort with emerging technologies.”

When considering whether a career path is secure from artificial intelligence and mechanization, it is important to consider several factors, such as: whether the position requires complex, non-repetitive movements, if the industry is able to afford a costly new technology, and most importantly, whether it is a job that requires a high degree of human interaction. The consensus in all fields from industrial trades to business professionals, is that AI will change the landscape of every industry and the skills associated with them but there will always be a need for people with in-depth expertise that can learn and utilize AI as it develops.



# Improper Battery Disposal Is a Dumpster Fire (Literally)

Lithium-ion batteries combust on contact with water or oxygen— and their presence in Lane County landfills are only increasing.

By Fern Dimick

How many rechargeable devices do you own? A laptop, a phone? Maybe even an electric toothbrush? What will you do when they break?

Your knee jerk reaction may be to just throw it away — but doing so can have dire consequences.

Rechargeable devices made within the past 20 years contain lithium-ion batteries. Lithium is a highly reactive element, and if exposed to oxygen or water, the battery will burst into flames.

The Clean Energy Institute at the University of Washington states that the first commercial use of li-ion batteries was in 1991. They have since become the predominant type of battery used in electric vehicles and rechargeable devices.

According to Waste Reduction Specialist Maya Buelow, fires caused by lithium-ion batteries doubled in Lane County from 2018 to 2023. Despite multiple options to dispose of these batteries safely, they are being tossed into facilities that aren't designed to process them — such as landfills, which increases the chance of combustion.

Buelow insists that a lack of education is a major player in this issue. “Especially [sic] in the last ten [to] twenty years, the battery chemistries have changed a lot,” Buelow adds. “So education and knowledge in the general public around what to do with each of those battery chemistries is just not caught up.”

According to electrochemist Matthias Agne, li-ion batteries have one side with lithium (held together by graphite) and the other with a conductive element (like nickel or cobalt). This provides the electrons needed for a chemical reaction — giving the battery its power.

To ensure that no reaction occurs randomly inside the battery, there is a thin glass

separator. However, there needs to be a way for the lithium to go through this separator when the battery needs to be used.

“All of the lithium-ion battery technology that we’re using right now is all doing that with a liquid component,” Agne says, “This is basically a salt solution with lithium salt that allows the lithium ions to go back and forth between the graphite and the rock.”

Since the lithium salt solution doesn’t carry the electrons in addition to the lithium ions, it ensures that the chemical reaction does not happen on its own.

If the battery is damaged, then the lithium is exposed to water or oxygen, which will trigger the battery to combust.

One fire can damage other li-ion batteries and cause them to combust as well. When this happens in places packed with flammable materials, like landfills, things can quickly get out of hand.

Due to the high amounts of energy within the battery and the reactivity of lithium, these fires cannot be put out with extinguishers, water or sand. The only option is to smother the flame.

An even bigger problem emerges with batteries that are embedded in devices such as phones, laptops, electric vehicles (also known as an “EV”), or even light-up shoes. An embedded battery must be extracted from the device in order to dispose of the battery safely. However, the battery extraction process can cause damage to the battery vessel and result in flames.

Due to how quickly li-ion batteries charge and how long they last, it’s unlikely that they will leave the mainstream any time soon.

According to Maya Buelow, here are some ways that Lane County residents and facilities alike can practice battery safety:

## 1. Education

Educating yourself and others about safe battery disposal is the most important solution. There is a U.S. Department of Energy grant for Lane County that ensured an expansion of facilities and education programs (such as in Bethel School District) beginning in December of 2025. There are, however, at-home options for education as well.

Some examples include; Lane County’s WasteWise app (also available in website or newsletter format) where you can search a specific item and it tells you where and how to safely dispose of it.

Another example is Redwood Materials’ “Advocate Toolkit” which is a free to download PDF explaining batteries and how to

dispose of them as well as electronic devices.

Manufacturers often have instructions on safe disposal of their devices – make it a habit to check user manuals.

## 2. Practice Safety Before Disposal

Some important precautions to take at home include taping the circumference of the battery and (if the device is rechargeable) to only use chargers provided by the device manufacturer.

Taping the battery can prevent both damage to the battery as well as oxygen from making contact. Clear packaging tape is thick and wide, making it ideal.

Chargers (especially in the context of EVs) are made for specific devices and their batteries; this results in chargers adjusting how much energy they are giving to ensure no overheating (this can be seen when iPhones say they are “optimizing charging”). When you use a third party charger, there

is a higher risk of your device overheating.

It’s also important to make sure that you’re not leaving devices plugged in for longer than they need to be to decrease the chance of overheating. “Ideally, people aren’t leaving devices plugged in when they’re not home either,” Buelow adds.

In the instance of vaping devices, ditch the non-recyclable “disposables” and opt for devices that have a detachable battery.

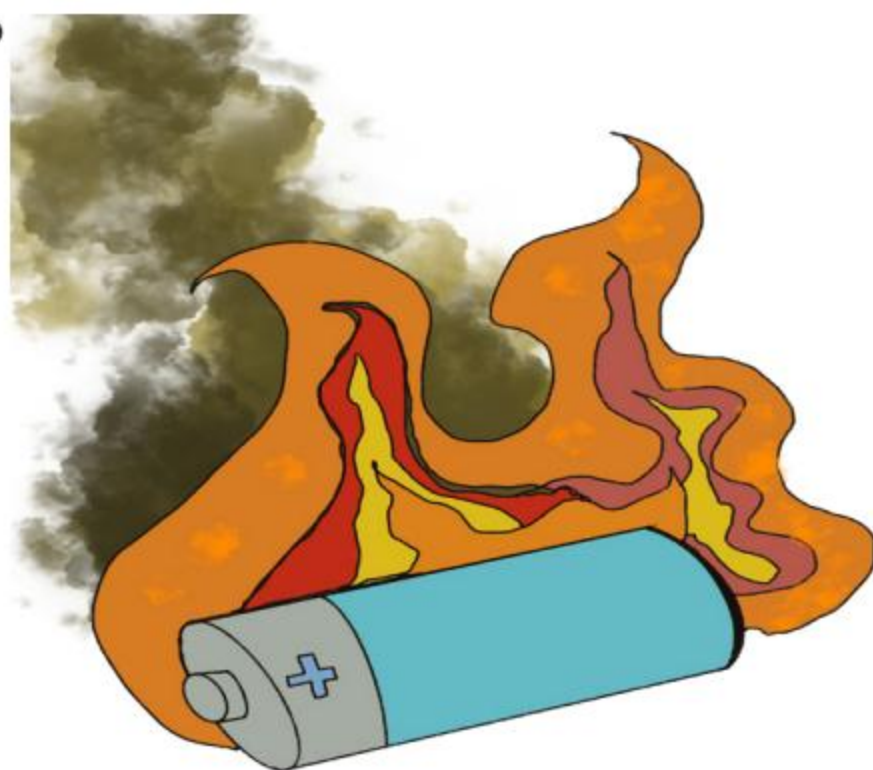
## 3. Recycling Programs

Lane County has the Household Hazardous Waste program hosted at Glenwood Transfer Station. An individual can simply schedule an appointment, and professionals will dispose of your materials for you. Just be sure to tape any batteries and store them in a ziploc bag beforehand!

Buelow recommends Redwood Materials, a company based in Nevada that is dedicated to safe battery and device recycling. They are unique in that they have the capacity to recycle EV batteries – something that is notoriously difficult and expensive to do. An individual can mail their device or batteries to Redwood Materials, and they will safely handle it.

Businesses, schools, and other facilities may turn to a program such as Call 2 Recycle. In this instance, the facility will pay for and receive a battery recycling box lined with a fiberglass blanket. If a fire were to occur inside, the liner will melt around it and smother the flame.

In fact, one of the key aspects of the Department of Energy grant mentioned above is that Call 2 Recycle and Bi-Mart will part-



Illustrated by Kat Tabor

ner to provide battery disposal sites in stores throughout Lane County with the hopes that safe battery disposal will be as common as going grocery shopping.

# Student Costs on the Rise: Classified Staff Members React to Tuition Hike

By Kat Tabor

Lane Community College’s Board of Education recently approved a 3.1% tuition hike — raising the cost of a credit to \$149 and adding \$67.50 for every additional credit beyond 15. As students head into the May election — with four Board of Education seats on the ballot — questions about affordability, access and information are at the forefront.

Manny Schlaepi, a former University of Oregon student and now a classified employee at LCC, says he spotted some information about the change — but not much.

“Yes, I did see some flyers about that,” Schlaepi says. “I’m not really a student here anymore — just a classified employee — but I was aware that this is a thing coming.”

Schlaepi, who identifies as neurodivergent, says his role at LCC has been a good fit. “It’s a great job for me,” he says. “I was fortunate enough to get an education, but I do have some student debt too.”

When asked if the tuition hike might affect who he votes for in the May election, Schlaepi says he’s still figuring it out. “I don’t have enough information about where these funds would go,” he says. “So I probably need to know a bit more about it. I would tend to want to keep the costs down for students. I mean, I think education is too expensive.”

As for where students can go to find out more about what’s happening on campus, Schlaepi says he would probably start simple. “There’s usually some kind of pamphlet... maybe a website?” he says.

The Torch has been covering the Board of Education and the upcoming elections. Students looking for more information about the tuition hike, candidate platforms and campus policy changes can visit [lcctorch.com/CandidateProfiles](http://lcctorch.com/CandidateProfiles).



# Echoes of Tradition: A Visual Journey Through the LCC 2025 Pow Wow

Photos by Sophie Armenti Written By Torch Staff



Each spring, Lane Community College’s Titan Coliseum fills with the sound of drums, the swirl of regalia, and the spirit of community during the annual Pow Wow, hosted by the Native American Student Association (NASA). Free and open to the public, the event invites all drums and dancers to participate in a day of cultural celebration. This year’s gathering, held April 5, featured two Grand Entries, a variety of vendor booths, and a community salmon dinner at the Longhouse. Guests could stop by the NASA table at the entrance for the day’s schedule, raffle tickets, and commemorative T-shirts — all part of a student-led effort to preserve and uplift Indigenous traditions on campus.

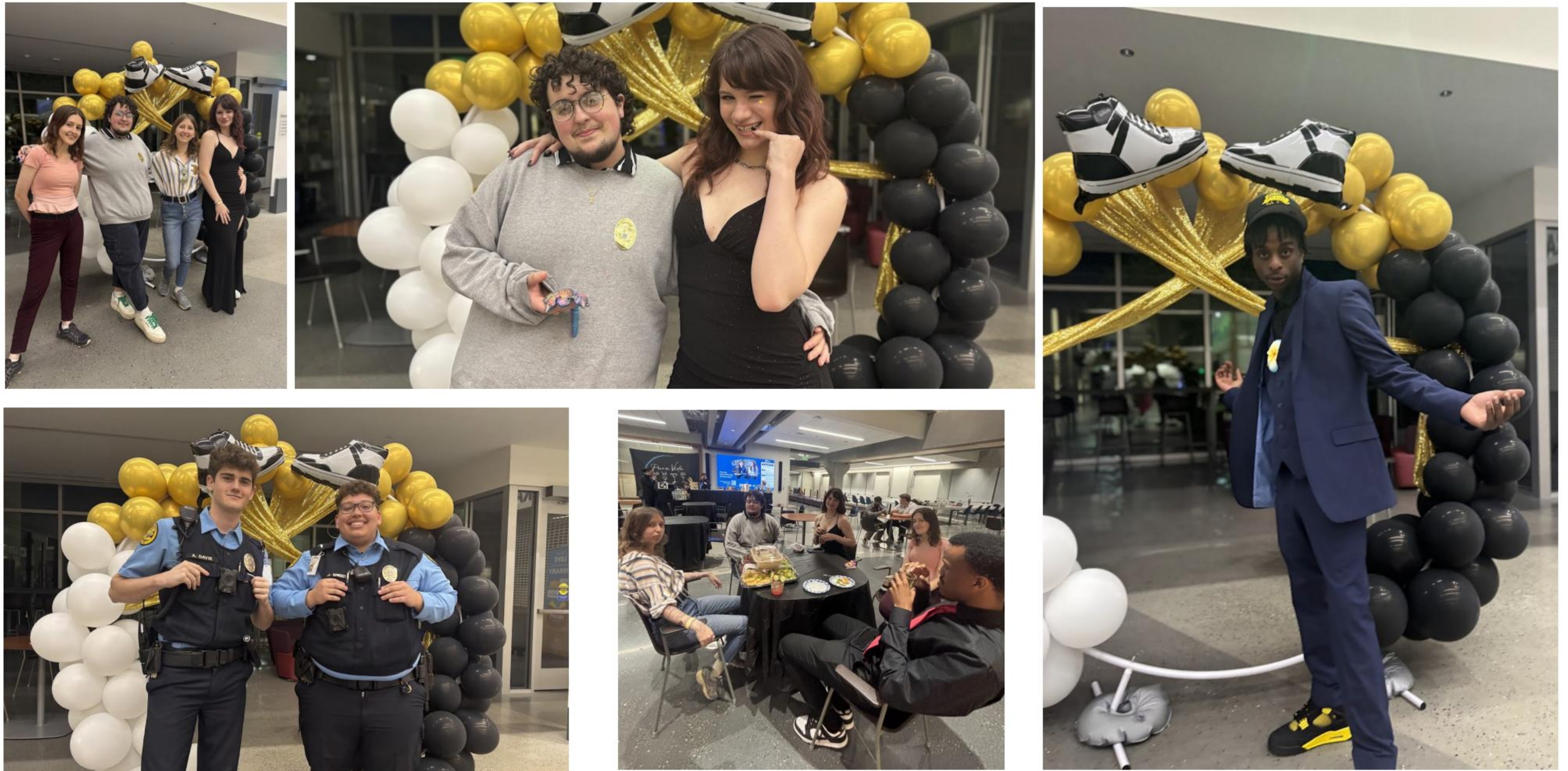
For a list of upcoming powwows across the country, visit [powwows.com](http://powwows.com).





# Laced Up and Dressed Up: Photo Highlights from the 2025 BSU Sneaker Ball

By Kat Tabor



## Anyone Can Dance

DanceAbility encourages artistic expression and connection between people of all abilities

By Amy Prince

It’s one thing to dance like no one’s watching, but it’s something else entirely to perform in front of an audience.

This was no ordinary dance, and the four dancers were not ordinary dancers. These dancers broke stereotypes, uprooted misconceptions, and dissolved prejudices by showing the audience that anyone can dance. Variations of this group have traveled all over the world, performing at a wide range of venues.

On Wednesday, April 23, the group known as DanceAbility performed at the University of Oregon’s Redwood Auditorium, dancing to recorded music by Orchestra NEXT, a non-profit organization based in Eugene.

DanceAbility is a groundbreaking dance method created in 1987 by Alito Alessi and Karen Nelson. Since 1989, it has been led solely by Alessi. The approach centers on improvisational dance to encourage artistic expression and connection between people of all abilities.

After the performance, the dancers responded to questions from the audience. When asked about choreography, Alito said “We collaborate, and we improvise a lot, and layer in concepts that are relevant to our life, like crutches.” He went on to say that the choreography process starts with music first, then movement, or movement first, then music. “Every body interprets its movement in its own way.”

This September-November, DanceAbility is offering a 25 Hour Intensive Course instructed by Award Winning & DanceAbility Founder, Alito Alessi. Classes will be hosted at the Hilyard Community Center in Eugene.

To learn more about DanceAbility International, please visit [DanceAbility.com](https://DanceAbility.com).



Illustrated by Kat Tabor

## Geology Club

Join us on Discord



Tuesdays

Updates about our schedule on discord

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Building 16, Room 211



## Yoga CLUB



- Stretch
- Strengthen
- Balance
- Meditation
- Inner peace

Building 5 Room 132  
Wednesday 11 - 12



### What is Yoga Club?

In 2005, two LCC science students felt inspired by campus yoga classes to pursue an outside of the classroom opportunity to strengthen their practice. For this one hour, we might talk about and practice certain postures, engage in a guided meditation, exchange ayurvedic lifestyle ideas, or have a guest yoga from the community. To meet yoga, the practice of yoga postures on the mat extends to physical and mental well-being off the mat and this club is an opportunity for anyone - yoga experience or not - to learn about the practice. Club is facilitated by science faculty member Sunny Castaneda, one of the students from 2005.

To request accommodations for or advertisements about this event in an alternate format, contact the Center for Accessible Resources at (541) 463-5150 or [accessibleresources@lancet.edu](mailto:accessibleresources@lancet.edu) (link sends e-mail) in advance. Some accommodations may take additional time to arrange.



# Get Your Hands Dirty, Go Garden!

Read about the Learning Garden’s history, philosophy, on-going projects, and how to get involved



Photo By Rye Butler-Corbett

By Rye Butler-Corbett

Known for its creative approach to gardening and contributions to both the culinary program and the Titan food pantry, the Learning Garden has been around for 19 years. Tucked away in the Southwest corner of LCC’s campus is where students and staff alike can get away from the stress of school, build community and volunteer.

The Garden has been a part of LCC since 2006, when student Brendan Lynch made it his independent project to start a garden.

Lynch was a part of the sustainability department for SOLAR. With support from the college student government and faculty, the garden was started.

19 years later, Andrea Mull is the Learning Garden Specialist. The garden is paid for by the student funds, and its goals are described by Mull as being “student led” including “student direct-

ed opportunity for students.”

While some classes incorporate time in the learning garden into their curriculum, there are no formal gardening classes taught at the learning garden. Both students and staff can show up and volunteer.

It’s not teaching like you experience in classrooms, according to Mull.

“You learn by coming and working with me. And when you work with me, I will expose the person to all different kinds of modalities of gardening,” she adds.

Mull emphasizes the “Learning” in “Learning Garden,” and elaborates on the many gardening approaches practiced in the garden.

“We have hugelkultur (a German word meaning ‘hill culture’), we have bioswales, we have diverse annual perennial crops. I’m working on a food forest and we have an orchard,” she says.

The Learning Garden is reliant on students for their help and input. “People don’t have to have a lot of experience with gardening. They just need to have a lot of excitement or energy or willingness to get down in the dirt,” Mull says.

“And you’ll learn with me (...) I’m going to tell you about the crops and the soil and what I’m doing and why I’m doing it,” she says.

The harvest is primarily shared with the culinary arts and baking program at Lane. Mull delivers them food once a week based on their needs and the garden’s ability to provide it.

Mull highlights the importance of the students having access to the garden’s harvest, “These are our future chefs that are learning how to feed people and learning what it means to have local produce and local crops and food,” she says.

“Given the soil, and the lack of help, and that everyone is back on campus... I’m not going to have food for everybody,” Mull says. “That’s why I’m focusing on the culinary arts; because I feel it is a very dedicated group to students who are learning.”

According to Harli Crossman, president of the horticulture club; the Learning Garden is funded by the student activity fee, whereas the club is funded by the student clubs and activities committee.

Once all the mandatory fees have been paid, the Learning Garden has a tight budget of

about \$1,000-\$1,500 for the year.

If the garden was funded by the general fund rather than the SAF, it would allow more opportunities for students to have paid positions working in the garden, according to one source who asked to remain anonymous.

In terms of ongoing projects; the garden has many.

With a grant from OEBB, “We have a riparian restoration project happening with Russell Creek,” Mull says.

Crossman has a lot of experience doing restoration work, and seems eager to support Mull in this endeavor.

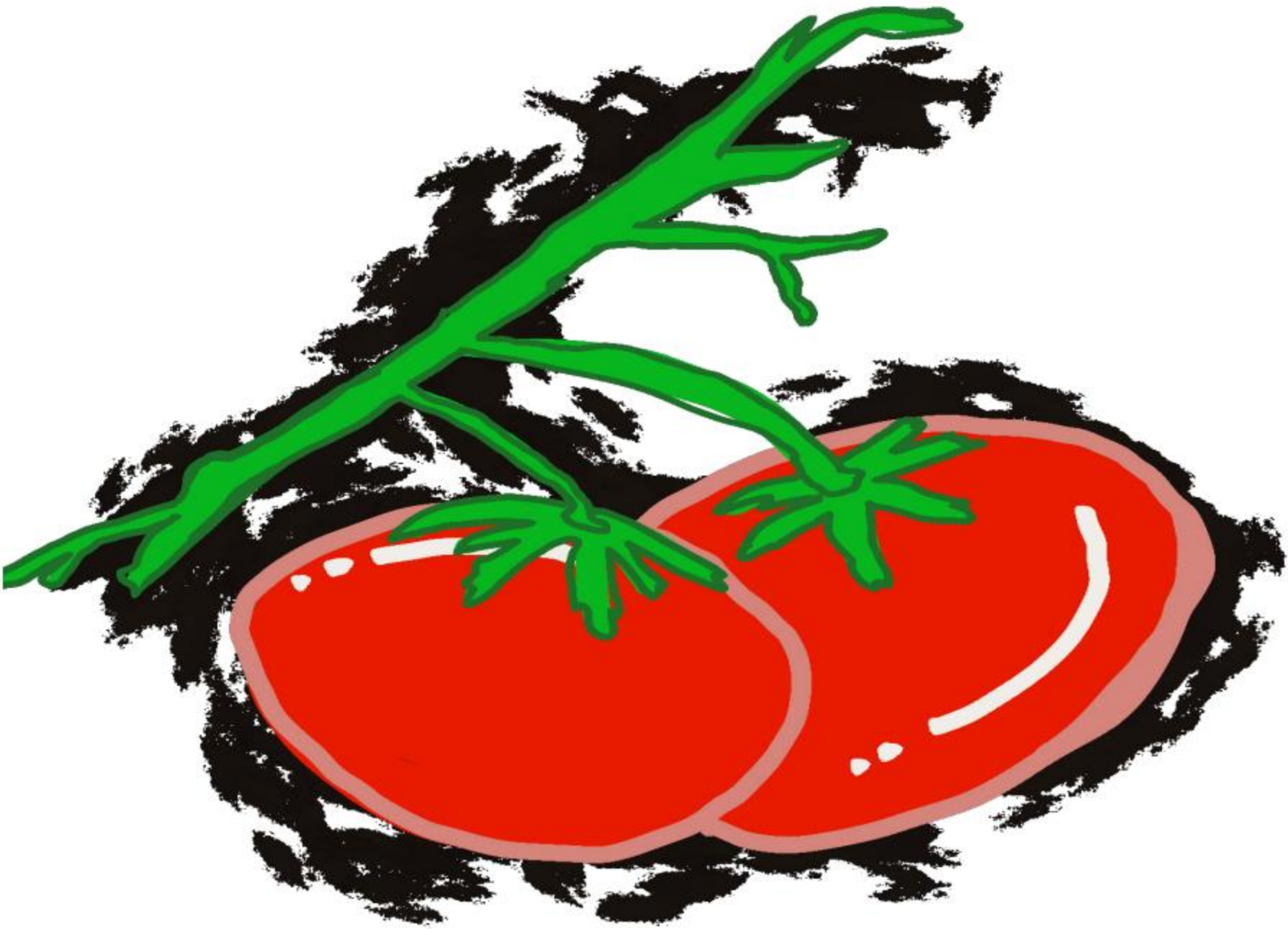
The bioswale is also being re-done and revitalized. For anyone wondering, bioswales are “landscape features that collect polluted stormwater runoff, soak it into the ground, and filter out pollution,” according to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

“Riparian” is defined by Merriam Webster as “things that live alongside a river.”

Beyond the projects, gardens already require a lot of maintenance. “I’m always asking for involvement from people,” Mull says.

It’s time to put on some gloves and get down in the dirt! For anyone who is curious and wants to participate, volunteering in the garden happens from 12 to 2pm on Wednesdays until June 11.

For more information on work parties and workshops, or to get on the email list, reach out to Andrea Mull via [learninggarden@lanec.edu](mailto:learninggarden@lanec.edu).



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# “Into the Park” New LCC Baseball Field Coming to Campus After 3 Years

Construction begins on a new baseball field after the current one has been unplayable for the past 3 years. LCC Baseball will play in 2026 on campus

By Sequoia Hall

The Lane Community College Board of Education approved fulfilling the contract to build a new turf baseball field at the April 2 meeting. This comes after the team has been playing at outsourced locations even for practices.

The field contracts expire at the end of the year, leaving the baseball team with nowhere to play due to their current field being in extreme disrepair. Lane's current field has not been played on in more than two years and looks more like a dirt bike track than a place for America's pastime.

The new field will be artificial turf. This option was chosen because of cost and time compared to the natural grass alternative, which would not have been ready till late 2026 — after baseball season. The turf field will hopefully be ready by early August 2025.

The field was initially met with hesitancy due to the question of cost and the environmental impact of turf fields. This was rebutted in a presentation by LCC Environmental Science professor Richard Glover, who talked about how the impact would not be detrimental to the environment and about the upsides for student-athletes and students. There were also numerous testimonials done during board meetings by parents, community members, and the assistant coach Henry Lovekamp, who all spoke in support of the team and the impact it would have on campus.

The LCC baseball student-athletes have not played a home game since May 2022. In 2023, they played every game in the away team's stadium. “What this team has been able to do with the situation has been pretty incredible,” says head coach Josh Blunt.

This year, they can play their games in Eugene at the Hamlin Sports Complex, but only on Sundays. This is the only year that they can use the facility since the contract expires at the year's end. Players could be affected by having to drive to practice every day instead of it being conveniently on campus. Having a home field will improve student access, which would lead to more team support, and the student-athletes would get better recognition for their hard work.

The field has been in the works for a while, with the board initially voting on it in summer 2023, but bureaucracy slowed the process. It got fully approved in October 2024, but the contract was agreed upon on April 2, 2025. There was a motion to move the vote back to June but the contract would have expired, so it would have killed the project. Luckily, that did not happen, and they broke ground on Monday, April 14. “It's almost indescribable for basically three years going to Sheldon High School to Hamlin Sports Complex, even to the soccer field to practice, it will feel really good.” Says Blunt, on how having the new field will feel.

The field will have vertical stripes with two different shades of grass green and be completely artificial turf from the same company that did the University of Oregon's PK Park.

LCC already has all the equipment, like screens, for coaches to not get hit during practices. Once the field is there, practices can start immediately. The LCC baseball team held a team barbecue with invitees, including people like some board members, who helped out massively in getting the baseball field under construction.



Baseball Field in Progress Taken By Robin Tabor

Having a stadium enables games and practices to be held on campus, keeping the student athletes safer because they don't have to drive as far to practice. This also allows for the opportunity to take in-person classes since they will not be hindered by driving. “Having the field saves us at least an hour and a half, maybe two on a day-to-day basis,” Blunt says.

This will be one of the only artificial turf baseball fields in Lane County, so it should be a big attraction for lower levels of baseball as well. Blunt foresees lots of high school games being played there.

LCC will obviously have priority, which is a luxury that they haven't had with a baseball field in three years. Coach Blunt and the rest of the squad are excited to finally have a home park that will hopefully be witness to lots of Lane wins. Stop by next spring to see a game on campus. Until then, the next home game is Sunday, April 27, at the Hamlin Sports Complex.



Baseball Field Construction Taken By Robin Tabor

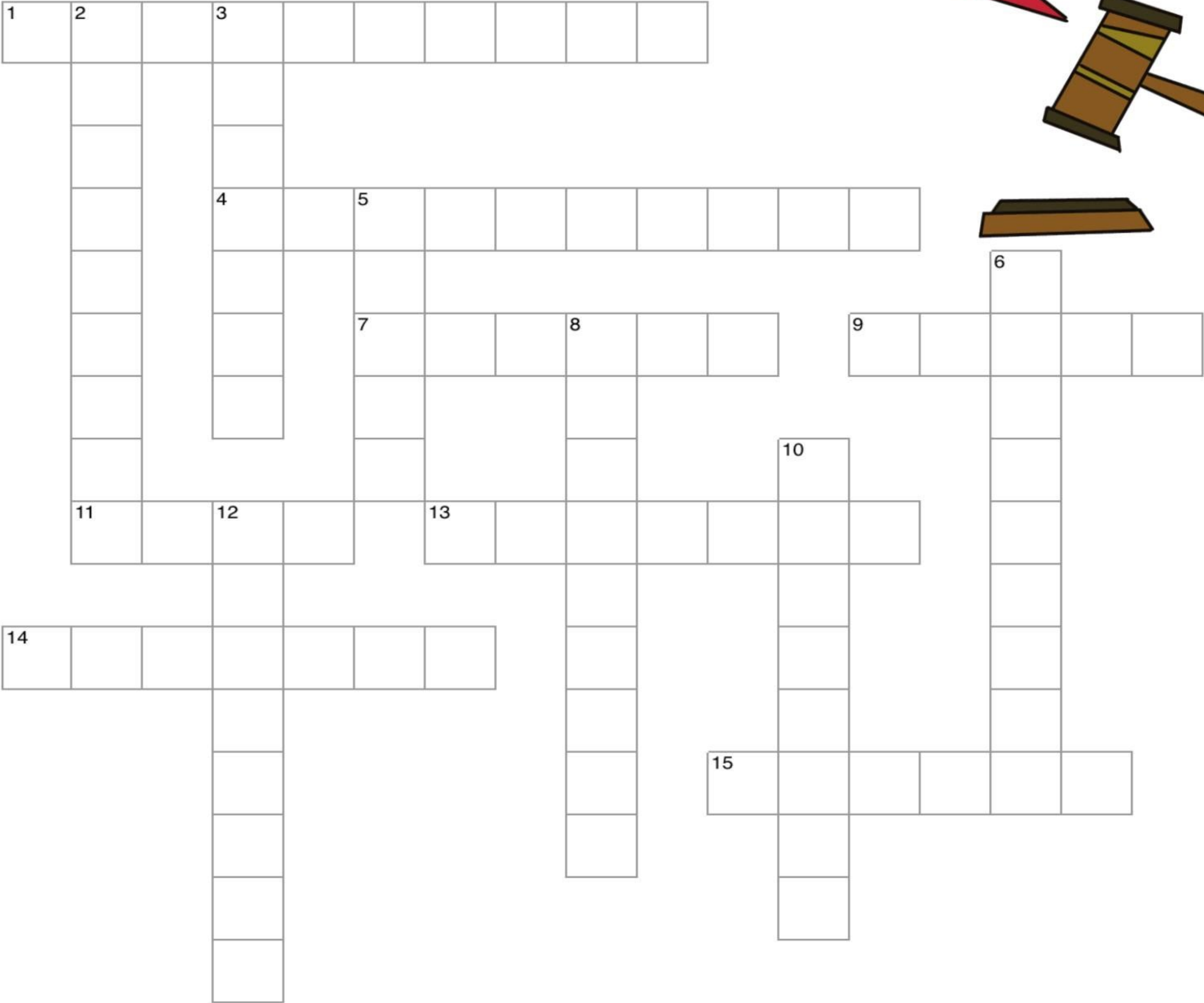
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THE Torch



CROSS WORD: May 20 Special Election



- Across
- 1. Running for student gov-ernment positions
  - 4. Chair representing a zone on the LCC board
  - 7. Zone 1 candidate with roots in Metal Trades and high school partnerships
  - 9. LCC's governing body
  - 11. Former Lane County commissioner running for Zone 1 seat
  - 13. Consultant challenging an incumbent for LCC Board in District 4
  - 14. Incumbent running for re-election in District 4
  - 15. Challenging incumbent Julie Weismann for Zone 3 position
- Down
- 2. Lane Community Col-lege's Vice Chair
  - 3. Current holder of Zone 1
  - 5. Faculty union at Lane Community College
  - 6. Uncontested candidate in May's election
  - 8. A student government position
  - 10. Incumbent appointed to LCC Board in July 2024
  - 12. Part of the Lane Student Government Association

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Cover art by Kat Tabor, striking photography by Sophie Armenti, bold layout by Amy Prince — backed by Eugene Weekly’s own design pros, McKenzie Young and James Bateman.

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