

Features

Featured Local Events, Groups and People

Soldier from West Linn returns, tells truth about Iraq

West Linn Alum Returns

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"Driving down the road you need to watch to prevent being blown up," Craig said. IED (Improvised Explosive Devices) became a problem for the soldiers and a curfew was imposed on the city. Craig and others patrolled the city at night to look for any suspicious activity.

"I needed to watch out for my buddies and my buddies needed to watch out for me," Craig said. Craig's tour of duty lasted for about a year when he returned to Oregon on Feb. 14, 2004.

After a leave of absence, Craig returned for his second tour of duty overseas on Sept. 5, 2005. Craig lived at the FOB (Forward Operating Base) - Warrior in another secured location in Iraq. During his second deployment, Craig would sleep during the day, working nights and rotating between three days of QRF (quick reaction force), and three days of patrol.

Being in the Army has given Craig first-hand experience about the dangers in Iraq and the political climate there. "We were trying to help them and they didn't understand that or they didn't want that," Craig said. "I think us being over there has helped the country a lot. We've given them a stable government."

Not all the cities that they visited in Iraq welcomed Craig and his fellow soldiers. "It's nice to help people out, but it also sucks to help people out that don't want to be helped. There are certain towns where they say 'hey, leave. Go away. We don't want you here' and that really hurts our feelings because we're there to help them and not to do anything else. We were trying to rid them of the terrorists coming from other towns, some from Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Syria."

In addition to these hardships, soldiers have to deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, also known as PTSD which is triggered by experiencing something traumatic in which the victim fears for his or life or feels helpless. Research has shown that these events change brain chemistry and the way that memories are stored. Scientists do not yet know if it is reversible. It is common for soldiers coming back from war to suffer from

PTSD. It causes them to be unable to work, to have problems with relationships, and to have difficulty parenting children. Craig



Corbett Craig poses for the West Linn Tidings in his front yard after his first tour of duty in Iraq. After two tours of duty in Iraq, Craig now suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Bipolar Disorder.

Photo submitted by Corbett Craig

suffers from PTSD and is on a number of drugs ranging from anti-depressants, anti-anxiety medication and sleeping pills. Craig also suffers from bipolar disorder.

"It's a small price to pay for what we did out there," Craig said.

The Army insurance company Tri-Care is paying for all of Craig's medical needs now that he has returned from war. For \$12 a month, soldiers get full counseling dental, eye and surgical coverage. A soldier's family gets the same coverage for \$24 a month.

Coupled with the symptoms of PTSD, Craig has also had to deal with a divorce from the wife whom he married in 2004 after his first tour in Iraq and divorced in 2006. It is reported that between

the years of 2001 and 2004, divorce rates have nearly doubled among those enlisted in the Army increasing from 5,658 to 10,477. The Army has the highest divorce rate out of any of the military services in the United States with 6% of Army officers and 3.5% of enlisted men divorced in 2004.

With Bush's new proposal to send more troops to Iraq and the new confrontations with Iran, Craig feels that a change needs to be made.

"I think it's stupid (sending more troops to Iraq) because you don't need more troops over there. You need better politics. You need people to actually set up the government over there rather than send more people who basically become bullet shields," Craig said.

Craig, again residing in West Linn, works at Fry's Electronics in Wilsonville. He hopes to continue his education and strives to become an electrical engineer. Craig's advice for men and women who are interested in enlisting in the Army is, "Think it through."

Now turning 23, Craig has seen more than most Americans will see in their lifetime. Trying to obtain normalcy in his life, Craig is now at a crucial place in his life.

"After my second tour in Iraq, I saw a coffee cup that my mom had," Craig said. "It was a James Dean quote which said, 'Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today.' I realized that it was so true and that I need to take it one day at a time."

Size really does matter when it comes to colleges

SACHIE HOPKINS

Page Editor

One of the biggest decisions many people face in their life is which college to attend. There are many factors that go into this decision including selecting a location and major, and deciding which extracurricular activities are desirable. However, for most, deciding what size college is one of the hardest parts. There are many advantages and disadvantages to colleges of every size.

"It is all about a personal preference from student to student," Julie Swanson, career center coordinator, said.

Big schools: 18,000 students or more—

There is a wide range of big schools beginning at 18,000 students, up to the very large schools, such as the University of Texas at Austin with an enrollment of 48,000 students; twice the size of the city of West Linn. Large schools bring many things to the college experience such as more choices of majors and classes, and often, the chance to work with distinguished professors. Larger schools tend to have stronger athletic programs as well as athletic pride. There are usually more housing options and better labs, equipment and libraries, according to www.collegeboard.com.

On the other hand, at big schools there are larger class sizes, as well as the likelihood of becoming just

another face in the crowd. There tends to be less flexibility with scheduling and often classes will be taught by a teaching assistant rather than the "famous professor" who will be working on his or her own research. Classes are usually lectures rather than discussions because of the large number of students per class; sometimes up to 500 students in one class.

Small schools: 3,500 students or less—

Small schools can range from less than 500 students to about 3,500 students. Smaller schools offer features that large colleges can't such as a more personal approach and a community feel. With smaller numbers, many things are possible including more one-on-one interactions with other students as well as professors. There are more hands-on learning opportunities as well as usually more discussions with smaller class sizes, and less of the teacher lecturing. Classes also tend to be taught by the professor, rather than an assistant. Students are often able to design their majors and students and advisers are on a first name basis. Since there are more small schools to choose from, competition for scholarships, both academic and athletic, is reduced.

"The ratio of students to professors in small colleges is obviously more...class sizes are also smaller," Swanson said. "Small schools tend to be more personalized, and

have more services for those who have specific education needs."

At small colleges, athletic offerings tend to be fewer than at larger schools and the choices of majors are more limited. Resources aren't as abundant, with smaller libraries and older technology. Housing options tend to be limited, as well as social opportunities, according to www.collegeboard.com.

Smaller colleges are geared to those who like to discuss and have a more personal relationship with professors and fellow students. Students who are interested in creative fields or those who are interested in a specific major

coming into college do well at small colleges.

For those looking for something that is between these two options, there are many mid-sized colleges that have a small college feel, with many of the large college resources.

"Go to the campus visits. See if the school is right for you," Swanson said. "Often you will see it online, but when you actually get there it isn't what you expected."

Whether a small or a large college is more appealing to an applicant's personality and learning style, it is important to consider all options carefully, and to remember the pros and cons of each size of college.

Spring Break promises week of travel, fun

KAITLYN RAGAN

Staff Reporter

A warm, beautiful beach, the bright sun beaming down on the water, and the smell of the ocean in the air.

Although not everyone may be going to the beach, one of the most anticipated vacations of the year, Spring Break (Mar. 24 to Apr. 1), has students and families planning ahead for an exciting week.

The top ten spring break destinations for 2007 are: 1) Cancun; 2) Rosarito Beach, Baja; 3) Acapulco; 4) Florida

(Panama City and Miami); 5) South Padre Island; 6) Negril, Jamaica; 7) North American Ski Resorts; 8) Nassau, Bahamas; 9) Puerto Vallarta; and the runners up (Hawaii, Paris, and Puerto Rico), according to an article by Kathleen Krislip on student travel.

"So far in 2007, the hot spots have been Hawaii, Mexico, the Caribbean and seven day cruises," Joyce Bates, travel agent at Sun Connections, LLC in West Linn, said.

Spring Break

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