

More than your average student

John Bundy, a 27 year-old business major, has the same complaints most students have. He moans about his accounting class and dislikes sitting in classrooms on sunny days. The one difference is that he is blind.

He can't girl-watch, he can't drive a car, but he can do everything else, he says. And it's hard to argue with him.

Sporting a grade point average that hovers near 4.0, Bundy says he has plans for law school when he finishes his undergraduate work in two more years.

He was only 9 years old when a bottle of drain cleaner exploded and blinded one of his eyes and severely damaged the other. Doctors felt at the time that they had a chance to save the damaged eye. But 16 years and more than 60 painful surgeries later, an infection took the eye.

Three months later Bundy enrolled at the University, determined to succeed at what he calls "the biggest challenge in my life."

"School gave me a new beginning," Bundy says. "No more pain or surgeries, I could finally get on with my life again."

Being blind has added a few hassles to the list that all students face, such as finding classes, having to take oral tests and finding a seat to sit in.

But "the University has been great to work with," Bundy says. "You hear all of this stuff about how big schools are cold and impersonal, but I've found that to just not be true here. I have thoughtful and helpful professors, and they have helped me in many ways."

Help doesn't just come from professors, he says. "Let's say I get lost. Yeah, that happens, a wrong turn. There is always someone who will point me in the right direction."

Two days before each new term Bundy and his mother, Mary Bundy, walk over the routes he will use as he goes to his classes. After two trips, Bundy is ready to go it alone.

"It really isn't a frightening experience," Bundy says. "In fact, sometimes it's kind of exciting."

When he does get lost, he asks for assistance. "Some people have the belief that blind people don't like to be helped," he says. "To some extent that's true. But if I need help I appreciate it, and if I don't I still appreciate the offer."



University student John Bundy, a business major, doesn't find too many obstacles that can stop him these days.

Finding a seat when he enters a room is easy, Bundy says with a laugh. "I usually just walk up to the nearest desk and ask if there is a seat available. If no one answers, I just sit down."

Other problems are not solved quite as simply. A few textbooks can be obtained on tape through the Library of Congress, but he usually must find volunteers to read his books for him.

adds.

Dave Wellsfry is one of the readers that Bundy depends on. Wellsfry helps Bundy with his accounting, a subject that is tough on a blind person because it is visually oriented.

"I really admire John," Wellsfry says. "John has an incredibly quick mind and he stays a step ahead of me and my calculator."

education. A blind student must do three times the work of other students, Bundy says, so his studying leaves little time for anything else in his life.

"But I enjoy the work," Bundy says. "There were so many years that I couldn't do anything."

Although he is planning on going to law school, Bundy is undecided about his future.

"Right now I'm becoming interested in clinical psychology as well as law school," he says. "But Perry Mason doesn't appeal to me. If I go into law I just want to handle the everyday problems that people have."

Bundy laughs at the suggestion that his definition of "everyday problems" might be a little broader than everybody else's.

"Well, I'm just like everybody else," he says. "No difference, I just can't see."

'School gave me a new beginning . . . No more pain or surgeries. I could finally get on with my life again.'

"That's one of my biggest difficulties," Bundy says. "I run out of money to pay my readers and sometimes I can't find them when I need them. If anyone wants to volunteer, my number is 942-2556," he

He works with Bundy once a week for several hours. "He really wears me out," Wellsfry says. "He has more energy than I do."

All Bundy's energy goes toward his

Story and Photo by Rick Attig

Local literacy council helps non-readers

By Steve Hooks
Of the Emerald

An unlearned adult may seem alien to University students.

But the Literacy Council of Eugene-Springfield, 1059 Willamette St., claims 5,000 Lane County citizens cannot read or write.

These people may be functional in every other way, says Ardis Curitser, chairer of the council. They can be business people, laborers or homemakers, she adds.





A Literacy Council pamphlet describes an illiterate mother. "Every night she has the same nightmare. Her baby swallows poison and she can't read the phone book to get an ambulance."

The pamphlet portrays other people relegated to lives of poverty, ignorance and danger because they cannot read or write.

Somewhere along the way, these "functional non-readers" never learned the basic skills, Curitser says.

Maybe they dropped out of public schools because of frustration or boredom, she says. Maybe poverty forced them to leave school for work, or maybe they were never taught correct skills but somehow remained in the public school system, Curitser says.

Many non-readers are foreigners, especially Indochinese refugees, who were unable to learn the language beforehand, she adds.

		bird		
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		cup		
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Graphic courtesy of Oregon Literacy, Inc.

By learning how to associate words with letters, illiterate adults can learn to read.

The non-profit, all-volunteer Literacy Council trains people to tutor non-readers, one-on-one, in basic reading and writing skills.

The council provides these tutors free to students of remedial programs. The council also provides low-cost books and other materials for the programs.

Community groups that work with the disadvantaged contact the Literacy Council for tutors, Curitser says. The county jail, juvenile counselors, social workers, welfare and rehabilitation agencies and Adult Basic Education instructors refer clients to Literacy Council tutors, she adds.

Curitser says the council, housed in a small back office of Lane Community College's Downtown Center, trained

about 50 volunteer tutors in the last four workshops.

The council trains tutors in two ways. Volunteers who tutor foreign-born students receive 15 hours of training. Those who tutor English-speaking students are trained in a 12-hour workshop. The council certifies the tutors at the end of the workshops.

The council uses a method that teaches students to associate pictures with words and letters. It is the same method employed by the National Affiliation for Literacy Advance of Syracuse, New York, Curitser says.

The time it takes students to master basic reading skills varies, she says. A person who uses the skills in the "real world" will master them faster than a

person who stays at home.

Some students master basic skills within a few months, and others complete the course in a year or more, according to a council pamphlet.

But tutors do not deal with only those who have zero reading and writing skills, she says.

Many people, including students at the University and LCC, have deficient skills and want to improve their reading and writing ability. Curitser says the council helps adults with literate skills "from zero up to the sixth grade."

The council also works closely with LCC's English as a Second Language program.

Because of budget cuts, the second language program has been referring clients to Literacy Council tutors. The council certified 11 volunteers to be second language tutors during the last series of workshops, Curitser says.

The Literacy Council does not have to worry about budget cuts because it receives no funding from government agencies or parent organizations, Curitser says.

Donations and a \$4 registration fee for tutor workshops fund the council, she adds. The council also receives material and guidance from the national affiliation.

The council formed about 20 years ago but grew only in the past 10 years, Curitser says. Some tutors have subscribed to the council's motto, "each one teach one" for more than a decade, she adds.