

# monologue

## Looking Back

As I sit to write my last editorial for a publication at Clackamas Community College, my mind is flooded with three years of memories of this school, what it has done for me and what I have done for it. This editorial is not a true editorial, as I have been taught to write one. It is, on the other hand, a recap of the changes I have seen here and the experiences I have had. Since my experiences are not all that different from those of others, perhaps my recounting will help bring into focus for others the role of the community college as I see it and the benefits this institution holds for the members of this community.

I began my career here as a housewife and mother with no clear idea of where I was going, how to get there, or what I would do when I found out. All I knew was that housewifing was not the life for me, and the only way to better myself was by furthering the education I had abandoned to get married.

Having had two terms of college at a four-year institution in California I was, perhaps, better prepared for college life than many returning students who may, or may not, have finished high school or attended another college. However, it had been six years since I had opened a book seriously and I was a little scared. Needlessly, I soon found out.

From the beginning, the counselors and instructors I encountered were supportive and non-threatening. They have all done their utmost to make my experience here a rewarding and productive one. The instructors, some of whom were my age or younger, all gave me credit for life experience and didn't treat me as an inferior just because I was a student. The lack of

formality on their part made it much easier for me to relate to, and feel comfortable being back in school after being a part of the "real world."

After working for a year as copy-editor for the student newspaper, I realized that journalism was the career I wanted to pursue, and pursue it I did, again with total support and encouragement from my advisor, Randy Clark, and everyone I met. Thus I spent the second year here as newspaper editor.

Everyone was supportive that is, except my husband. When the air cleared and I found myself a single mother I turned to the only stable situation I had left, the college, and again I found the support I needed. The day-care situation and especially the low-income subsidy which this school so uniquely offers, gave me an excellent place to leave my son and freed my mind from that worry so I could concentrate on my school work.

The problems I encountered along the way were made easier to deal with by the fact that all of my instructors were willing to make allowances for my situation and were not hesitant to grant me leeway when conflicts arose between mothering and being a student.

The excellent help and counseling I received from the Financial Aid office stood between me and despair several times. They were always ready to help me through a financial crisis and were so knowledgeable about sources for financial aid and how to fill out the correct forms to get it, that I know I never would have made it without them.

I returned for a third year here not from academic necessity but from emotional necessity. After my separation I was not prepared to uproot myself and go on to another school. I needed some time with familiar people that I knew and trusted. I also needed to be in a

situation where I knew I could succeed. If this school does nothing else for its students, it goes out of its way to make sure that they find a place for everyone to succeed, as far as it is possible. The counseling center is not just a place to go to plan a class schedule. The expert staff is also willing to help students plan a life schedule that they can succeed at.

Working with student government as media director gave me an excellent opportunity to observe the behind-the-scenes operation of this college, and again I am impressed. Lest one think that I am easily impressed, let me say that I also had the opportunity to talk to members of student governments at other colleges and there were very few whose administrations considered the student as important an asset to the workings of the college as Clackamas' does.

Our administration has been liberal enough and far-sighted enough to be able to recognize the needs of the community and to do something about it. They have fostered the growth of community education, the Handicapped Resource Center, the Women's Crisis Center and the Focus on Women and Focus on Men programs. And, if they haven't been directly involved with these programs, as many might argue, they have, at least, provided an atmosphere where they could be developed and grow.

This, then, is my final thanks to those faculty members, counselors and administrators who have made my three years here the most rewarding and productive years of my life. At 25, I am leaving here well prepared to enter a four-year school and from there go on to become a productive, well directed member of society. Thank you, everyone, I really hate to leave.

Sincerely,  
Happie Thacker

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