

Tall teacher tells terrifying tales of tabloids

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Co-Feature Editor

"Elvis Found Alive and Well in South America." If you have been in a grocery store checkout line lately, this probably sounds all too familiar.

Tabloids have been getting quite a bit of their own publicity in television and newspaper headlines.

Murder victim JonBenet Ramsey, 6, was exploited throughout the media. Now it is the Cosby family's turn.

It is a tough decision for tabloid editors or whether to spend thousands on information about Ennis Cosby's murder or to use the money to help find the criminal that murdered him.

So who is behind the pages of *The Enquirer*, *Star*, *Globe* and many others?

Eric Faucher, an Alternative Programs Instructor at Clackamas, has the inside scoop on tabloid journalism. Faucher worked for the *National Enquirer* for over two years.

In 1977, in a therapy group, Faucher met a stringer for the *National Enquirer*.

"He said, 'Give me your name, and I'll tell my editor down at the *Enquirer* that you're interested in working for us,'" Faucher explains. "A week later I got a phone call."

From there he went on his first assignment.

Sitting in the lobby of the Sheraton Universal Hotel looking for Telly Savalas, Faucher thought, "This is my one chance at glory."

After sitting in the lobby for three days with still no sign of Savalas, Faucher called his editor and went home. A few weeks later he received a check in the mail for \$450.

A few months passed before he got another call. They asked him to come to Florida for a four-week tryout. He was promised that if he did well, the *Enquirer* would hire him as a staff reporter. Starting wage at the *Enquirer* in 1978 was \$38,500 per year.

"I had no formal training in writing at all," Faucher explains.

Faucher started out easy, digging up information on health stores. But the worst was yet to come.

"They expect you to do 'door stepping,'" he says.

"Door stepping" is the process of walking up to a celebrity's door, introducing yourself and hoping they will talk to you. Faucher says most often he was thrown off the property by bodyguards.

Over time Faucher learned all the "affirmation tricks," such as getting the subject to agree to a statement and then turning the statement into a direct quote.

"You get pretty skilled at maneuvering people," he says.

When breaking news was scarce, *The Enquirer* would send Faucher to a city for two or three days (nowhere in particular). His job was to find story leads.

During one of these trips "I got to be the Donny and Marie Osmond reporter," he says.

Faucher was in Provo, Utah looking for information on UFO's when he signed up for a tour of the Osmond home. Their father died of a heart attack, and Faucher covered the story.

Faucher claims he was in the *Enquirer* office for no more than one week out of every month. During the other three weeks he was traveling.

"I felt like I was in a cross between the newspaper and the



photo by Jon Roberts
Eric Faucher, former tabloid reporter, shares his experiences with journalism students.

mafia," Faucher says "Their ideal candidate [for an *Enquirer* reporter] was a law student."

According to Faucher, law students would know how to put together a story because they write legal cases every day, which are much like tabloid stories.

Although we may think tabloids are trash, Faucher said, "I made nothing up."

All of the major tabloids are based in Florida -- they often call it "Tabloid Alley"-- so it was easy for

Faucher to work for many different tabloids. After his time at the *Enquirer*, he was a freelance writer for the *Enquirer*, *Globe* and *Star*.

The average pay for a freelance article was around \$1400. By writing up to six articles a week, Faucher was able to live well on his paychecks.

When asked, Faucher admitted, "I miss the wildness of it," but said he would never do it again.

"If you're into money and a



walk on the wild side, journalistically, you might want to consider the tabloids. I would encourage anybody to try it for a year or so. You would have a blast, but it's not where you want to end up," Faucher said.

No mystery to Authors' Night guests

The ever so popular Authors' Night series resumes Feb. 12 when three popular Northwest novelists come to campus to discuss mystery and crime literature.

Mary Daheim, who writes in the *American Cozy* sub-genre, is one of the well-read mystery novelists in the country. She has published many novels in her *Bed and Breakfast Mysteries* series, which features Judith McMonigle-Glynn, a proprietor of Hillside Manor and part-time sleuth.

Her new series of novels, *The Alpine Mysteries*, features Emma Lord, who is the editor of the *Alpine Advocate* and a solver of crimes in a Northwest town full of

quirky characters and dangerous situations.

Joining Daheim will be G.M. Ford, whose novel, *Who the Hell is Wanda Fuca?*, has sold well across the country. The book introduces us to Leo Waterman, a rumpled, rain-soaked, hard-boiled-but-soft-hearted Seattle detective with a rebellious streak left over from the 60s. This fast-paced and funny novel centers on an environmental activist who gets dragged into environmental sabotage.

The third writer on the panel is Cherry Hartman, a licensed clinical social worker who has written self-therapy books in the past, but

only recently broke into the mystery genre. The protagonist of her first detective novel, *The Well-Heeled Murders*, is Morgan McRain, also a clinical social worker who moonlights as a private investigator.

Hartman also is the author of *Be Good To Yourself Therapy and More Be Good To Yourself Therapy*, and she cowrote *The Fearless Flyer: How to Fly in Comfort and Without Trepidation*.

Authors' Nights, held once each term, begins at 7 p.m., Feb 12, in the Gregory Forum. The event is free and open to the public. However, a \$2 donation to the Friends of the Library will be accepted.

Debra Beers' art exhibit debuted at the Pauling Gallery on Jan. 22. Beers is an instructor in the Art Department. Her exhibit will run through Feb. 5.



photo by Karin Redston

Val-A-Grams back on Campus

"The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time." --William Shakespeare

Give the gift of song to that special someone this Valentine's Day with a Clackamas Chamber Singers' musical Val-A-Gram. Talented student singers will serenade your love as a special Valentine surprise. Hire soloists, duets, trios, quartets, etc. from Feb. 13 to 15;

all proceeds go toward fundraising for the Chamber Singers. Orders need to be placed as soon as possible so singers can prepare.

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