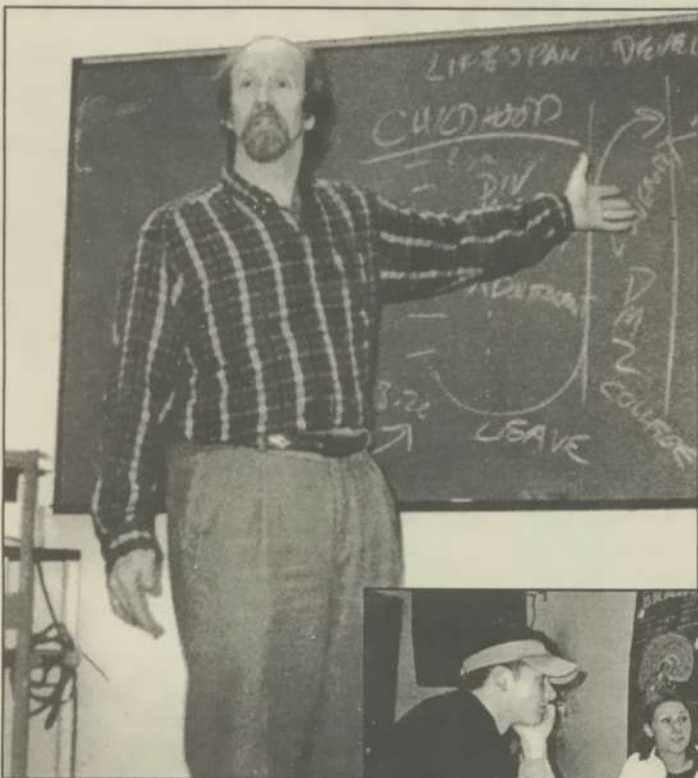


Loren Ford's students psyched for life



Top: Loren Ford gives a lecture about growing up. He uses examples of his sister and mother's wacky relationship.



Above: from left to right, students Kyle Kraxberger, Traci Flitcraft and Jim Bodenhamer gather in groups to discuss their life traumas.



Left: Students Brandon Masters and Rachel Tinney review chapters while laughing at Ford's unusual tactics.

DAISY BAIN
A&E Editor

How do you start your day with humor and learn a thing or two? Take a class from Loren Ford, that's how!

I recently sat through a PSY 101/Human Relations class taught by Ford and left feeling as if I had just gone to a comedy club. What makes this experience even funnier is that I actually learned something by just sitting in one class.

What I left feeling seemed to ring true with majority of his students.

"I love it! He's the best

teacher I've ever had. His motivation inspires me," said Rachel Tinney, a human relations student.

Brandon Masters heard about the class from the schedule catalog.

"I got lucky," said Masters. "I love the class. It has helped me in my life in how I deal with others."

Ford lectures differently than most teachers I have come in contact with in my two years here at Clackamas. He uses real-life experiences to enforce what he teaches, with a comedic twist. The students participate by forming groups and acting out situations that relate to the topic of the day. An example of Ford's zany twists to communication would be his method of introducing yourselves to each other. He would split the class into groups and instead of shaking each others' hands, he would have you shake your classmates ears.

Masters' favorite part of the class is the way he portrays his class lectures. "He uses real-life examples. He makes it easy to apply to real life situations."

According to Ford, the class covers a lot of personal material and he tries to do whatever he can to make it comfortable for his students, but still be able to teach them the meaning of his material.

"There is a method to my madness," said Ford. "I like to keep things light."

Ford's biggest goal of the class is to get the students to communicate and think critically about who they are and how they would like to get there. The class is an "advanced warning about real life experiences," said Ford.

Ford gets a lot of returning students, not only from current stu-

dents but from past students who come back for more because they feel they are ready to take in a greater extent the information Ford offers.

Before Ford started teaching, he worked as a part time counselor and worked at a half-way house for family counseling. He started teaching 20 years ago.

"I liked it better because I was going in to underground health work," Ford said when asked why he decided to start teaching. Ford has been at Clackamas since 1977, teaching primarily human relations. In 1994, he published his own text book titled "Human Relations, A Game Plan for Improving Personal Adjustment." "I wrote the book because I wish there were some things people knew before they came into counseling."

During his sabbatical last year Ford attended grad school to start teaching history. This is the first term Ford has taught Oregon history. He is trying to introduce "psycho history," or "putting history on the couches," as he puts it. The class is about looking at some of the psychological dynamics of what goes on in regards to shaping the historic events.

When Ford decides he has had his fair share of time at Clackamas, he plans to become a park ranger or a tour guide somewhere in Oregon.

"Where do old teachers go when they retire? They just go and teach in another place," said Ford.

If you just can't get enough of Ford in his classes, you can try to see him and Ed Mills, a social science instructor, play in his blue grass band. Just ask him for the where and the when!

PHOTOS BY DAISY BAIN /
Clackamas Print

What would Xmas be without Clackamas' trees?

ELISABETH MEYER
Staff Writer

For a growing number of Oregon's businesses, the season of comfort and joy begins earlier each year. Expanding the Christmas season, which comprises a staggering part of retail activity, benefits merchandisers immensely. But no amount of preparation for the annual frenzy rivals the sheer time commitment the following individuals make to December 25: Christmas tree farmers.

Western Oregon's temperate rainforest makes it a perfect cradle for the industry. In fact, Oregon tops the list of Christmas tree-producing states, growing 10 million of the 35-40 million trees sold in the United States annually, said Clackamas County Extension Agent Mike Bondi. A quarter of Oregon's trees are grown in Clackamas County alone, 90 percent of which are shipped out of state. These numbers help us to understand why you can't get to far from campus without seeing scores of tree plantations.

In a heavily agricultural state, Christmas trees compete for what Bondi estimates is their tenth-place ranking in economic importance of Oregon crops. He said Christmas tree farming began mostly as a side business for many

Clackamas County families when the industry first picked up steam in the late 1950s. And although Christmas trees are now important, Clackamas still has more growers than any other county in Oregon.

While tree farming isn't simple or relaxing, as local grower Jim Ringle stresses, it is a favored method of supplementing a day job.

"You can't (make money) raising a couple of cows, or growing a couple acres of a grain crop, or hay," said Bondi. While growing trees is much more complex than most people realize, he says, "It is a whole lot better than most of the alternatives."

America's Christmas tree industry has been growing steadily since the 1920s, when trees became a household tradition. Michigan was the top grower till 1979, said Bondi. "Oregon eclipsed all other states after that."

Modern tree farmers fill the growing gap between a holiday tradition and a less home-centered lifestyle, said grower Jim Ringle of Ringle and Son Tree Farm. People are simply too busy to go hunt for the perfect tree in the backwoods, making U-cuts the new holiday tradition. His U-cut in Beaver Creek features—besides several species and as-

sorted sizes of trees—hot drinks, candy canes, and a petting zoo.

He begins shipping his trees wholesale in early November, and usually isn't done until late in the month. Then the U-cut season begins.

"This is the first time in 17 years I've had Thanksgiving off," Ringle said. He attributes the early finish to the timely arrival of wholesalers' trucks, which have a reputation, he said, of being less than prompt.

Timing is crucial to shipping, since the trees are perishable. They must be loaded within days of being cut.

"What you have is a very perishable commodity, and it's a very labor-intensive one," said Bondi. "Most everything is done by hand."

This makes labor, especially at harvest time, a huge issue.

"Without the migrant workforce," Bondi said, "I frankly don't think this industry would survive."

Local farms ship to Guam, Japan and the Philippines, to name just a few countries. Within the United States, trees also have



ELISABETH MEYER/Clackamas Print

Left to right: Francisco, Ricardo and Carmen Ortiz bale Christmas trees at Misty Tree Farms in Estacada.

miles to go before purchase. Estacada tree grower Jim Erwin's trees are shipped not only to places where white Christmases are rare or nonexistent, but also where they are much whiter than the Willamette Valley.

"We ship (them) to Hawaii, New York, Washington D.C., Texas, Louisiana, Nevada, Kansas, California...and let me think...Idaho," he said.

Why can't states grow their own trees? Some can and still do. Pennsylvania and New York are well able to produce trees, said Bondi. But Oregon's climate can produce a tree faster.

"A tree that would take seven years here would take nine in Pennsylvania," Bondi said. "And our would look better... we simply grow really good trees."

Add the Northwest-native Noble fir to that equation and the scales are tipped even farther in Oregon's favor. Nobles, which Bondi terms "the Cadillac of Christmas trees," have been marketed back east for about twenty years, but are still popular—and expensive.

Growers struggle to keep up with the demand. "We just can't grow enough (of the Noble fir)," said Ringle.