

New term starts without Lesley



MIKE POLLOCK / Clackamas Print

Craig Lesley, Pulitzer nominee and English instructor, reminisces about his time at Clackamas Community College.

DAISY BAIN
A&E Editor

Craig Lesley, English instructor and award-winning novelist, retired Oct. 1 after a 30-year tenure at Clackamas. The department will hold a retirement party for Lesley sometime this spring.

"It's been a great place to teach. I love the students. It's been a wonderful teaching faculty," said Lesley.

Lesley started teaching because he liked to work with people. "I've always liked teaching. I plan to teach on a part-time basis," he said. He especially liked his remedial classes. "One of the best things about Clackamas is that you get to teach older students," Lesley said. He also liked his night classes because the interest was

brought to the class. "The older students make that true."

"I'm really proud of the writers that I've brought to the school," said Lesley about the authors he has helped bring to Clackamas for Authors' Night.

Besides teaching, Lesley has hobbies such as spending time with his family, fishing, playing basketball with his daughters and working with Hispanic people by helping them write letters and fill out forms. Of course, he also likes to write.

Lesley grew up in Eastern Oregon and went to high school in Walla Walla. This area of Oregon is where Lesley comes up with most of the material for his stories.

So far Lesley has four books that have been published and have won awards. "Winterkill," published in 1984, is about a ro-

deo rider and his son. It won the Best Novel award from the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association in 1985 and has had a lot of following in colleges around the state.

"The River Song," published in 1989, and "The Sky Fisherman," published in 1995, also have received the Best Novel award.

"Storm Riders," published in 2000, is a novel set in Oregon City and is based on Lesley's experience raising a young American Indian foster child with a birth defect. Both "Storm Riders" and "The Sky Fisherman" were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

Lesley says that his favorite part about writing these novels is that people read them and like them. "That is where the real reward is," said Lesley.

Lesley is currently working on a nonfiction book about Eastern Oregon and the disappearance of the Old West.

Chewing gum doesn't bridge the gender gap

Welcome back—I hope everyone enjoyed the break. If I remember correctly, you all ran off and didn't let me finish my story. Consequently, I lost interest and took off down a totally unrelated path that I have to find some way to segue into, so let's see how this works: anti-aircraft gunsights, radiation subplot and blondes in uniform...oh yes, the dentist. I'm totally convinced that dental personnel, like women in general, are experts in subtleties. Add the fact that mine is an intelligent woman, and I was way out of my league. One minute she's discussing the office Xmas party with the occasional dental reference tossed in: "...blah, blah, buckle..." or "...yada, yada, crown—by the way who's your insurance through...?" then suddenly "root planing" slips out.

Those two words together paint a really scary picture—involving Home Depot and a shop teacher missing several fingers in my case—but by this time, who cares! This is a very clever tactic whereby she uses her superior oration skills to keep the patient under wraps. Jaws were never meant to be apart for that long for any reason. Ever. She knows I don't have the strength to voice a protest by that point. And why the hell is she trying to keep up a conversation with me when she's got three fingers and a Makita cordless in my mouth? This is the tangent I ran

down while you all were enjoying shots on New Year's Eve. Not even a great white shark opens its mouth until the last possible second during an attack, and then it clams up as soon as business is handled. That's what mystifies men about a woman's

ability (and desire) to talk through everything. It has nothing to do with emotional predisposition, it's just physiologically unnatural to us.

Many years ago, William Wrigley tried bridging the gap between men and women with chewing gum, and it failed miserably. It was supposed to be a way for men to exercise and develop the stamina to hold their own in the oral give-and-take of relationships. It merely ended up stuck to shoes, under desks or in children's hair. This left behind a generation of bob-cut, TMJ-afflicted girls pissed at the institution. This is why science now strictly focuses on biting pressure. There's no awe-inducing study of jaw-opening power on the horizon. We already know what the results would be. My baby sister could hold an alligator's mouth shut, but there isn't a man on this planet who can stem the tide that follows the phrase "Honey, we need to talk." (Someday

I'll tell you about the poor guy who invented another marital aid known as duct tape.)

Here's a further example of the communication gap: I think it's probably easier for gay men to quit smoking than it is for straight men. That's the only part of the joke I need to lay out for another guy. Our minds slide out of the gutter into the storm system and we chuckle or groan. However, check with a female friend, either it's stupid or they just don't get it, then you have to explain it (more talking) and it's no longer funny. It's gross, which ruins the joke and invites shame, which results in that new living-room set she's had her eye on for the past few months. I don't think it's any accident that my very married, fresh-from-dental-school care provider drives a brand new BMW.

Marvin G. Baker
Guest Columnist



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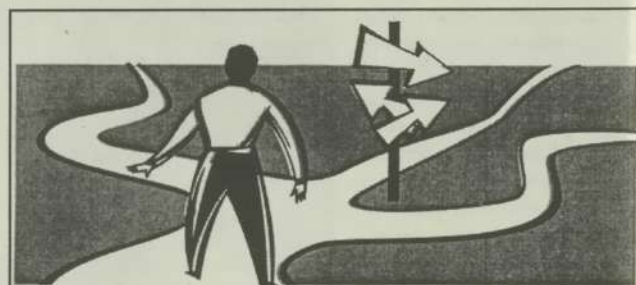
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Clackamas Community College
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Gregory Forum
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For more information, please see an Academic Advisor in the Advising & Counseling office located in the Community Center.