

# THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

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## Identity theft: it can happen to you Student has her coin purse taken while at the bookstore

**Karen Hill**  
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Like hundreds of other students, Diane Reynolds purchased her books at the campus bookstore on the first day of school, but for Reynolds, it cost her more than just the price of her purchase.

On Sept. 29, at 1:50 p.m. Reynolds joined the thousands of other victims who fall prey to the fastest-growing crime in America—identity theft.

These thieves steal purses, take wallets, rummage through personal mail, dig through garbage, or hack into online databases to obtain names,

credit card information, social security numbers and other identifying records to commit fraud and other crimes against innocent victims.

For Reynolds, the theft happened in a matter of seconds. While paying for her books, she set down her small coin purse on the counter. The coin purse contained her driver's license, food stamp card, financial aid checks, library card and a small amount of cash.

"[The cashier] was rattled. It was time for her break," said Reynolds.

When Reynolds left the store, she immediately realized she had left her coin purse on the counter and promptly

reentered the store. Unfortunately, it was too late.

Thinking it may have been turned in to Lost and Found, Reynolds went directly there. She discovered it had not been turned in, and set out to cancel her financial aid checks.

Financial aid was able to stop payment on the checks but could not issue her the new ones until she had a valid ID, which had also been stolen.

Reynolds filed a police report, and acted as quickly as she could, but not quite quick enough.

"They found a man had used my food stamp card at 7-Eleven. He got

all the cash off of that," said Reynolds.

The amount on the card was \$61.75, none of which Reynolds was able to get refunded.

Later, Reynolds found an unusual message on her answering machine. The recording informed her that she had six overdue items at the Clackamas County Library.

"Well, I haven't gone there for a long time, so it wasn't me," she said.

A visit to the library produced a mile long list of CDs and VHS tapes, checked out in her name, "...plus a canvas bag to carry all their loot!" added Reynolds.

Fortunately, since the card was reported stolen, she was not liable for these charges.

"I figure altogether, I'm out less than \$200," said Reynolds.

There were also attempts made to cash the financial aid checks, but because they had been cancelled, the thief was unsuccessful.

As for Reynolds' ID, she said the police caught a 19-year-old girl attempting to use it to cash a check. The bank didn't quite fall for it, given the ID listed the cardholder's age as 58. The girl was taken into custody for forgery and identity theft, Reynolds said.

"It all happened so fast," said Reynolds. "The police were great and told me who to call...it can be very confusing."

Many students may not have been aware of the incredible rate that these thefts happen, which was unfortunately confirmed by Reynolds' own experience.

Clackamas Federal Credit Union presented a seminar called "Identity Theft" on Oct. 30 to help students become aware of the dangers of this crime, the best methods of prevention and what to do when you find yourself to be a victim.

"The [incidents] are actually much greater than anyone thought, because a lot of people are the victims of identity theft and don't report it," said Mary Greco, Clackamas Federal Credit Union employee.

Greco suggests that every person order an annual copy of their credit report and insure its accuracy. Credit reports are available through websites such as Equifax.com, Transunion.com and Experian.com.

Greco also recommends not giving out personal information on the phone, in the mail or over the Internet, "unless you have initiated the contact and know who you're dealing with," said Greco.

"The good news is [that] the average person in an identity theft normally doesn't lose more than \$400," said Greco. "But there are some people that lose everything."

Acting quickly in these types of situations is vitally important, as Reynolds discovered with the aid of campus officials.

"I want people to know there are good people here," said Reynolds, speaking of financial aid and campus security. "They were right on top of it."

### Victims of Identity Theft:

- ♦ Contact fraud department of all three major credit bureaus; ask for a fraud alert to be placed on your account.
- ♦ Close any accounts you believe may have been tampered with.
- ♦ File a police report and keep a copy to give your creditors.

Information provided by Clackamas Federal Credit Union



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Diane Reynolds and a bookstore employee reenact the day her coin purse was taken. In a matter of seconds, she became a victim to the thieves who stole her identity.

## Old cement ashtrays butted out

**Jesse Lamond**  
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Last Wednesday students and college staff may have been confused and/or surprised to see a multitude of shiny new cigarette disposal devices that had seemingly sprung up overnight.

The hard-to-miss, yellow-and-black ashtrays are intended to phase out and eventually replace the aging concrete-and-sand-ash tubes that at present sparsely litter the campus.

The concrete tubes are starting to crack and tend to fill with water when it rains. The unmovable tubes are not easy to clean out and must have the sand sifted to collect garbage. These delapidated cylinders are also a fire hazard according to John Wilberg, day team leader of custodial.

"An open-face, sand-style urn will burn," said Wilberg. "The [new] ash trays are designed not to let fires occur."

There are more of the new beacon cans than the old concrete installations, a lot more. Campus Services did not have the actual number of new units because they are still in the

process of setting them out.

"We'll see where the cigarettes congregate and we'll put new ones there for that," Wilberg said.

According to Campus Services, the new \$80 ashtrays can simply be hefted and dumped out like a wastebasket. Ease of maintenance for these new devices will, in theory, save the custodial staff time that can then be spent maintaining other aspects of the college property.

The college administration does not plan on hiring any additional custodial staff to service the new campus facilities that are being constructed, so some streamlining of the current staff routines and workload management was in order.

According to Bill Leach of Campus Services, the four-foot, yellow-tipped Rubbermaid ash cans were purchased from their supplies vendor in an attempt to lessen the campus custodial staff's workload.

Leach also said that the choice to update where smokers park their butts was a "resource issue for [custodial staff]." Dealing with cigarette butts left by careless people all over the ground is a considerable issue that takes the

janitorial staff time to deal with.

So far, student and faculty responses to the new receptacles have been mixed but colorful.

**"They're not very attractive, but [they're] better than a gazillion butts squished [on] the ground."**

**Mollie Frey**  
Visual Arts secretary

"They're not very attractive, but I guess they are better than a gazillion butts squished all over the ground," said Mollie Frey, visual arts secretary, examining one of the miniature lighthouses plopped outside her window.

"Now if they'll just use them," she added.

Her slight skepticism of students actually using the new gadgets was voiced by several other students and teachers in Streeter Hall.

David Andersen, art department chair, said that the Art Center gravel pit was already "the world's largest cigarette butt repository."

"Maybe now some people can get a clue," he said.

Other students and staff have labeled the additions on campus as "pandering to addicts" and refer to them by such descriptive terms as "UFO transponders," "phallic symbols" and "giant suppositories."

It remains to be seen if the hard-to-miss butt holders are properly used. Spent cigarettes still show up in the rocky flowerbed around the Art Center and on the sidewalks between Clackamas' main buildings. With any luck, the new ashtrays will keep our pleasant campus less trashy.

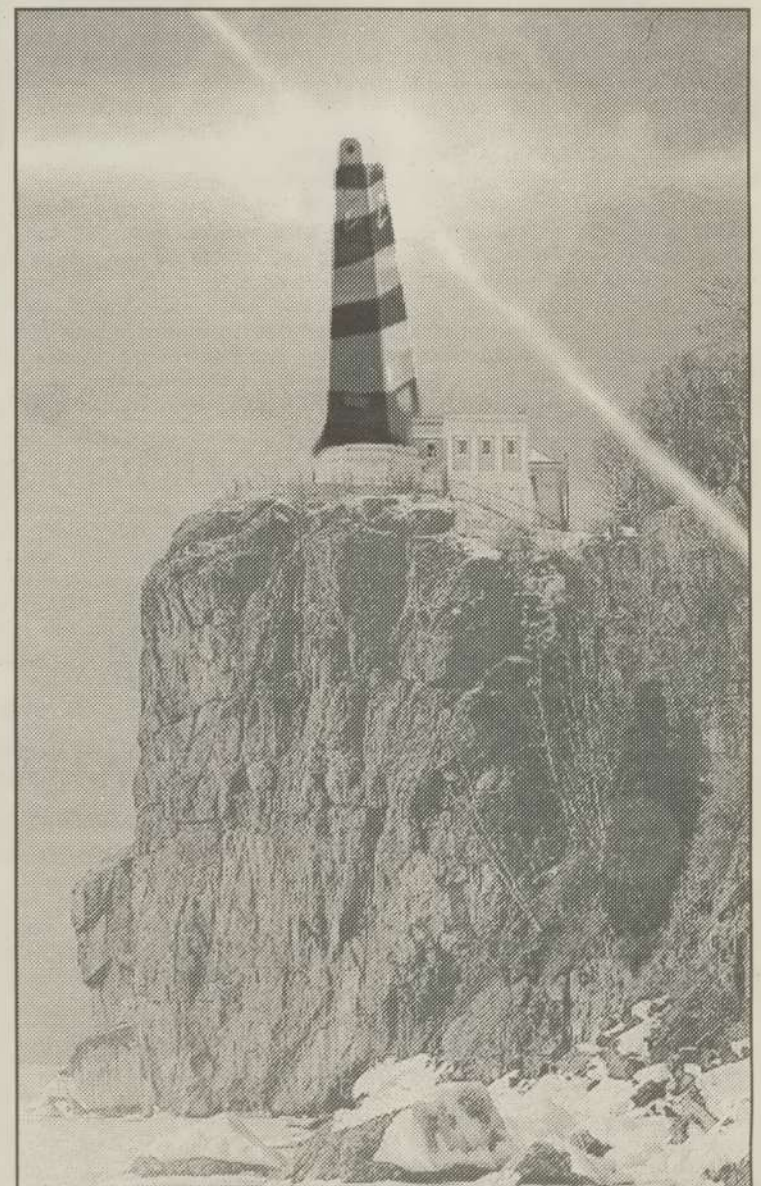


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE LAMOND