

Water treatment program cleans house

Kimberly Maier

Clackamas Print

The goal for many community college students is to choose a path that will enable them to help the environment, earn a lucrative salary, all with a four-year program.

Clackamas is one of three in the Pacific Northwest that offers a Water Technology Program. The two-year program consists of credits which earns an Associate of Applied Science in Water and Environmental Technology. A one-year certificate of Completion can be earned after only 57 credits.

John Lewis, current head of the department, stated, "A two-year certificate prepares you for work in the fields of treating wastewater, picking up waste and returning it to the environment safely."

Lewis has been employed at Clackamas since 1981. He spent years working with Special Operations Engineering with the Army. He is currently the instructor for the Water and

Environmental Department as his fellow instructor, Dan Lundy, retired this year.

"The program turns out 18 to 24 students a year. That matches the requirements for Oregon, so everybody gets a job," Lewis explained. "The creed in our department is: protect public health. All students should have that first in mind. We don't want to pass on infection. We want to ensure that reclaimed water protects fish, salmon, blue heron and insects to ensure that natural habitat is not destroyed by effects of the human population."

Lewis explained that there are added benefits to joining the program versus going straight to a four year school.

"A lot of students are determined to go to Oregon State or PSU to get their four year degrees. What they don't realize is that if something happens after two years and they have to work and stop going to school, then they're left with no degree to get a good paying job with. Students that go to Clackamas spend two years at a cheaper school, and at the end of two years, they have a degree to make money. With this, you get something."

The salary range for someone who chooses this career path is

between \$30,000 and \$110,000 a year, depending on experience.

"A really smart thing to do would be to go on to get your bachelor's in management or business finance. Then you would make really good money."

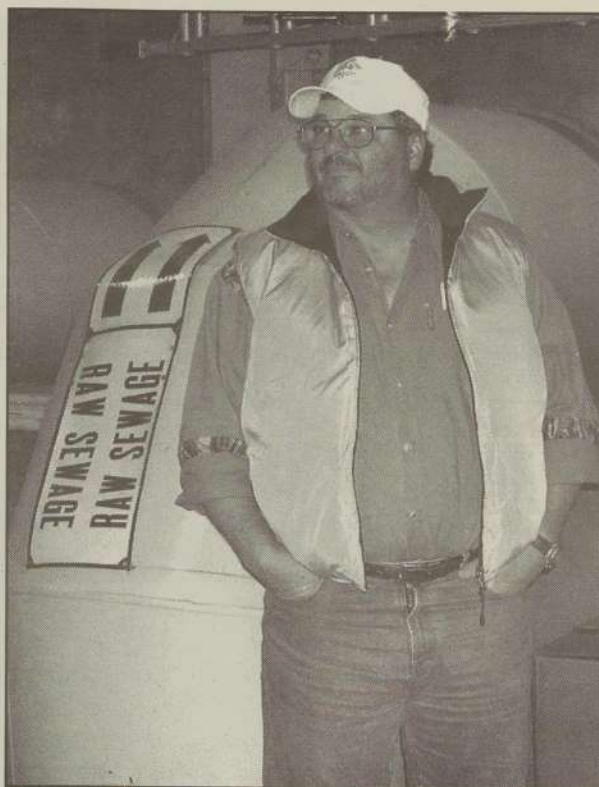
This line of work also allows for travel opportunities.

"Students from here go all over the world. Some stay here and go to work for big corporations like Intel, others go to South America, Central America, Africa, even Saudi Arabia to build water systems. The degree is very versatile and skills can be transferred anywhere in the United States and many places overseas."

In order to treat water, Environmental Technologists use bio solids, consisting of lettuce, corn, peas and paper products. The waste is put into a "compost cooker" and the non-harmful material is then returned to the soil with no pesticides.

"It's a little bit of physical labor and a lot of problem solving," Lewis stated. "It's very rewarding work and it's stable."

Not a bad way to go if you're looking for a fast way to get ahead in life and give back to the environment.



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John Lewis, a Clackamas instructor, runs the Water Technology Program, which turns out 18 to 24 students a year who can work in the field of water treatment.

It's National Novel Writing Month, so come together, write now

Aubra Cameron

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a bunch of aspiring writers. Combine them with over-active imaginations, all-night typing binges, plot twists and ninjas. The 50,000-word goal and the pressure for the month of November.

The result is National Novel Writing Month.

NaNoWriMo, as it is affectionately known by participants, started in San Francisco in 1999. Chris Baty, the main organizer, got together with 20 other writers in the city and challenged them each to bang out a 50,000-word novel during the month of July.

"We wanted to write novels for the same dumb reasons twentysomethings start bands,"

Baty explains on the official website. "Because we wanted to make noise. Because we didn't have anything better to do. And because we thought that, as novelists, we would have an easier time getting dates than we did as non-novelists."

Nine of the 21 participants reached the 50,000-word goal that first year. They told their friends, who told their friends. When the second NaNoWriMo rolled around - moved to

November "to more fully take advantage of the miserable weather" - 140 writers signed up. It has been growing ever since.

Aubra Penner and Lara Hedbor are two Clackamas students who are doing NaNoWriMo for the second time.

"I saw a book called 'No Plot? No Problem!'" says Penner of how she discovered NaNoWriMo. "I took it down

to laugh at it and ended up buying it."

"And she threw the book at me," adds Hedbor.

50,000 words in a month may seem like a lot, but it comes down to about 1,700 words per day, Hedbor points out. Though with school and jobs, even that can be difficult to manage.

"It's like writing boot camp: sleep deprivation, food deprivation and drug-induced stupors," Penner says of the NaNoWriMo experience.

Both Penner and Hedbor say that you would be amazed by the kinds of stories you end up with "when you forget about it and just write." Both completed the event last year.

Writers don't get any sort of prize for reaching the 50,000-word goal, other than the satisfaction of knowing they have completed the task. If their word count is verified by NaNoWriMo, they also receive an official "Winner" web icon and a certificate.

Writers interested in NaNoWriMo can sign up at the official website, www.nanowrimo.org, until Nov. 25.

"You can do it!" Hedbor assures writers who may be hesitant to sign up. "You'd be amazed how much you can produce under the conditions of NaNoWriMo. I didn't think I could do it last year, and I ended up with a pretty cool story."

Participants often describe the pressure of NaNoWriMo stories taking on lives of their own - characters appear out of nowhere, motivations change without warning and plot twists come often. That, many say, is what makes it such a unique creative experience, because the one-month deadline doesn't allow time for either advance planning or extensive editing.

Penner has one last piece of advice for writers new to NaNoWriMo: "Remember, every typo is not really a typo, it's simply an opportunity to add ninjas."

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