

Clackamas explores Camelot



Internet Graphic

Next term students will get swoony over the new Arthurian Romance class

E.E. West

The Clackamas Print

King Arthur will ride again ... for the first time, this winter.

Clackamas will be offering a new Arthurian Romance class starting Winter Term '06. The course, designated ENG 218, will delve into the vast body of literature surrounding King Arthur and his Round Table.

According to the course's instructor, Jan Anderson, Arthurian Romance and its commentaries comprise the largest canon of literature in the world, eclipsing even Shakespearean and biblical criticism.

Anderson plans to explore the full gamut of the legend, from what evidence exists for a historical basis

for the legendary king to the more recent entries in the canon, such as Disney's "Sword in the Stone."

"When you talk about Arthurian legend, you're talking about Gawain, Lancelot, Parsifal, Tristan and Isolde, and the Grail legends, among others," Anderson said, listing some of the stories which contribute to immensity of the Arthurian canon. The course will touch upon all these stories, though given the immense volume of material, students will only be able to scratch the surface.

"I think that one of the assignments of the course will be for students to find their own favorite examples of modern Arthur legends and share them with the rest of the class," said Anderson. "That way we'll be able to cover as much ground as possible."

Anderson will also be teaching the Celtic mythology course during Spring Term, a subject which ties in directly with the Arthurian legends.

"One of the things I hope to bring to the course is knowledge about the Celtic background of the legends," said Anderson. "We'll be reading stories from the Welsh Mabinogion which are the oldest mentions we have of Arthur

and his knights."

Arcane and ancient books won't be the only course materials covered in the class. Anderson plans to include her own library of audio/visual material. She plans to show the famous Disney cartoon, as well as "Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail."

"I think it'll be fun to have everyone bring a big bag of popcorn and watch the Pythons give us their take on the legend on the last day of class," said Anderson.

What interests Anderson the most is the durability of the Arthurian Romances.

"Of course, we'll try to get at the mystique of it all and what has kept the legend alive and well for over 800 years," said Anderson. "I think part of the answer has to do with how the stories speak to our need for hope. Out of the Dark Ages came this king, this powerful symbol of hope."

"There is also a very human need for magic and fantasy," she continues. "The Arthur legend bridges the gap between magic and reality. None of us will ever be knights in shining armor, but through the reality of the fiction we can live in that world for a time."

Campus observatory lets students scope out the universe

Laura Cameron

The Clackamas Print

The Haggart Astronomical Observatory is one of Clackamas' hidden treasures.

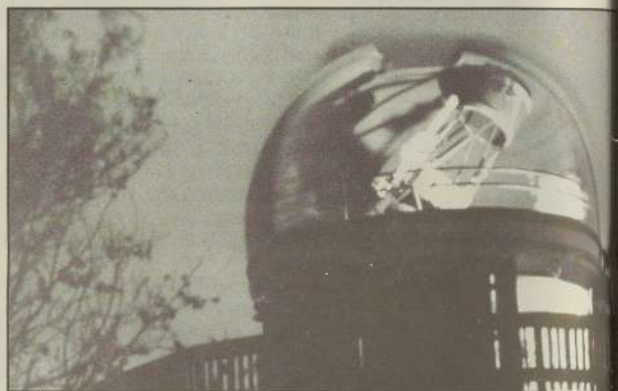
Located on the grounds of the Environmental Learning Center, the Observatory opened in 1989 and is named for Harold Haggart, one-time professional telescope designer and builder. Haggart hand-built the dome that crowns the 45-foot tower,

though it was originally part of a personal observatory attached to his house. Haggart died in 1984; his widow, Darcy, donated the dome and dome drive assembly to the ELC in May of 1988.

The tower is built almost entirely of recycled or donated materials: the main support posts are power poles salvaged from Portland General Electric, most of the framing timbers came from the remains of the Smuckers Jelly Cannery (now the old Art Center), and the metal struts supporting the telescope came from bleachers discarded by Clackamas.

In fact, the only truly new material used in the construction of the Observatory was the cement for the base and central column. The central column, which supports only the telescope, is basically its own structure. The column and the tower never touch, allowing the telescope to remain steady even when people are walking around and causing the tower to shake.

Rotting timbers were discovered in the structure in 1999 and the



Contributed Photo

Time-lapse photography catches the Haggart Observatory in action. The observatory, opened in 1989, was built almost entirely out of recycled material.

Observatory was closed for repairs; the deck, warming hut, and stairs were all replaced. The rebuild took nearly two years and used over \$160,000 in donated materials. The Observatory boasts an impressive array of astronomical equipment.

A 13-inch reflector scope, a 11.5-inch refractor and a pair of 11 x 56 astronomical binoculars are available for use on the observation deck while the dome contains the main telescope, a 24-inch Newtonian reflector built by Steven Swayze of Portland.

Because only 10 people are allowed on the tower at one time, there is another set of telescopes available for use in the parking lot: a 13-inch reflector, a four-inch reflector and a 60-mm refractor. However, they would not mind having more.

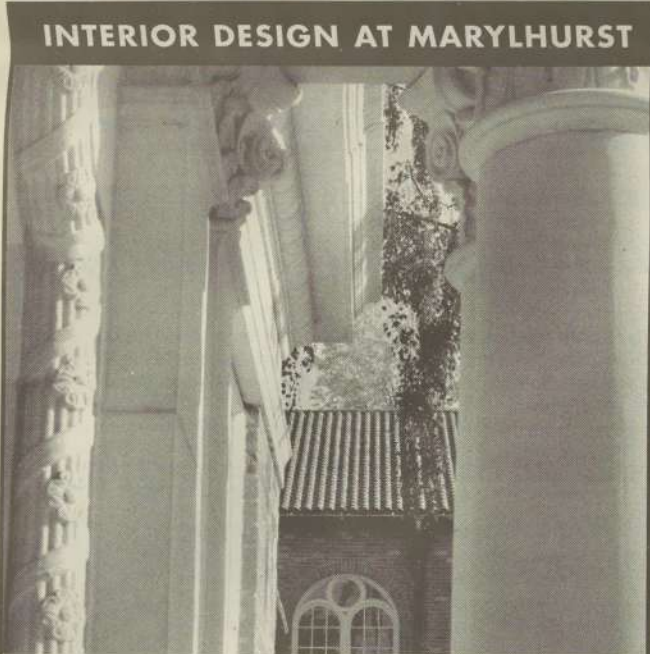
"We're always looking for new telescopes," said Observatory Director Karen Halliday. "We want to have a lot of different types of telescopes on hand, so people can see what kind of telescope would be best for them."

Also available for daytime astronomy is a small hydrogen-alpha telescope, used for solar viewing. "It's amazing to look through," said Halliday. "You can see the flares coming off the sun, and they'll actually change right before your eyes."

The Observatory is open to the public viewing every clear Saturday night, or by arrangement.

"By arrangement is best during the winter," said Halliday. "Always keep in mind what you want to see looking at before you come out. If you want to see deep-sky objects like galaxies or nebulae, come on a dark night when the moon is small. If you come on a night when the moon's full, we'll pretty much be looking only at the moon."

Entry to the Observatory is free, though a donation of \$3 per person is requested.



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