

Instructor loves job, fears grades

E. West
Editor

long, lean frame draped over his office chair, feet propped on a cluttered filing cabinet, James Bryant-Trerise related this anecdote: "A teacher friend once told me it doesn't matter whether or not you've read everything you've assigned in a class," he said, smirking in anticipation of the punch line. "... you only have to be one week ahead of your students."

Those unacquainted with Bryant-Trerise's demeanor, his statement might come as a shock. Well, aren't teachers supposed to be humorless? Or are they fond of dry poetry they can't read? And well, aren't they supposed to read everything? Bryant-Trerise's light style

and deep passion for the written word, particularly religious poetry and wisdom texts - a passion that has been with him from a very early

age. And of course it's that life-long love of literature that allows him to teach extemporaneously, as though he really is only one week ahead of his students.

"I was raised in an Evangelical Christian house. We were encouraged to read the Bible - not so much by my parents, but by the church. And so I did," said Bryant-Trerise. "So here I was being inundated by stories and poetry. By the time I was a freshman in high school I already knew I was going to be an English major."

After he had earned his Master's degree from Claremont University he tried teaching at Seattle Central CC, a job that he does not remember fondly.

"I just wasn't prepared. I didn't know what the hell I was doing," said Bryant-Trerise. "When I [returned to teaching] in '91 I started discovering that everyone's got amazing stories. Consequently, I started learning, and because I was learning I loved it."

And so the worst nightmare of his father came true: he became a professional student.

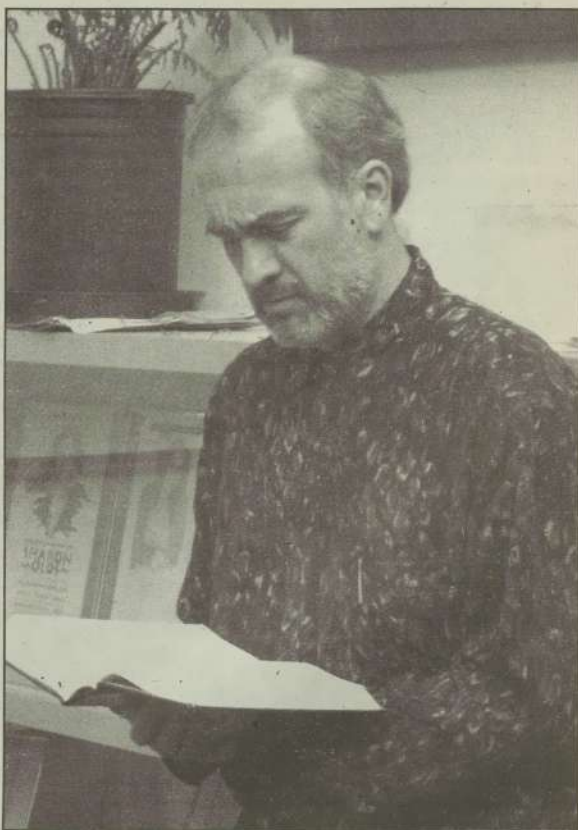
Bryant-Trerise believes that his Christian upbringing, and the lessons it imparted to him, play a major role in how he teaches.

"When a person writes well, he has abandoned himself to the subject. He's thrown out 'shoulds' and 'oughts.' That's what I think faith is. Faith is abandoning shoulds and oughts," said Bryant-Trerise. "And he abandons fear. A good baseball player is doing the same thing. He has intense focus and he has no fear. Anytime he has fear, anytime he's not abandoned himself, boom! he's frozen up."

Fear, of whatever sort, is Bryant-Trerise's enemy in the classroom. During the 2006-2007 school year, Bryant-Trerise will be taking a sabbatical, during which time he hopes to further develop and share his teaching method with his colleagues. Part of that teaching method involves leaving grading off as much as possible, for as long as possible.

"Grading creates fear. How can you have lack of fear if you have grading? Instructors hate grading. Students hate grading. Grading poisons everything you try to do in the classroom," said Bryant-Trerise. "It's just stunning what happens when you suggest we not have it. Just stunning."

Whether or not Bryant-Trerise manages to change the world of English and literature instruction with his methods, one thing is likely to remain the same: he'll always be teaching, and he'll always be having a hell of a time doing it.



BRYANT-TRERISE

Jeff Sorensen Clackamas Print

"When a person writes well, he has abandoned himself to the subject. He's thrown out 'shoulds' and 'oughts.'"

James Bryant-Trerise
English Professor

Hart: stale menthols, old coffee, Oregon City hardcore

Continued from HART, Page 1

spring Clackamas Community College had its first festival of student-made films. One film, "Ode to the Girl," was written by Hart. Making, however, doesn't seem to be in her future.

She enjoys screenwriting; it's so many things that other writers don't.

She's going to be taking another class in February, because I enjoy that form of expression," Hart said, adding that "... the film-making process is so satisfying. I much rather enjoy

splicing together home video footage of crazy adventures I have with my friends."

Hart has experienced a lot at Clackamas Community College. Her time here has caused her to come up with some great advice for new students.

"Don't make assumptions that people want to be your friend just because you're in their class, or give you a cigarette, or wear the same brand of clothing as you, or have a similar haircut," she said. "No one is here to make friends, and they're lying if they say they are. It probably just means they want to get in your pants."

Hart works for the English department at Clackamas, but has big dreams for her future career.

"Someday I'd like to own a coffee shop in Oregon City. I'll call it the OCHC (Oregon City Hardcore) Coffee Shop. I'll sell really crappy coffee and stale muffins," she said, "I'll make all my money in shirts I'll sell that

say happy Oregon City slogans like: 'Oregon City - Where cigarettes are cheap and people are cheaper.'"

A lot of students at Clackamas transfer to a four-year college after they graduate. However, Hart has a much different plan.

"After I finish my fourth year here, I plan on getting rid of any

material possessions I can't fit into a knapsack, and then I'm going to wander the unbeaten paths," Hart said. "You know, the roads the beat poets missed, the territory the monks and shamans overlooked. I really need a soul searching journey where I only rely on the world, and the world relies on me."

FREE!

Students receive a free sushi platter with their meal with a valid college ID!

SUSHI and TERIYAKI

Monday - Friday 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

61 Beavercreek Rd.
Oregon City, OR 97045

in the Berry Hill Shopping Center near the college)

SUSHI and Teriyaki!

be do have more... **possibilities.**

Complete your Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Management, International Business, Business Information Systems, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts & Humanities, or RN to BSN, through Linfield College's Adult Degree Program. Classes meet online and evenings. Financial aid available. Get started today!

- Winter classes begin January 4, 2006
- Spring classes begin February 11, 2006
- Summer classes begin June 12, 2006

Call Portland Linfield Advisor, Jennifer Morey Hawkins at 503-413-7166 (jmorey@linfield.edu) or contact us at 1-800-452-4176 (linfield.edu/dce).

LINFIELD
Adult Degree Program

U.S. News Best Colleges 2005