

# Club Dignity seeks awareness

**Ben Maras**  
Editor-in-Chief

A spot at this term's ASG Clubs Fair provided just the boost needed for Clackamas student Mathew Spencer and his ideas. Spencer is the founder of the up-and-coming "Club Dignity," the college's first club specifically for people with disabilities.

"I thought it might be a good idea to have one," Spencer said. "From what I can tell, this campus has a lot of disabled students, and parents of disabled children."

After conceiving the idea, Spencer began drawing support. He enlisted Casey Sims, coordinator of the Disability Resource Center, who was eager to help.

"I think [Club Dignity] is something that's needed on campus," Sims said. "Often, people with disabilities feel isolated; one of the best benefits is that people [without disabilities] can relate to the challenges of overcoming the kinds of barriers [associated with disability] and raise awareness."

After turning his club constitution in to ASG, Spencer and company faced one last challenge: getting the minimum five members needed to be declared a campus club. After just a couple of hours at the Clubs Fair the membership had already surpassed the requirement, as eight people

signed up as club members. Spencer expects to see more soon.

According to the club constitution, their main goal is to "foster a supportive environment at CCC for people with disabilities," and to "offer a venue for group members to discuss and problem-solve challenges that are associated with disability."

Spencer says that the group is more about affecting and supporting the members of the club, but that they wish to make their cause on campus known.

The constitution further indicates that they intend to "advocate for campus changes to promote access and acceptance for people with disabilities, as well as educate the general campus on issues pertaining to disability."

Sims says that accessibility extends beyond wheelchair ramps and automatic door buttons.

"It means the website being read by a voice reader, so that people with disabilities can surf the site. It also means providing [class] text in alternative formats," naming books-on-tape and larger type for those with sight disabilities.

Spencer himself has to take advantage of these services. He has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Asperger's Disorder and a non-verbal learning disorder, which is similar to, but milder than Savant Syndrome.

"I sometimes jokingly compare myself to Rain Man," Spencer said, referring to the 1988 film starring Dustin Hoffman, although he says his is not as extreme. "It takes me a while to read or write, so I get my books on tape."

Likewise, most of the members so far signed up in Club Dignity have learning disorders in some form or another.

Although both Spencer and Sims say the campus' accessibility is better than most, they also believe that the disabled and their disadvantages often get overlooked as a group, and that the campus would benefit from having its awareness raised.

"You look at different minority groups – and yes, I am referring to people with disabilities as a minority group – any member will take different layers of offense to that level of joke," Spencer said when asked about *The Print's* use of the word "cripple" in a light-hearted manner in an opinion piece about parking last term.

"I personally don't," he said, adding that he thinks it speaks volumes that people

don't pay attention to the issue, and that can sometimes lead to discrimi-

nation. "I have seen discrimination on campus," Spencer said. "It's everywhere if you look hard enough."

Sims says that while there is discrimination, the college is already doing a great deal to make itself more accessible.

"I don't know what other college can say [that] the first two rooms of the main door of the main building are committed to servicing people with disabilities," he said, referring to the main doors of the Brod Community Center.

In these early stages of Club Dignity, big plans are already being made. They are already planning to have speakers from various organizations such as Voc Rehab – which assists people with disabilities in finding work – speak to the members, and help make Club Dignity a community effort.

"Being accessible is important with who we're trying to serve [at the college]," Sims said. "The culture of Clackamas is one of acceptance."

For more information on Club Dignity, see the ASG office.



SPENCER

Jeff Soensen Clackamas Print

# Control engineer saves college bucks, keeps rooms cozy

**CJ Ciaramella**  
Feature Editor

Hilmo Ljucevic may be the most powerful man on campus. He has control of every room of every building on campus at his fingertips.

Well, at least when it comes to temperature. Ljucevic is part of Plant Services – the group in control of the power plant that heats the college.

"My position here is control engineer," said Ljucevic. "My first assignment is to take care of the utilities – electric, gas, and others. Also, I try to improve efficiency."

Efficiency is the key. As Ljucevic stated, the more efficient the system, "the more money we save."

To this end, Ljucevic implemented a computer system, called "Automated Logic," that can independently monitor and adjust the temperature of any room on campus.

"Depending on the outside temperature, the boiler increases or decreases [the temperature accordingly]," said Ljucevic as he demonstrated the program. "For example, the outside temperature is 49, but if I say the temperature is 48 ..."

Ljucevic typed the number into the computer and turned to look at the huge boilers outside his office. In about 30 seconds, they kicked on with a loud "whoosh!"

The automated system has made life easier, and not just for Ljucevic.

"Before [the system was installed], we had four or five people a day calling to say that their room was too hot or too cold."

And since Ljucevic implemented the program, the college has saved a lot of money. He was too modest to say exactly how much, but a spreadsheet he briefly showed made it clear that he was doing more than turning off the lights when he left a room.

"In every room, I'm checking the temperature and adjusting," Ljucevic said.

Before moving to the US from Bosnia, Ljucevic held a similar job



LJUCEVIC

as an engineer. He was also a serious chess player.

"I played chess at the university in Sarajevo. I was good for a couple of years, but after my studies I got married, had children," Ljucevic said, shrugging his shoulders. "You have to give some things up."

Of course, it's hard to give some

things up completely.

"In 2004 I played in a tournament, and I won," Ljucevic said. "The money I sent to the children in Sarajevo."

Ljucevic has long had soft spot for kids.

"I've always liked working with young people," he said. "After the war I taught children chess. Two of my students are now champions in Bosnia."

Ljucevic sees chess as a way to encourage the kids he adores, which is why he is currently working on starting a United States Chess Federation sponsored chess club on campus.

"I'm thinking the way to save our children is sport ... My philosophy is, if you make them busy, they won't have the time to go out on the streets," he said. "I feel I can help people with chess."

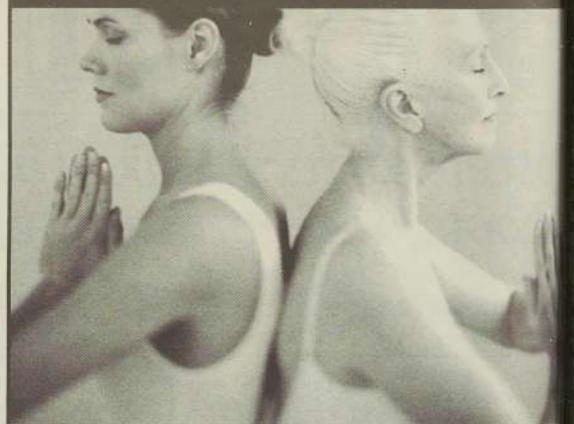
Ljucevic is happy working at Clackamas. "I want to say here, from the beginning, I had trust, understanding and a good environment," Ljucevic said.

He specifically wanted to thank Bill Leach and his co-workers.

"They're really good people," he said. "[They] gave me a chance to show what I could do. I hope they

are satisfied with my work." Judging from his current progress, Ljucevic need not worry.

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