

Bookstore lovin'

The Clackamas Bookstore director sets the record straight

Laura Cameron

The Clackamas Print

Most students do not see the Clackamas Bookstore as a pleasant place. Its image is tarnished as a reminder of the massive amounts of money every student must shell out for books each term.

David Holcomb, the director of the Bookstore, would like to change that.

"We're on your side," Holcomb said.

Holcomb, who is also in charge of the mail room and oversees Clackamas' contract with its food vendor, has been the director of the Bookstore since June 2001. He says that running a bookstore is unlike other retail jobs.

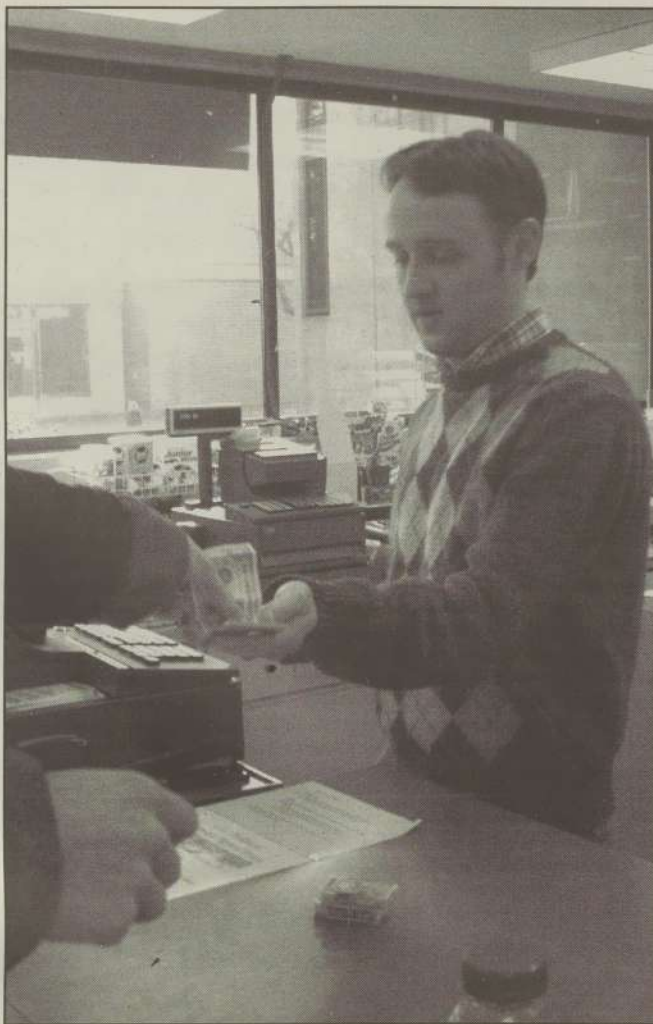
"Selling textbooks is unique because someone else chooses what we sell," says Holcomb. "Then we have to go out and find the books. Obviously, we try to find as many used books as possible."

While many students might greet that with skepticism, Holcomb does understand the financial burden books put on students.

"I'm getting my MBA at another college," Holcomb explains. "I don't get a discount for working in a bookstore, so I know exactly how expensive textbooks can be."

The Clackamas Bookstore has several programs in place to help students out. One they began just this term is a five percent discount on all new books. They are also one of the first 30 bookstores in the country to start a digital book program, and they have an arrangement with Snap-On Racing to get automotive students the tools they need at a discount.

"We're trying to show we have



Adam J. Manley Clackamas Print

Bookstore employee Ted Walker helps a customer with his purchase in the Clackamas Bookstore, located in McLoughlin.

empathy," Holcomb said. "We are open to try anything it takes to keep prices reasonable."

While coordinating orders, shipping and stocking is difficult, Holcomb and the rest of the bookstore staff pride themselves on keeping that difficulty from reaching the students.

"Ideally, no one ever knows how hard it is to get the books on

the shelves," he says. "We want our customers to have a seamless process in getting their books."

Despite the financial stigma attached to the store, Holcomb enjoys his work.

"Our purpose is to help people get an education," Holcomb said. "Being able to see that happen ... well, it makes me feel really good."

SMYRC brings hope to LGBTQ teenagers

Derek Erikson

The Clackamas Print

The teenage years are supposed to be the best years of one's life, but for many young kids, it can be a time of intense confusion, depression and pain. Coming-of-age for these teenagers means learning that they have a different sexual orientation than what is considered "the norm."

Fortunately, there is an organization to help kids through troubled times. SMYRC, the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, is available to offer kids healthy alternatives instead of destroying themselves.

For those under 23 that are confused or nervous about their new found sexuality, there is free counseling available.

SMYRC offers "assessment, individual treatment, groups, couples and family therapy" all at no cost, according to their website. Other than counseling they offer "skill building" groups such as art, writing, tutoring, etc.

SMYRC also has social periods where youths can interact with other LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transsexual, and questioning teens over a game of pool or while watching a movie. There is also a full kitchen and a library; occasionally they have live shows and performances.

The organization offers chances to volunteer or intern as well. Some of these volunteers are a part of "Bridge 13," a group that travels around the schools and teaches a workshop about the issues faced by lesbians and gays in modern America.

Workshops outline some of the proper terminology and how to use it. It explains the difference between common confused terms, such as "transgender" and "transsexual."

The ultimate goal of the workshops is to create an atmosphere that allows people to open up and simply be themselves.

SMYRC also works to keep battered youth out of prostitution, which is a common problem amongst LGBTQ teens that have been thrown out of their homes because of the intolerance of their guardians.

People interested in helping out with SMYRC can volunteer, donate money or item off of the organization's wish list, or just spread the message of tolerance.

For more information, visit the SMYRC website at <http://www.smyrc.org>.

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