

# Cafeteria staffer rides into sunset

## Greener pastures, better pay

*The cafeteria bids a fond farewell to its only hog-riding grandma*

**Adam J. Manley**

*The Clackamas Print*

The cafeteria is a bit dimmer this week, for it has lost a part of its soul. On Friday, the college bid a bittersweet farewell to a resigning Chartwells employee, the Harley-loving Harla Lakin.

For nearly four years, Lakin has been a source of good cheer for co-workers and patrons alike. Greeting everyone with a warm smile and friendly conversation, her genuine concern for the people she feeds has made her more than just a cook to the students and faculty who know her — it has made her family.

"I've been here a long

time," said Lakin. "Some of the students I wait on twice a day, every day. They're like my own kids."

In fact, it was the opportunity to work with kids and the clean environment that brought Lakin to Clackamas.

"For most of my career I've worked in restaurants that had bars," Harla said, describing her 30-plus years in the food industry. "Around alcohol, after so many years it just gets really tiresome and wears on you. It was time for a change."

**"It can't be all about working constantly. You have to take a minute, take a breath to say hello."**

**Harla Lakin**  
cafeteria employee

It wouldn't be the only change for Lakin, who is now grandmother to a two-year-old girl.

"My two favorite loves are my granddaughter, and riding motorcycles," Lakin explained.

Lakin has been riding motorcycles since the age of 18, but gladly gave up her Harley for a minivan to spend time with her

grandchild.

It's precisely that kind of caring that has made Lakin special to many during her time here. Despite being on her feet and constantly busy working at the grill, being the chef's assistant and heading catering teams, she still manages to make conversation and connect with the myriad of people she encounters.

"You make time," stated Lakin. "If it's important to you, you make time. And you guys need that connection, as much as I do. It can't be all about working constantly. You have to take a minute, take a breath to say hello."

Lakin's resignation comes as a result of financial distress. Unable to meet expenses with her Chartwells wages, she applied for a job at Willamette Valley Country Club in



LAKIN

Lara Hedbor Clackamas Print

Canby. She began work there Tuesday.

"I'll be the chefs' assistant, under four chefs," Lakin explained. "At some point I'd like to come back to the college and work for the college — not for a private company in the cafeteria."

Lakin's departure came as a shock to those who have become accustomed to seeing her smiling face around mealtime. While they are

happy that she's found a better opportunity, no one can deny that the food will never be quite as good.

"I always tease you guys — 'Well, [my food is] better because I put love in it,'" Lakin said. "It's not just teasing I really do. I want you guys to eat good, I want it to be good, I want you to be happy. And when you're happy and you smile, that just makes my day."

## College opens doors for Skills Comp

*Clackamas Regional Skills Competition held on Feb. 23*



High schools across Clackamas County sent students to CCC to participate in various skills contests on Feb. 23. (Above) Lakeridge senior Megan Deane and Eli Jiminez, Clackamas art student, work together on a project. (Left) High school junior Mike Adamson and Ray Rozell, senior, collaborate. (Below) Clackamas auto student Ken Parker (foreground) judges for the brakes competition while Brennen Mclain, a Putnam High School senior, works hard.



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