



"Limelight" opens in Alexander Gallery See Page 4

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Super Spruce saved by horticulture class



Emily Walters Clackamas Print

Top Right: Students in the grafting class search for cuttings from a tree on campus during their grafting class Monday, Feb. 4.

Top Left: Instructor Bruce Nelson looks over cutting samples in one of the greenhouses. The cuttings will later be used as grafting practice for students.



Kyle Steele Clackamas Print

Klotchy Creek Giant dies in a storm, and its branches are brought to Clackamas in hopes that some of the tree can be salvaged

Kyle Steele

The Clackamas Print

The wind was just too strong on Dec. 3, 2007, so strong in fact that it toppled the nation's largest Sitka Spruce near Seaside.

Klotchy Creek Giant, as it's also known, was considered dead when the top 125 feet of the once-200-plus-foot behemoth fell to the ground.

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Sexual orientation prevents male student from giving blood

FDA regulation about sexuality stops Clackamas blood drive organizer, Mitch Knudsen, from donating

Megan Koler

Editor in Chief

Many people who give blood regularly know that going through the American Red Cross screening process can be like going through hoops.

Some people who donated blood at last Wednesday's Clackamas Student Government blood drive were perhaps surprised to find out that they were not eligible to donate for a variety of reasons. Individuals who have recently visited a foreign country or taken a prescribed medication, for example, may be unable to donate.

Others, like ASG Public Affairs Officer Mitch Knudsen, who organized the blood drive, are very aware that they cannot donate simply because of their sexuality. "I feel that it's inappropriate and ridiculous," Knudsen said. "Lesbians and heterosexuals can still get HIV and STDs. It's not just gay STD; everyone can get it."

The blood donor eligibility guide for the American Red Cross states that the organization will not accept blood from any male who has had sex with another male after 1977. There is no mention of restrictions to individuals who have engaged in male-female intercourse or male-female intercourse, regardless of any precautions taken. "It's ridiculous that these men can't donate," said English teacher Carol Bumell, who is the adviser for Clackamas' Gay

Straight Alliance. "Anyone that is having unprotected sex is susceptible."

"It perpetuates a stereotype that all gay men have HIV and that HIV is a gay man's problem," Bumell added. "These healthy, young men that get tested are constantly reminded that they are not accepted and they are thought of as diseased."

Knudsen considers himself a responsible individual and draws offense at the stereotypes that have developed over the years.

"People still think that gays are promiscuous and sleep around," Knudsen said. "I'm in a committed relationship. I don't sleep around. I don't do that."

According to Clare Matthias, spokesperson for the Pacific Northwest Regional Blood Services, the American Red Cross has been imploring the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) — which creates the guidelines by which the Red Cross abides — to loosen restrictions for blood donors for quite some time but to no avail.

"They check the blood. They check every unit of blood," Knudsen said. "They could save so many more lives if they let gay men donate."

The FDA's Web site has released an official statement in response to questions regarding the eligibility of men who have sex with other men (MSM) as blood donors. It reads as follows:

"They could save so many more lives if they let gay men donate."

Mitch Knudsen
ASG Public Affairs Officer

"FDA's primary responsibility is to enhance blood safety and protect blood recipients. Therefore, FDA would change this policy only if supported by scientific data showing that a change in policy would not present a significant and preventable risk to blood recipients. Scientific evidence has not yet been provided to FDA that shows that blood donated

by MSM, or a subgroup of these potential donors, is as safe as blood from currently accepted donors."

Matthias said, "They have planned to maintain those policies even though current blood-testing technologies have improved and will continue to maintain them until new information becomes available."

Although Knudsen succeeded in organizing yet another blood drive this school year, and will organize one again, the success is a complicated one.

"I'd like to give blood," he said. "I like coordinating it, and I am glad I am doing it because I like helping people; but at the same time, it just reminds me that I can't do this."



Genyva Laubach Clackamas Print

Student leadership adviser Michelle Baker waits patiently as she is prepped to give blood Wednesday, Jan. 30.