

# Student sells to Pixar

...work and a knack for storytelling helped Keith Meyers land a deal with Hollywood's biggest animation studio

By Matt Garrison  
Clackamas Print

Keith Meyers' active imagination recently landed him a deal with Pixar Animation Studios. Meyers, a Clackamas student, submitted a story to Pixar last year that was accepted. The piece, with a character who is an elf, children's story speckled with adult humor. "I was watching a small perambulator get into a huge truck," Meyers said in regards to his inspiration to write the tale. "I observed this individual," Meyers was reminded of the elf. He created the story from there. Multidisciplinary Education Instructor John McKenna has taught Meyers and holds a high opinion of his work. "Keith was a very self-motivated, focused and inter-actively motivated student," McKenna said. "He has a real talent for writing. His stories are thoughtful and whimsical, sometimes with hints of

Aesop's fables and sometimes with surprise shifts in tone reminiscent of Walter Mitty." "Keith has worked with the Life and Career Options Program (LCOP)," she added. "He gives a lot of credit to the LCOP for helping him develop the confidence to be so daring."

The LCOP helps students determine their career and life plan.

"Keith is a great guy who is inspiring," said Former LCOP Adviser Jackie Hubka.

Getting a story recognized in the film industry is not an easy task.

"The process was very difficult," Meyers said. "I had to find a literary agent, search movie industries and ask questions. Use caution when picking your agent; some will take advantage of a new writer."

"First, write the story. Sit on it. Have friends look at it," he continued. "Accept the criticism. Revise and edit the work. Start over if you have to."

"Have several people read it again. Accept more criticism until you get it right. Don't let it destroy you. Then, find an agent, ask them questions and let them walk

you through."

Meyers does not know when his story's silver screen counterpart will emerge or in what form. Pixar has not confirmed how they plan to use the piece, but it may become the basis for a short film.

In the meantime, Meyers has some very basic advice for aspiring writers:

"... Write about something you know about."

You can read a rough draft of one of Keith Meyers' fictional short stories to the right.

Also, check out the back page for more student creations.



Genyva Laubach Clackamas Print

Student Keith Meyers works at his computer in the Dye Learning Center. Meyers went through agents and many drafts of his story before his work was accepted and purchased by Pixar.

## July Fourth in England

By Keith Meyers

One day I asked the question: "Dad, do they have July fourth in other parts of the world?" As the wise dad began to answer the son's silly question, he thought, "If I answer this question, he will ask why, as any five-year-old would do."

Wisely, as Dad sat pondering how he would answer, he had an idea! Gently, he took the son over to the telephone and started to dial a very long phone number.

I was unfamiliar with the strange, long phone number that he dialed. A voice answered the phone. "Hello, Master Robins speaking." I quietly thought, "Who is 'Master Robins?'" My dad never enlightened us about this guy! Mom did not know of him, either. Who was Master Robins?

Dad spoke to Master Robins as if he was a long-time friend. Who was he? We never knew! Even my mom who was sitting on the sofa was a bit confused. I ran back to the phone where Dad was making the call. All of a sudden a lady named Mumm picked up the phone, and with great respect, my dad asked the lady if she could tell his five-year-old son that they do have July fourth in England!

A sweet, elderly lady with a soft voice called me by name, telling me, of course, we have July fourth in England. "Son, what did your teacher teach you that comes before the fifth and after the third of July?" she asked. With a smile and chuckle, my dad did in fact answer the question. Yes, they have July fourth in England!

## Lewis: Love found on campus

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Inspired by the students she saw every day and her "fairy godmother" began furthering her own education and eventually earned a master's degree in communication. "When she was hired as a full-time member in 2003, her and Eric's relationship had deepened. "We became acquainted; we are friends," she said. "We spend each other's company and a period of time dating. It's very hush-hush."

Alice said, "[We] kept our relationship private from our coworkers. I think several people knew there was something between us, but it wasn't being openly discussed."

The topic of marriage was broached in 2002, when Eric was leaving for a term of teaching at Clackamas students in London.

"We knew that Eric was going to be over there for three months," Alice said. "We thought, 'Wow, why don't we look into getting married over there.'"

The couple traveled to Scotland, in the spring of 2002, at the time equivalent of a justice of the peace, they were wed.

"When we announced that I was going to travel with me to Scotland for the term, and that I was going to get married in Scotland while we were abroad, my and support we received from our colleagues was tremendous," Eric said.

Alice said, "In fact, they threw a wedding shower for us when we got back from London here on campus."

In 2003, after Rickenbough's departure, Alice finally became a full-member of the communication department.

"I might find the idea of

having to go to work with their spouse downright frightening, but Eric and Alice's experience has been anything but worrisome.

"There is an instant understanding when we talk about issues or challenges or the happy things that happen on campus," Alice said. "There is an instant understanding because you know the cast of characters; you know how the institution works, and there is a long history of being here at the college together."



Contributed

Alice and Eric Lewis pose during their 2002 wedding held in Scotland.

Eric said, "I think it brings us closer and gives us an intimacy that couples that don't work together miss out on."

"It also probably helps that Alice and I teach different subjects, work in different buildings and come to work on different days," he added. "It is not as though we share a cubicle and are bumping into each other 24/7."

Since 2004, when their son Evan was born, the real challenge has been coordinating their busy schedules to fit their new roles as parents.

"I think for us, because our son is so young, we have to switch off times," Alice said. "We can't be here together at the same time very easily."

They are both looking forward to next year, when Evan will be in school and they can ride to the campus together.

Despite how well dating at the workplace has worked out for them, they suggest that anyone seeking their same good fortune be very careful.

"When romance blossoms in the office, the normal outcome is that someone gets hurt, rumors can flow, staff members can get caught up in taking sides or the intrigue of scuttlebutt, all causing discord and unhappiness," Eric said. "For all of these reasons, Alice and I kept our private lives private, because we didn't want our working world to get messy and uncomfortable if our relationship went belly-up."

However, as Alice explains, it is common and natural to be attracted to one's coworkers.

"We meet people that we become involved with in the places that we frequent," she said. "Proximity is a big part of how we form relationships with people, so I think a lot of the times it's inevitable."

All is well for Eric and Alice. Worries about gossip and unwelcome chatter have been replaced by six successful years of marriage.

"It was very fairy tale-like to come here and meet my prince charming," Alice said. "Everybody loves a good story, and it was a nice, happy ending for both of us."

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