

Professor protects nation from nuke

By Matthew Ostergren
Arts & Culture Editor

What is your name and position here at Clackamas?

My name is Lilly Mayer. I am a life science instructor.

How long have you been an instructor here and where did you get your degrees?

I started here in 1988 as a part-time instructor. However, between 1991 and 1992 I worked as a forest botanist for the Forest Service in Idaho at the Targhee National Forest. I was then hired at CCC as an instructor full-time. It was a hard choice. I really enjoyed being a botanist, but guess which one won out?

I got my bachelor's degree in biology and my master's degree in botany plant science from California State University Chico. The bachelor's was in 1973 and the master's in 1975. Spring semester 1976, I started a PhD program in botany at the University of Wyoming. Because of finances, I never finished.

So, what did you do after you left the University of Wyoming and before you came to Clackamas?

After leaving the University of Wyoming, I started working for Peter Kiewit Mining. It was a coal strip mining company; it had mines in both Wyoming and Montana. I worked for them as a biologist, doing pre-mining and post-mining surveys of the local plants and animals as well as working with the reclamation of the mine lands.

In 1981, I left the mining company and got a job at the National Seed Storage Laboratory in Colorado where I worked on seed viability studies. We used to have a lot of discussion of how to make the repository atomic bomb proof. The repository was used to store the genetic material for all the agricultural crops used as important food sources for people,



Lilly Mayer shows a film in the Biology 101 class she teaches. The video playing features from left to right: Francis Crick and James Watson, the discoverers of DNA, the molecule that stores the genetic information for all lifeforms.

such as corn and wheat as well as legumes like peas and lima beans, in case of nuclear war or some natural disaster.

After that, in 1985 I moved to the San Francisco Bay area

and worked for the Agricultural Research Service. We looked at proteins in wheat nuclei to determine the salt tolerance of the wheat. That is important because as we irrigate, we get a build-up

of salt in wheat fields that could prevent the growth of wheat.

In 1986, I came to Portland and that is when I started teaching. I first taught at Portland Community College before com-

ing to CCC.

Do you have a favorite you teach, a subject you most interesting to inste

I like all my classes because they all offer different perspectives on biology, although I would really like to start teaching botany again.

Speaking of classes, are rumors that some changes have taken place in the classes and in sciences in general. What are changes?

Because students and instructors have had to deal with class sizes, the non-major biology and major biology classes have reorganized to have separate lecture and lab sections. The separation has allowed us to reevaluate how non-major biology is presented. We now use the Internet for reading assignments and the information has been reorganized so that the application can be seen in lessons. Also, our non-major biology classes use Net for information gathering and class discussion. The Net were purchased through the Foundation biology element account that was funded from royalties of lab equipment written by Chris Strickland and me.

And one other change is that the H1N1 flu is that the classes have spray bottles to sanitize the desktops in the classes.

What activities or hobbies do you enjoy the most of CCC?

I own a 20-acre farm where I raise cashmere goats, goats and gypsy horses. One of them is my favorite hobby, and I also work on my acre garden.

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