

Shelfies: James Hite, fan of the classics

by ERIN CAREY
news & culture editor

When James Hite isn't working for both Clackamas Community College and Portland State University as a political science teacher, the man often finds himself doing countless hours of research for the book he's writing.

Inspired by political history and most often American presidents, Hite sat down with The Clackamas Print to discuss some of his favorite books and authors.

The Clackamas Print: What is your favorite book from your bookshelf, and why?

James Hite: 'The New Confessions,' by William Boyd. He's a great writer and he's a

British writer. He's a great storyteller and has some great themes in his books. He's very humorous, and very funny and witty in his writing. If you haven't heard of him, you might have heard about one of his other books, 'A Good Man In Africa.'

If you read that book too, that's another favorite of mine. It's a great book about this British guy who goes to Africa. He's a bureaucrat, and just the mishaps he gets into, it's hysterical. You will laugh out loud.

He tells these stories and they're very indicative of human nature. He's a great writer.

TCP: What writers have influenced you?

Hite: William Boyd, definitely, and I like a lot of David McCullough's writing. I like biographies, as well. I read lots and

lots of fiction, so I've been influenced by everybody from John Irving to Hemingway to Dickens. I think I've read everything but one book that Dickens wrote. I also write fiction as well. In fact I'm working on something right now that's presumably going to be my first work of fiction.

TCP: What have you been reading lately?

Hite: Right now I'm reading for myself this book about E.M. Forster, who was another British writer. It's a biography of him called 'A Great Unrecorded History.' Forster was a novelist who wrote primarily in the early 20th century. He wrote about six novels, I think all of them have been turned into films. 'Passage to India' is probably his most famous book. I'm reading a really interesting and relatively new

biography of him right now.

Also, I've got about 20 books that are stacked up from the library as a part of my research for another book I'm working on, having to do with Franklin Pierce, who was the 14th president. I'm doing lots of research right now, so I have countless books about Pierce and that era when he was president, and various topics related to him.

As I tend to do when doing research, I say 'I'm gonna skim these books' and end up reading them all, so I'm currently reading about 20-plus books on Franklin Pierce.

TCP: What was your favorite book as a kid?

Hite: My favorite book when I was a little kid, when I was about 10 or 12 was 'The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin,' and I

absolutely loved it. I love politics and history, even when I was a kid. And then when I was in my late teens early 20s, I loved 'The World According to Garp,' by John Irving. That book had a huge impact on me, just the story and the way Irving writes.



HITE

Bookstore patio opening draws hungry crowd



Top: Several students line up for free food to celebrate the grand opening of the new bookstore patio, "The Cougar Court." Left: The Cougar walks up and down the line posing for pictures with students and high-fiving the eager waiters. Above: Plants donated by the horticulture department to be given away. Below: Members of the ASG and bookstore staff barbecue hotdogs and hand out cupcakes, Victory energy drinks and Kind Bars.



Photos by Liz Gomes