

Take a book, leave a book

Little Free Library event to support literacy for Clatsop County's kids

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

Clatsop County's main reading outreach program is challenging everyone in the area with time, a toolbox and a passion for literacy to design and construct their own "little free library."

The initiative, inspired by a national program, will be capped by a Little Free Lending Library Build and Auction fundraiser in the spring. The libraries and the books on their shelves will be shared throughout county communities.

The standard size for the libraries is 22 inches square and 12 inches deep. Fun and whimsical designs are encouraged, but the libraries must accommodate as many as 10 hardcover books standing 21 inches tall. In similar initia-

tives throughout the country, people have created libraries to resemble lighthouses, movie theaters, barns, phone booths and more.

Libraries Reading Outreach of Clatsop County, known as Libraries ROCC, is collecting the finished little libraries at Seaside Public Library through December. The donated libraries will be on display through January for viewing and voting for people's choice awards. They will then be auctioned off during a fundraiser in February.

"This is your opportunity to get books in the hands of children," Seaside Public Library Director Esther Moberg said.

Funds raised from the auction will go directly to Libraries ROCC, a nonprofit program that provides no-fee library cards and summer reading programs to youth up to age 19 in Clatsop County. The program is supported by the Seaside, Astoria and Warrenton libraries and the county's five school districts, along with several corporate sponsors, Clatsop County and the cities of Seaside, Astoria and Warrenton.

Little library project

The Little Free Library movement, which started in 2009, is focused on spreading literacy and making community connections. It has grown over the years to involve about 32,000 book exchanges.

Although the movement is popular, there has not been a collective push to spread the movement in Clatsop County, which is why "we loved it," Moberg said. Astoria Library Director Jane Tucker agreed it would make a good fundraiser because it gives people something to make and allows them to use their imagination and creativity.

"It seemed like something that would be fun," she added.

Beatrice "Bebe" Michel with her Little Free Library at McMenamins in Gearhart.
Eric Halperin/For EO Media Group



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

A Little Free Library in Astoria. Such libraries are springing up throughout the coast.

Only three Little Free Libraries in Clatsop County are officially registered — one each in Gearhart, Astoria and Knappa. Moberg said she believes there actually are about a dozen in the county, but not all are registered.

"The concept is sharing with your community," Moberg said. "You're supposed to take one and leave one of equal value."

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Council says 'Stop' at confusing crossing

Astoria leaders split over scope of other changes

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Astoria will place a new "Stop" sign and make other improvements at Irving Avenue and Eighth Street, an intersection many drivers find confusing even though traffic engineers have proclaimed it safe.

The steep, four-way intersection that gives westbound drivers on Irving the ability to zip left up Eighth without stopping has been bashed by some residents as perilous. But collision data between 2009 and 2014 shows just one accident that caused a minor injury, a crash rate

considered normal for traffic volume.

Westbound drivers on Irving will still have the right-of-way, but the City Council voted Monday night to install a "Stop" sign so northbound drivers on Eighth will have to stop, instead of just yield, for Irving drivers. Other signs will also help guide drivers through the unique intersection.

The 3-2 vote was an example of how the City Council can get whipsawed when trying to weigh the concerns of vocal residents against expert advice.

The idea for traffic improvements originated with complaints from residents about Irving and Eighth, as well as the "Right Turn Permitted Without Stopping" signs under several "Stop" signs at other intersections.

City engineers insisted the intersections were safe, but the City Council called for a review and the city reached

out to DKS Associates, a Portland transportation consultant.

The consultant agreed that the intersections were indeed safe, yet recommended the changes at Irving and Eighth along with better signage and roadway striping at several other spots around the city to help improve driver perceptions. The recommendations, adopted by the city's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee in October, included swapping in "Except Right Turn" signs for the "Right Turn Permitted Without Stopping" signs for clarity and consistency with national traffic control guidelines.

Some feared greater confusion

Mayor Arline LaMear and City Councilors Drew Herzig and Cindy

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Death with Dignity

Is it only an elite, urban option?

By NATALIE ST. JOHN
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. — A growing number of terminally ill residents have chosen to die on their own terms since the Death with Dignity Act went into effect in 2009. However, a recent report suggests that few minority, lower-income and rural Washington residents have taken advantage of the law. It may be more difficult for residents in rural parts of the state, including Pacific County, to participate because they don't have easy access to participating doctors and pharmacists.

Another end-of-life option

Washington is one of just four states where "aid in dying" (sometimes called "physician-assisted suicide") is legal. Under state law (which is modeled after Oregon's 1997 Death With Dignity Act) a mentally sound person who is within six months of dying from a terminal condition can request a lethal dose of medication. The process requires approval from two physicians, as well as a pharmacist who is willing to dispense the lethal drugs. In some cases, a psychological evaluation is also required to ensure the person is competent to make the decision.

The number of people who received the lethal doses of medication has increased each year, from 65 in 2009, to 176 in 2014, according to an annual report published by the state Department of Health, which is responsible for making sure that participating patients, doctors and pharmacists comply with the requirements of the act.

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Astoria to try toilets by the river

Three restroom options added after complaints about homeless

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Disturbing reports of public urination and defecation by the homeless have prompted the Astoria City Council to experiment with three new portable toilets near the Astoria Riverwalk.

Two portable toilets will go in at People's Park at 16th Street and Marine Drive and one portable toilet will be installed at Ninth and Astor streets. The new toilets, which will be cleaned twice a week by a private vendor, will cost the city \$5,395 a year from the Promote Astoria tourism fund.

Some tourists and locals who use the Riverwalk have groused about the lack of public restrooms, but the issue was driven by persistent complaints over the summer from downtown merchants and others about the homeless.

Installing portable toilets was a recommendation from a city task force responding to the growing homeless population.

Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston, who is also the assistant city manager and serves on the homeless task force, said the number of calls the city has been getting about public defecation, in particular, is "alarming."

"I've never seen anything like it," he said.

Public restrooms are available at the Sunset Empire Transportation District and near 12th and Exchange streets. The new portable toilets would add options closer to the Riverwalk.

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