



Items sit on display during the Museum of Whimsy grand opening Saturday in Astoria.



An old antique door from the 1930s sits on display Saturday at the Museum of Whimsy in Astoria.



A werewolf mask from a 1930s French theater sits on display Saturday at the Museum of Whimsy in Astoria.

Museum: 'It's something interesting. It's something different'

Continued from Page 1A

a "The War of the Worlds" alien tripod painted into a corner; and a wealth of exquisitely crafted artwork that is often amusing, captivating and haunting as hell.

In other words, Trish hasn't founded just another stuffy museum.

"What I want you to leave with — more than what you come in to see — is (to understand) just the amount of dedication that people had — even dating back to the 1850s had — when it came to making art pieces, or even just souvenirs," she said.

'Over-the-top'

The iconic 1920s-era building, which won the city's Dr. Edward Harvey Award for historic preservation in 2007, is an attraction in itself.

The architectural relic was a bank for half a century until the last bank to use it left in the 1970s. For a time, it was occupied by a video arcade and a spa. But the bank went largely unused and neglected.

When Trish, a former stockbroker, and her husband, Walter — creator of the D Programming Language and the wargame "Empire" — purchased it in 2005, there was wood rot, water damage and ferns growing through the walls, she said.

"It was moldy mess. There was condensation everywhere," she recalled. But upstairs, "the plaster was still intact, and it was beautiful. So we bought it."

After renovating the building, the couple used it as an event space and cupcake parlor. Ready to tackle a different project, they listed the bank for sale a couple of years ago.

"Then, after we put it on the market, I thought, 'Oh, why do we want to sell it? We're never going to find another building like it,'" she recalled. "So I said, 'Let's just keep it.'"

Converting the place into a museum accomplishes two things: The doors remain open to the public, and Trish now has a space to store and display her prodigious stockpile of fanciful objects.

Trish has also opened a

candy counter on the first floor. A gift shop and an upstairs wine bar are in the works.

"The building was so grand, that it really needed everything to be done over-the-top," she said. "It just looked like it needed something excessive inside. If it wasn't going to be a bank, it had to be something as dominant as a bank."

'It's Trish'

Chester Trabucco, operator of the Riverwalk Inn, witnessed the Brights restoring the Bank of Astoria some years back, while he developed the Hotel Elliott across the street. He attended the museum's grand opening.

"The thing that is so marvelous about this is that it's done in a town of 10,000 people," he said. "One of the draws to Astoria is that there are very talented, artistic people that put their — not only their money and their resources — but their passion for bringing something to life that you don't see just anywhere."

Terence Edgar, an artist who painted "roses and castles"-style decorative panels for a reproduction of an English canal narrowboat's prow, flew from England with his wife, Christina. He said he wouldn't call his work a "whimsy" but an "oddy," especially since narrowboats are unfamiliar to many Americans.

"It's something interesting. It's something different. If this was back in the U.K., it would be traditional bog standard. Everybody would know it," he said. "People don't know it here; that's the good thing about it."

The Museum of Whimsy will continue to evolve; Trish said she plans to switch out some pieces and bring in new ones, to keep the experience fresh for returning visitors.

"It's more a labor of love than wanting to make a killing as a museum," she said.

MacAndrew Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society, remarked as he strode through the Banker's Suite on Saturday. "I love it. It's whimsical — it's Trish."



Dulcye Taylor, left, owner at Old Town Framing, assists Museum of Whimsy owner Trish Bright, right, in carrying a custom-made frame for a large painting into the Museum of Whimsy on Wednesday.



Antique dolls sit on display in the Museum of Whimsy on Saturday during the grand opening in Astoria.



Andre Lynch from Beaverton takes a look at items on display during the grand opening of the Museum of Whimsy on Saturday.



Items on display in the Museum of Whimsy are seen here on Saturday.



Iroquois raised beadwork sits on display Saturday at the Museum of Whimsy in Astoria.

Wage: In Clatsop County, the wage will increase to \$13.50 by 2022

Continued from Page 1A

At least 203,000 Oregonians will receive a raise from the new law Friday, according to the Oregon Employment Department. Wages climb from \$9.25 to \$9.75 in most parts of the state, including Clatsop County, and to \$9.50 in rural counties.

"I think it's a great thing," said Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, chairman of the Senate Workforce Committee, which first proposed the law. "It starts small, but that is the beauty of the way we have crafted this. It is spread out over a number of years. Workers are still going to get immediate relief from the financial pressure they're under because of housing and other costs they face."

The first-of-its-kind law customizes wages by cost-of-living and income level in three different regions of the state and sets a five-year schedule for increases. The law stemmed from concerns about the state's housing shortage and rising expenses in a state with relatively low wages. The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis has ranked Portland's affordability below Seattle's because of a dispar-

ity between wages and living expenses.

The actual number of employees who benefit from the pay bump is unknown, said Nick Belcickis, state economist with the Employment Department. Minimum-wage workers who receive tips may not on paper appear to be minimum-wage workers because of that extra income, Belcickis said.

But those costs still materialize for employers. Tips in Oregon don't count toward the wages owed to an employee, but employees are required to report any money they receive on the job as income for tax purposes.

Most of the 250 Deschutes employees who will receive a raise from the minimum wage law also make tips at the company's pubs in Portland and Bend.

"The people who receive minimum wage in our company receive tips, and that's the lion's share of their earnings, plus we provide health care, even for food and beverage staff," said founder Fish. "We know these are our highest-paid employees getting a raise because those are our tipped employees."



Photo courtesy of Yoshida Food International
Junki Yoshida of Portland-based Yoshida Food International said he will cut many temporary positions in his company to offset the cost of the wage increases.

The additional cost comes at a time when employers also are adjusting to new paid sick-leave requirements and facing the potential of a corporate tax increase under Initiative Petition 28, which voters will consider in the November general election.

Junki Yoshida of Portland-based Yoshida Food International said he will cut many temporary positions in his company to offset the cost of the wage increases. He said he also is looking at ways to pare down benefits.

"It is hurting those people," Yoshida said of the people who would lose jobs. In lieu of the temporary workers, he is asking his better-paid staff to increase production.

Fish of Deschutes Brewery said despite the burden of having to pay higher wages, he doesn't view the law as a bad thing.

"There are some employers who are not treating their employees as well that are making it harder on those of us who are," Fish said. "With that being said, the Legislature doesn't seem to value business and risk and all of those kinds of things as much as maybe they could."

"We have terrific people we get to work with, and this is not about them," he added.

The new law has some complications for employers who have itinerant employees working in multiple regions.

Generally, employers have to pay employees the regional rate in which the employee works more than 50 percent of the time, but if an employee works in more than two regions, the employer has to track that employee's time spent in each region and pay different wages according to

the amount of time spent in each region.

The Bureau of Labor and Industries has scheduled a series of seminars to help employers comply with the new law.

Enforcement of the law will be mostly complaint based, said Charlie Burr, a spokesman for Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian.

The minimum wage gradually climbs to \$14.75 by 2022 in the Portland urban-growth boundary, which includes parts of Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. It will rise to \$13.50 in Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Wasco and Yamhill counties, and parts of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties outside Portland's urban-growth boundary.

In rural areas, the wage increases to \$12.50. Those areas include Malheur, Lake, Harney, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, Wallowa, Grant, Jefferson, Baker, Union, Crook, Klamath, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Umatilla and Morrow counties.