

Escape room: Finding your way out 'takes a lot of imagination'

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"It's something I would have loved to do when I was a kid," Miller said. "Nowadays, how often is it that you're not on a phone, that everyone is engaged?"

One-Eyed Jack

Over the weekend, a group of family and friends participated in the Escape Room's soft opening to test the scenario of clues and puzzles Miller and Lyman developed. The room is relatively cozy in size, but dark in nature, adorned with a variety of treasure chests, pirate flags and gold doubloons that all may (or may not) be a clue to escaping.

When the group enters, the door clicks shut and a video starts to play explaining the scenario. The story goes that One-Eyed Jack — the fictional, yet most evil, pirate on the Pacific Ocean — has kidnapped your party, and everyone has one hour to solve the riddles before "walking the plank." According to Lyman and Miller, there is no real plank to walk — just disappointment to face.

Once the timer started counting down, everyone dispersed into separate corners in a sort of chaos, overturning chairs and flipping over flags in the hunt for clues.

"We tried to make some clues more logic-based, others spatial, and some you just need to be persistent," Miller said. "It takes a lot of imagination."



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Cannon Beach Escape Room got a trial run last weekend as a group of 11 participants solved a variety of puzzles to unlock the room.

Designing the hunt

But designing a scavenger hunt of complex clues is even harder than solving them at times. Lyman and Miller said it took multiple attempts to workshop and tweak the game, often doing run-throughs in their basement or bringing puzzles to

family dinners to ask for input. The key is to make sure all of the clues fit together, and to adjust it to ensure the puzzles weren't too hard or too easy.

"We wanted our rooms to be adult- and kid-friendly," Miller said. "It's something to do on a rainy Friday night, or

a creative way to have a birthday party."

Back in the room, the chaos slowed and everyone gathered around one puzzle, fiddling and fidgeting with the last of the clues. The team then busted out the door with cries of celebration, after finishing in 31 minutes and 36 seconds

— which is the record, so far.

Serena Cline, one of the participants, said at first she was scared to try it but found the whole experience to be fun.

"The hardest part is communicating all of the clues to each other. But it was so rewarding to escape," Cline

said. "I'm just glad I didn't have to walk the plank."

Miller said the group solved clues in ways she didn't anticipate, but ultimately being creative is the point.

"I love seeing people's strengths come out, and seeing strangers work together," she said.

Pickup: Garbage rates vary based on size of bin, pickup frequency

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Residents can currently drop off both yard debris and glass at Recology's transfer station on Williamsport Road and a couple of other locations for free. But Mayor Arline LaMear, who was in favor of curbside glass pickup but not convinced yard debris

pickup was necessary, said it can be difficult for people, especially the elderly or those without reliable transportation, to haul glass down there.

City Councilor Cindy Price opposed the increases. Her concern was, she said, that "we're raising fees everywhere."

Price championed another fee increase Monday that would impose a \$3 levy on residential water customers to help the Parks and Recreation Department. But the parks fee, she said, would bring in much-needed revenue for a department that provides important community services.

Rates vary among customers

Garbage rates vary among customers based on the size of bin they have and how often they are scheduled for garbage pickup. But Recology General Manager Fred Stemmler said there are ways for people to reduce their individual bills, even with the ini-

tial increases introduced by curbside glass and yard debris pickup.

These services help reduce what people throw into their garbage, he said. Yard debris includes Type 1 compost — plants and unprepared fruit and vegetable scraps — further eliminating items that would normally get

thrown in with the rest of the garbage, Stemmler said. Someone with a weekly pickup schedule and a larger bin could downsize or go to twice monthly pickup.

Recology will also begin picking up garbage at city parks, alleviating some pressure on city staff.

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