

# Microplastics: ‘We want this affordable and accessible’

Continued from Page 1A

to consistently raise money, as well as awareness about the issue.

“Rather than going to a landfill, we wanted to turn (the plastic) into a vehicle for conversation,” Rice said. “When visitors come, it’s not only an opportunity for environmental education, but a positive, tangible reminder that you can make a difference.”

### Haystack ‘really bad’

The presence of microplastics on beaches around the world has been steadily increasing for the past six years, said Marc Ward, the director of the environmental nonprofit Sea Turtles Forever.

Ward, who often leads beach cleanup efforts in Cannon Beach, has been researching marine plastics for more than 20 years. In that time he started to see the prevalence of the material in the digestive tracts of sea turtles.

But he didn’t realize the severity until he returned to the coast from a research trip six years ago to find the beaches he loves — like Oswald West and Crescent Beach — covered in the tiny plastics.

“I’ve been on the beach all my life. I was a surfer — I know every beach in this state. I also know we never had microplastics before,” he said. “I take my kids to the beach, and when I saw my baby with microplastic in his mouth I



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The finished products from the line of jewelry include pieces of plastic removed from local beaches embedded within earrings, bracelets and other decorative adornments.

knew something had to be done about this.”

Since then, Ward has facilitated countless surveys, developed a microplastic screening system and organized more than 100 beach cleanup events up and down the West Coast.

Microplastics are detrimental to beaches because of the toxins they accumulate.

“You get a bottle. It’s dropped in the ocean. The UV light from the sun breaks it down and makes it brittle. Then it breaks up into small pieces,” Ward said. “It never biodegrades, they just get smaller and smaller. It’s then when they absorb these chem-

icals — which are often carcinogenic — through broken edges and surfaces and keep concentrating them. Left alone, you could have a contaminated beach.”

The mile in front of Haystack Rock is “really, really bad,” Ward said, where he has consistently surveyed more than 100 grams of microplastics per square meter. Some beaches, like Crescent Beach at Ecola State Park, had the amount of microplastics quadruple in three years of surveying.

Generally, he said it’s dangerous to not clean out any section of sand more than 50

grams per square meter. How the currents work and the geography of the North Coast are partly to blame for why the volume is dense, Ward said.

This issue affects every part of the food chain, where almost a million seabirds and 66 percent of marine life are ingesting microplastics, according to NOAA statistics. But people can also ingest it by building a fire on the beach and inhaling chemicals from the burning plastics.

Disposing of and creating less plastic is ultimately needed to eliminate these issues, but volunteering at beach cleanup events to screen



Pooka Rice holds up a tray of pieces of plastic and other materials removed from area beaches that are used in making her line of jewelry.

plastics out of the sand is a big way to start, Ward said.

“Sometimes it feels like a hopeless situation. I’ve worked with thousands of people in Clatsop County and Tillamook County to clean these beaches, and they all leave with a great feeling of accomplishment,” Ward said. “They see we can actually do something about it.”

### Becoming sustainable

Even with 100 pieces of jewelry made, the team has hardly made a dent in those 240 pounds of microplastics collected. But in this case, that might be good — interest in buying the pieces has surpassed Rice’s expectations.

“We’re trying to make this sustainable. We’ll need more volunteer involvement to keep

up with the demand,” she said.

A website is set to launch next week offering pieces for sale, and people should expect seeing these creations around the county at local stores priced between \$8 and \$35, program coordinator Melissa Keyser said.

The goal is a steady form of revenue to make the program as independently sustainable as possible. The team also hopes to partner with the Cannon Beach Arts Association to hold more ecology-based art classes, as well as support more environmental education.

“We want this affordable and accessible, because we want to start larger conversations about sustainable consumption and practice with everyone,” Keyser said.

# Doughboy: The bronze monument was last refurbished in 1991

Continued from Page 1A

were damaged by the wreck, so they’ll need to be reconstructed. We still need to have an analysis of the connection of the bronze monument to the base.”

The city had already received a \$12,625 Veterans and War Memorials Grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to pay for improvements to the western side of the statue, including the western bathroom — undamaged by the crash but closed for years and in need of restoration.

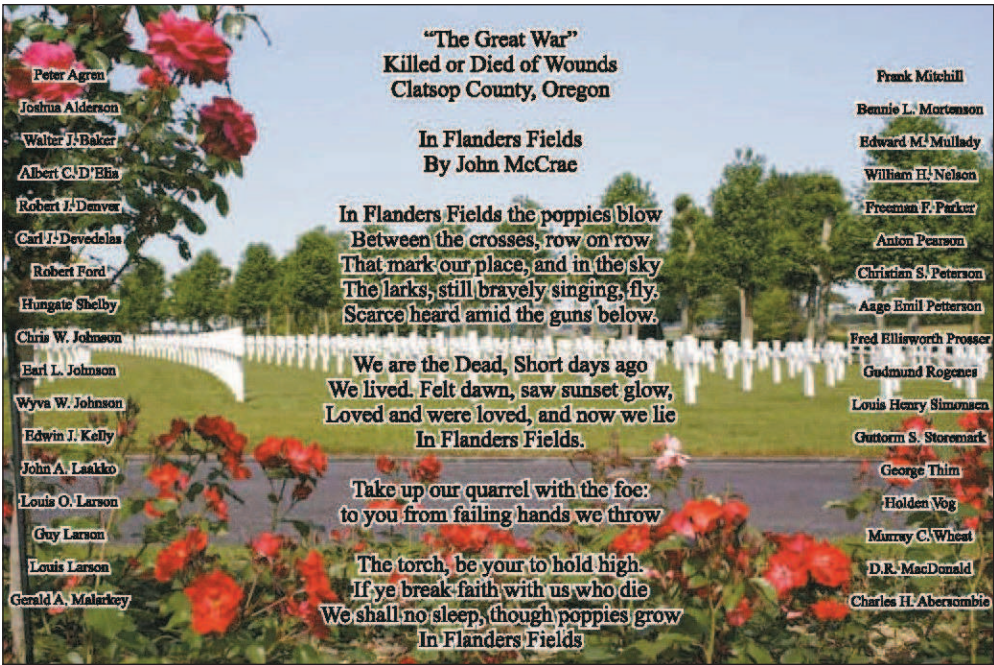
Utility work will be done by contractors. Clatsop Community College’s Historic Preservation and Restoration program will document conditions of the monument and restore the plaster on the west side of the base starting this winter, said instructor Lucien Swardloff.

“We’re also going to refurbish the flagpole,” he said. “That has rust, and the connections to the ground need to be redone.”

The crash damage has already pushed back the grant-funded work, some of which will be delayed until spring, Cosby said, but the city hopes to finish the restoration within a year.

Astoria’s Doughboy Monument is one of many around the country undergoing repairs in advance of the centennial of the end of World War I. A monument in Raymond, Washington, is one of 50 so far to receive a matching grant for restoration from the World War I Centennial Commission’s 100 Cities/100 Memorials program.

Astoria’s monument was entered into the National



American Legion

The American Legion’s Clatsop Post 12 hopes to install a new monument in front of the Doughboy Monument in Uniontown listing the names of 34 Clatsop County soldiers lost in World War I, along with the poem “In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae.

Register of Historic Places in 1984, including the first public bathrooms added to the list. The bronze doughboy was last refurbished in 1991 using crushed walnut shells and hot wax. It is not part of the new project.

Mike Phillips, president of the American Legion’s Clatsop Post 12, said the group hopes by next summer to install a new concrete monument near the Doughboy listing the names of the 34 county soldiers lost in the war, along with the poem “In Flanders Fields,” by John McCrae.

The proposed monument will have to go through the city’s Parks Advisory Board and ultimately be decided by the City Council, Cosby said.

The monument would be about 3 to 4 feet wide and 3 feet high and also have the



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The Doughboy Monument in Uniontown, dedicated in 1926 to locals lost in World War I and struck by a truck in August, will be repaired through a combination of state historic preservation grants and insurance money.

names of those who served on the other side, Phillips said. He hopes it will complete the Doughboy Monument and help remind people of those who served in

World War I.

Frank Buckles, who died at 110 in 2011 in West Virginia, was the last surviving U.S. World War I veteran.

“A lot of people don’t



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

The bronze doughboy atop the Astoria Victory Monument in Uniontown, dedicated in 1926 to locals lost in World War I, is called Over the Top at Cantigny in honor of the first major American offensive in World War I.

even realize that they have family members that made the ultimate sacrifice,” Phillips said. “I think it’s only right to memorialize our veterans and their families.”



## GIVE IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE

Our gift planning team can help you support the missions of OHSU or Doernbecher Children’s Hospital with many kinds of gifts – wills, trusts, real estate, personal property, stocks or other assets. Our gift planners are ready to help you explore the possibilities and make the most of your philanthropy.

CALL OR VISIT US ONLINE TO LEARN MORE.



OHSU & Doernbecher FOUNDATIONS

Office of Gift Planning | 503-228-1730

giftplanning.ohsufoundation.org | giftplanning.dchfoundation.org

Discover Scandinavian Design

finn ware

Est. 1987

30<sup>th</sup> Birthday SALE

NOV. 10-13

SAVE 30%

ON ALMOST THE ENTIRE STORE

For every \$10 spent, receive a ticket to enter 30 Days of Giveaways (Winners drawn 11/30/17)

1116 Commercial Astoria, OR (503)325-5720