

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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ONE DOLLAR

## Characters for bid



Diana Kirk signs her book for two fans during a fundraiser at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

### Write on Seaside! raises money for local libraries

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**S**EASIDE — A librarian, a ghost librarian and a dog.

These were the main characters in the short story “The Ghost in the Stacks,” by local author and library foundation board member Melissa Eskue Ousley. As she read her excerpt about a haunted library on Saturday, the audience sat in anticipation with bidding paddles in hand, waiting to bid on a chance to become a part of the story.

One of those bidders was Madeline Ishikawa of Portland, who for \$50 now had to decide what she was going to name the character.

“I think it’s a fun process to be a part of a story I otherwise wouldn’t be apart of,” Ishikawa said.

This process continued with eight other local authors as part of Write on Seaside! — all with their own stories shared and adjusted at the will of a room full of library donors.

The event, held as a banquet in the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, was a meld between two causes: Write on Seaside!, which started last year as a writing conference and fundraiser for the Seaside Public Library Foundation; and the Little Free Library silent auction fundraiser to support Reading Outreach in Clatsop County, a program that subsidizes about 700 library cards for children who live in rural neighborhoods to



Christian Zupancic entertains the crowd at the library fundraiser in Seaside.

encourage childhood literacy.

By the end of the night, both causes reached their \$10,000 goal.

“Ultimately, the goal is to get books into hands of kids in the community any way we can,” Seaside Library Director Esther Moberg said.

The two organizations decided to combine efforts into one large event and make the writing conference portion more interactive by allowing donors to become part of the stories.

Authors were asked to submit short stories about libraries and books, which will all be published into one anthology and include all of the revised character names. Ousley was inspired to blend her love for the paranormal into her library-

themed short story.

“I wanted to include libraries as a theme, but I always love a good ghost story, and what better place for a ghost than at the library?” she said.

Some deviated from the prompt. One was about a brain, and another about a magic diary. One story centered around elk crossing on U.S. Highway 101 as a tribute to the Gearhart and Warrenton elk herds.

But the point was less about the “eccentric” plots of the short stories and more about the creative process, Moberg said.

“Before (the foundation) created

See **LIBRARY**, Page 8A



The Daily Astorian Correspondence received by Traci Williams. A cut-out of her dog made her fear for the animal’s safety.

### Facing abuse, woman starts her life anew

Rebuilding with her children in Gearhart

By **R.J. MARX**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**GEARHART** — When Traci Williams came to Gearhart in 2016, she was literally running for her life.

It was a last-ditch effort to get away from abuse and stalking. She bought a closed-up ice cream parlor across from the post office and within eyesight of the police station. From her shop windows she can see all four corners of the tiny downtown.

She quickly worked to renovate the building and reopen as an ice cream, coffee and wine shop. It was very important to her and her children, who both work for her. It was a success from the start, a little gathering place often packed with happy children and adults.

She didn’t tell many people why she came here. Her friends knew.

Then on Thursday, Williams’ story was published on the front page of the *The New York Times*. The newspaper recounted years of abusive behavior by Morgan Stanley financial adviser Douglas E. Greenberg against Williams and three other women.

The interest in her story came “out of the blue,” she said. She was ready to move on when she was contacted by reporter Emily Flitter.

See **WILLIAMS**, Page 3A

### Johnson, Boone hold Seaside town hall

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**SEASIDE** — Climate change, emergency preparedness and other topics were on the minds of residents who came to City Hall on Saturday to ask state Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Deborah Boone questions.

With retirement on the horizon for Boone, some quizzed her about the future of emergency preparedness, her legacy issue.

One of those constituents was Tiffany Mitchell, a candidate running for state House District 32 — Boone’s soon-to-be former seat.

“I come from Utah, where we have similar issues living on a fault line,” Mitchell said. “Then I moved here and I felt I was moving from one community with emergency planning issues to another facing the same issues. What do you think needs to still happen to make sure this area is prepared?”

See **SEASIDE**, Page 4A

## Opportunity paints for recent transplant

Gittle bought one-way train ticket to Oregon

By **EDWARD STRATTON**  
*The Daily Astorian*

**A**fter visiting all 50 states and 13 countries, Chelsea Gittle has never felt as connected to a place as she has in Astoria.

Gittle relocated last year to the North Coast, where she runs Proof in Painting, a paint-and-sip party business, and makes hand-drawn gift cards and knits clothing accessories.

Gittle is originally from Cape May, New Jersey, a small beach resort town similar to Seaside that booms in the summer with tourists. She spent much of

her childhood with a grandmother who taught her about crafting.

“I was always very content keeping myself busy with drawing, painting, making stuff,” she said.

Gittle attended Rutgers University in New Jersey, where she spent her freshman year exploring subjects before settling on ecology, figuring art would remain a lifelong hobby.

She spent several years as an environmental scientist in Boulder, Colorado, before taking a job back on the East Coast. About a year later, after



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Chelsea Gittle relocated last year to Astoria, where she runs a paint-and-sip party business, draws greeting cards and crochets clothing.

See **GITTLE**, Page 8A

