

Seaside Aquarium fundraiser to benefit nonprofits

The 'Maine Event' honors legacy of marine conservationists

SEASIDE — The Seaside Aquarium will host the second annual "Maine Event" fundraiser on Sunday, benefitting the Friends of Haystack Rock and the North Coast Land Conservancy.

The fundraiser is named for Neal and Karen Maine, both passionate marine conservation advocates along the Oregon Coast and beyond. The Maines have inspired educational programs such as Sea Week and the Estuary Discovery Program.

The event will last from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and all funds raised from admissions to the aquarium will be split and donated to the North Coast Land Conservancy and Friends of Haystack Rock.

Today, intertidal life surrounding Haystack Rock continues to thrive because of Karen's efforts that led to the creation of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, and the program has inspired generations of marine scientists and conservationists.

Neal is credited for co-founding the North Coast Land Conservancy, an organization centered on the concept of approach-



Seaside Aquarium

Mother and daughter Harbor Seals 'Greta' and 'Casey' play at the Seaside Aquarium.

ing conservation cooperatively rather than confrontationally. The idea was to engage the community to do what was best for people, plants and wildlife. Neal was also involved with the Seaside Aquarium for many years and served on its board from 1995 to 2020, expanding educational outreach and involvement in both the community and the scientific world.



Seaside Aquarium

The Seaside Aquarium faces the Promenade and beach.

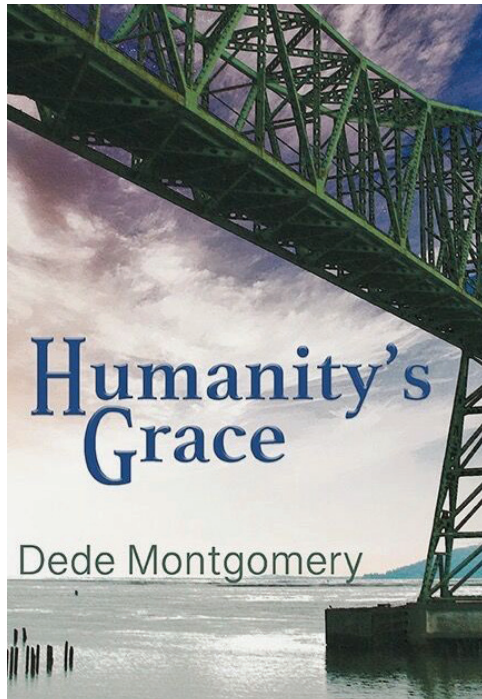
Continued from Page 8

Maritime Museum and the Port of Portland.

Montgomery's childhood included verbal abuse while playing on a boys' Little League team and appearing in an advertisement highlighting pollution in the Willamette River. An athlete throughout high school, she played volleyball for the University of Montana. Sports and the outdoors continue to flavor her life. She now enjoys kayaking, cycling and hiking.

Montgomery's ancestors were Northwest pioneers. Her third great-grandparents, Chloe Clarke and William Willson, sailed separately up the Columbia River to reach Fort Vancouver in Washington Territory in 1837 and 1840. "As first a teacher and carpenter with the Jason Lee missionaries, they met in Nisqually before moving to The Falls (Oregon City) and Salem," she noted. "Their original land claim makes up today's downtown Salem and Willamette University." Second great-grandfather Joseph Kaye Gill founded the J.K. Gill bookselling empire, which grew to 40 stores and lasted until 1999. He helped found Ocean Park as a Methodist church camp headquarters.

As a girl, Montgomery tossed a message in a bottle into the Willamette River and was delighted to receive a reply from a man



'Humanity's Grace' is a fictional short story collection by Dede Montgomery, available through Amazon and at some North Coast bookstores.

who discovered it. She borrowed that experience for her first novel, "Beyond the Ripples," with a bottle in the Columbia River

washing up at Westport, Washington. "That started me on creative journey of writing literary fiction," she said.

When she progressed to "Humanity's Grace," a nontraditional format intrigued her. Minor characters took on larger roles. "I was not excited about a true sequel," she said. One character had concluded the first book with her father moving to Astoria. "I set it in Astoria because that was the last place that Annie's dad lived in 'Beyond the Ripples.'" The character's father thought there was treasure buried at the Astoria Column. In "Humanity's Grace," Annie returns to Astoria for a memorial. "I could have put it in any town, but I love the Columbia River, the Riverwalk and the Column."

In promoting her new book, Montgomery notes that her characters "meander through sorrow and sadness, joy and regret, as they remind the reader of the startling and collective beauty of life's connections."

This is Montgomery's key theme. "There is so much about connections and interconnections between people, you don't know about all these potential connections if you don't have an opportunity to engage. They are synchronicity or serendipity, as much as they are social. I don't know if it's 'god' or just life energy," Montgomery said.

Aside from writing, Montgomery works for Oregon Health & Science University as an industrial hygienist, educating people about workplace safety while promoting wellness.

Unsurprisingly, some elements from her vocation of 36 years have crept into the lives of her fictional characters, including electricians who work at a paper mill.

"I start on something and just write," she said. "It's kind of stream of consciousness. I am always getting ideas, I dictate ideas into my phone."

"I cannot remember ever having writer's block. It doesn't happen to me," she said. Montgomery hopes to speak about her creativity in Astoria later this year. "The writing itself gives me a huge joy. There is a satisfaction in processing it. The editing process — not the punctuation, but talking about these ideas — is really wonderful," she said.

Montgomery also recently published a collection of blog posts, "Then, Now and In-Between." When her mother died a year ago, readers responded to her grief. "I am not going to make lots of money or get on bestseller lists, but it's when someone tells me I have expressed what they couldn't express. People say 'they loved the way I did that.' Life is full of sadness and joy and you have to figure out how to get through all this," Montgomery said.