

At a Hillsboro library, patrons can check out an experience

A collection of unconventional items

By JENN CHAVEZ
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Way back before the COVID-19 pandemic, Debbie Bowman browsed the Brookwood branch of the Hillsboro Public Library and gushed:

“This is amazing. They have a cake decorating kit,” she said. “And this other one, a digital projector? That is awesome.”

There are plenty of books to check out at the library. But also ... so many things.

“I like that panini maker, that would be awesome to try. Or I know my sister’s tried an Instapot from here before she bought one,” Bowman said, perusing more.

Libraries have long offered more than just books: Patrons can often find movies, music, or games at their nearest branch, too. Public libraries have also offered other nontraditional items for checkout in the past, like puppets or toys. But in recent years, some libraries have built entire collections of even more unconventional items: Libraries of Things. One of the first collections of its kind in the United States is right here in Hillsboro.

“Our motto for the library is ‘for everyone,’ and I think this collection really epitomizes that thought,” said Brendan Lax, a collection development librarian at the Hillsboro Public Library — or our librarian of things.

Years ago, Lax had already been stretching the bounds of what the library system could offer its patrons, including video games and board games. Then he found inspiration from a 2014 trip to a few unconventional collections in California. Lax visited public libraries in Berkeley and Oakland to see their expansive tool libraries. He also stopped by the first American Library of Things in Sacramento, which had adopted its name from a nonprofit collection in London. He was particularly excited about the array of musical instruments he saw there. It seemed like a great way to pique patrons’ interest and curiosity.

He said to himself: “Hey, I never thought this could be something my library could do for me!”

Lax decided to try some new things out in Hillsboro’s collection, like educational STEM toys for kids and kitchenware.

“And when kitchen gadgets come back, and they’re still looking clean, and all these board games and parts and pieces are coming back, and nothing’s missing, we get the sense that we can pretty much try anything,” Lax said.

Since then, Hillsboro’s Library of Things has



Jenna Deml/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Librarian Brendan Lax tunes newly donated ukuleles to make sure they are ready for checkout.

grown to feature over 1,200 items, including nearly 600 board games. It’s helped inspire similar collections in the Portland area, across the state and around the country.

Gadgets and gizmos

The library is full of unique offerings. Among them: Toys that teach kids how to code, like the Code-a-pillar. A microscope, or a 3D pen.

The collection includes plenty of nonscientific fun too, as patron Lindsay Erickson discovered on her visit.

“Today I am borrowing a game where you get to hit someone in the face with whipped cream,” Erickson said with a laugh. “So that’s gonna be super fun for my kids.”

There’s a colorful parachute for playing games, and a cornhole set and slackline kit for fun outdoors.

The collection is also a board gamer’s paradise. And if, by chance, a piece goes missing? No problem:

Lax can often make new pieces using the library’s 3D printer.

For kitchen adventurers, the offerings include a huge collection of creative cake pans in different shapes and themes, a carnival-style popcorn popper, Instapots, air fryers, a mochi maker. There is even a chocolate fountain for more extravagant occasions.

“And, we have a Star Wars Death Star waffle maker, of course,” Lax said.

To tap into your filmmaker side, try a GoPro camera, or a green screen kit.

There’s a sensory kit of different devices, like a night light or a weighted blanket, for people with sensory processing issues to try out. And an air quality monitor to test the air inside your home. The library also checks out a few companion cats: robotic felines that meow and move, designed for older adults who can’t have live pets.

They’ve got several machines for converting video tapes to DVD, so patrons like John Prosser can revisit old memories.

“It was old cycling movies — I’m an avid cyclist — some of my old competition movies from 20 years ago,” Prosser said.

He tried a violin once, too. “It was painful,” he said, chuckling. “We brought it back probably a bit quicker than we anticipated.”

The library’s musical instrument collection has many fans. Keyboards, steel drums, ukuleles and more are up for grabs. And the theremin — one of the earliest electronic instruments ever invented — was a big hit with patron Sailor Jensen.

“It was pretty cool. The fact that you can control it by lifting your hand up and down, left and right, that is awesome,” Jensen said.

The Library of Things typically checks out items for one week, although a few can be borrowed for longer. Lax said many are popular enough to have holds on them, even those with multiple copies.

One good way to browse the wider selection is to stroll through the library’s hold shelves. Another great way is to check out its YouTube channel, where Lax posts funny, creative videos he makes with his fellow librarians spotlighting different things in the collection. You can see him dressed up like Dick Van Dyke from the movie “Mary Poppins,” showing off the library’s chimney sweep (that item, by the way, was a suggestion from the local fire department).

In others, he’s edited into movies like “Jaws” and “Star Wars” using the library’s green screen kit, facing off in a banjo duel with Kermit the Frog, or hosting kitchen game shows with different culinary gizmos.

In keeping with its motto, the Library of Things has something for everyone.

the Astorian Classifieds

SELL YOUR VEHICLE HERE!
If it Drives or Floats...

\$49.95
ADVERTISE TODAY
800.781.3214
classifieds@dailyastorian.com
If it doesn't sell in two weeks
We will give you two weeks for FREE!

GARAGE SALE SEASON IS HERE!

ONLY \$25 for 3 days

Call 800.781.3214 to advertise today!
classifieds@dailyastorian.com

Searching for Employees?

PLACE YOUR JOB POSTING HERE

Special Includes:

- 2 Weeks in Print & Online
- Logo Included
- Facebook Boost
- Featured Advertising

Call the Astorian at 503-325-3211 or email: classifieds@dailyastorian.com

eomedia group
The most **valuable** and **respected** source of **local news**, advertising and information for our communities.
www.eomediagroup.com

251 Boats for Sale

10 ft kayak for sale. With car rack and PFD and paddle. Will accept best offer. 503-325-2899

617 For Rent

ART STUDIO FOR RENT
12 X 12 OPEN CONCEPT
\$225 PER MONTH
503-325-4442 - Astoria Art Loft

651 Help Wanted

Tax Preparer –
Immediate opening for a full-time, year around Tax Preparer for individuals in an Accounting office. Corporate/Partnership tax return & Bookkeeping experience helpful. Call (503) 738-9543 for an interview or Send resume' to PO Box 54, Seaside, OR 97138

651 Help Wanted

Cannon Beach Police Department
Position: Police Officer
Closing Date is Monday, August 15, 2022 – 5:00 PM
Salary: \$27.17 - \$34.68 Hourly Including Benefits

Link for full job details: <https://www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/police/page/police-officer-job-1>

Sell your children's outgrown clothes and toys with a classified ad in The Astorian.
Call **503-325-3211** to place your ad today!

7-25 **CRYPTOQUIP**

RQSJCU FN RSFRCSDX ORCJYQUUX
QUUFJQDCP NFS GEIRCP QTYIQUO
DF JFTODSEJD GFICO FT:
JQICU-UF D.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: FLICK ABOUT A LARYNGITIC FELLOW WHO COULD ONLY SPEAK USING HIS BREATH: “THE HOARSE WHISPERER.”
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals P

Go. Do.

coastweekend.com

dining • the arts • music
shopping • museums •
classes • movies gardening
• news • blogs • more

coast WEEKEND

CLASSIFIED ADS work hard for you. Try one today!

618 Wanted to Rent

Low-income senior looking for room to rent in Seaside. 503-200-7650

651 Help Wanted

JEWELL SCHOOL
Vacancy Notice
Middle School Language Arts/Humanities Teacher
For more information, please visit our website: www.jewell.k12.or.us. Please email your application materials to allycecec@jewellk12.org

COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM, INC.
HEAD START

Community Action Team Head Start is hiring in Clatsop County!!
We provide:

Medical, dental, vision and life insurance benefits
Personal and sick leave
Balanced work schedules
A culturally respectful work environment

Teacher \$26.81/hr
Family Advocate \$24.32/hr
Assistant Teacher \$18.27/hr
Cook \$15.10/hr
Bilingual Assistant \$15.10/hr
Floating Aid \$14.41/hr
Dawn Crawford at 503-556-3736, dcrawford@nworheadstart.org

Bookkeeper -
Immediate opening for a full-time Bookkeeper in a full service Accounting office, G/L, P/R, knowledge of computers useful, Corporate and/or Individual tax capability helpful. Call (503) 738-9543 for an interview or Send resume' to PO Box 54, Seaside, OR 97138

FIND IT, TELL IT, SELL IT!
Classified ads! 503-325-3211

GARAGE SALES

www.dailyastorian.com

401 Garage/Yard Sales	401 Garage/Yard Sales
Estate Sale July 29th-31st Friday 9am-4pm Saturday 8am-4pm Sunday 8am-noon 436 Chinook St, Astoria	Yard Sale Saturday and Sunday July 30th & 31st 9am-3pm 448 South Franklin (back apartments), Seaside
Furniture, tools, antique fridge (working), decorative decoys, entire stack of original Disney records, old bottles, and much much more!	Vinyl records, aquarium, backpack sprayer, rain gear, air beds and pump, movies, cassettes, puzzles and games.

7-26 **CRYPTOQUIP**

Q J B U V W P J U R U N W Y P
W Y R U N K V G Y U B D W R U R T Y E I T L B I T
Q J W D G B U B V K R W I J B D D ' R

LBNNEEV? IGDDE RJEUR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PARCEL OF PROPERTY SPECIALLY ALLOCATED FOR HUMPED ANIMALS TO CONSTRUCT HOMES ON: CAMEL-LOT.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals G