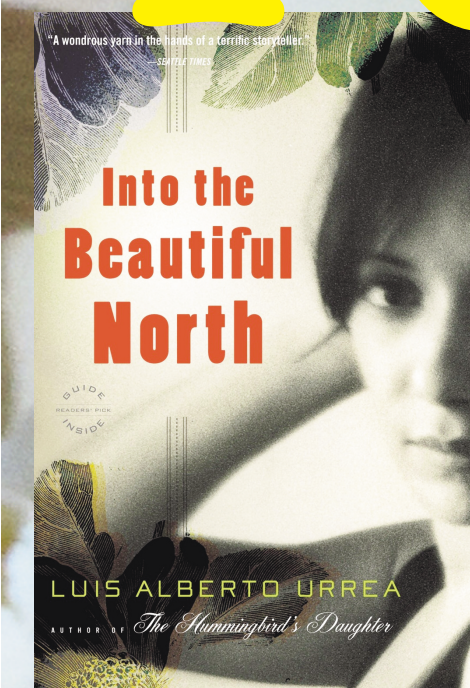


Feasting on Words



Library and other literacy groups celebrate language

Bidders mingled among books at Saturday's successful Feast of Words fundraiser for Hood River County Library.

Students mixed words with teachers – in a good way – at the recent SMART Tongue Twister Tournament.

People in Hood River County are indeed feasting on language, and mixing in a variety of ways to share the written or spoken word. A favorite reading program for the whole community – with a few new twists and plenty of activities – returns March 15. It's called Hood River Reads.

The Gorge Literary Journal takes shape starting this spring, with poetry, fiction and essay submissions invited by April 22.

Details about Hood River Reads and "Gorge Lit" are below.

Meanwhile, Hood River County schools held numerous reading-related events celebrating the written word, and the March 2 birthday of Dr. Seuss (see photos).

Parents and kids gather for Scrabble once a month at Parkdale Elementary, and upcoming programs at the library focus on the book "Insurgent" – trivia challenge on March 20 – and the Belgian graphic novels of "Tintin" – book giveaway, movie screening and more on March 25. (See library website for details.)

"The Foundation is so thankful to our community for the tremendous support

this year for the Feast of Words," said foundation chair Jen Bayer. "With wonderful sponsors and a great turnout for the party, we were able to bring in over \$30,000 for revitalizing the Georgiana Smith Memorial Gardens. We couldn't do this without the tremendous generosity of our local merchants in terms of donations of amazing food, beverages, music, and auction items. Thanks to everyone who donated or volunteered; we can all look forward to reading a good book in the beautiful Gardens later this year."

Amber and the Pale Ales (Amber Nelson, Glen Holcomb, Rob Guidera and George Bentz) performed, Gavin McAlpine and foundation board member Carolyn Welty-Fick led the auction, and local restaurants and purveyors of wine and beer provided ample culinary accompaniments.

The night of food, music and silent and live auctions raised funds to upgrade plantings and amenities, and repair portions of the irrigation district at the Gardens, located on the north, south and west sides of the downtown library. Marion McNew of Mount Hood Gardens plans to restore planting areas and replace some sections with new and drought-resistant foliage. Benches will be upgraded and planting beds brought back to the condi-

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Cascade Locks, submitted photo; Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

CASCADE LOCKS' Benjamin Harestad shows his headgear for last Tuesday's Hat Day at Cascade Locks School. (Details on page B6.) At top right, Luis Alberto Urea's "Into the Beautiful North" anchors 2015 Hood River Reads activities. Feast of Words fundraiser attendees peruse varied silent auction items Saturday among the stacks in the Library's historic reading room. The event surpassed the \$25,000 goal. At top original 2005 garden design detail.

HR Reads kicks off Sunday

Hood River County Reads is kicking off its 2015 season on March 15 with a special event at the Hood River Library beginning at 2 p.m.; related kickoffs will be held at the Parkdale and Cascade Locks libraries on March 17 beginning at 5 p.m.

Hood River County Reads is a community-wide program for readers of all ages, with titles chosen to represent the cultural diversity of the valley. It began in 2006, with local author Virginia Euwer Wolff's novel "Bat 6," about the Japanese experience after World War II, and has run every year since – with the exception of 2011, when the library was closed due to budget cuts.

This year, there are two

books: "Into the Beautiful North" by Luis Alberto Urrea, and "Becoming Naomi León" by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Helen James, Hood River County Reads Chair, with committee members Mole Schaefer, Pat Schmuck, Gale Arnold, Jean Harmon, Elizabeth Garbor, Fran Finney and Assistant Library Director Rachel Fox, chose books that are a "good read for a wide range of the community," said James. "It has to be accessible, fun to read, and tell us something about who we are."

Both books are available in English and Spanish. James said 1,000 books were purchased for the program: 500 copies of "Into the Beau-

tiful North" in English, with another 175 in Spanish; 325 copies of "Becoming Naomi León" for classroom sets at the elementary and middle schools to read in class; and 20 copies of Urrea's other works (fiction, nonfiction and poetry), which are now available for checkout.

While "Becoming Naomi León" is taught to the younger grades, "Into the Beautiful North" will be taught at the high school level. Both share the common themes of borders, growing up, searching for a hero and family.

According to a press release, "Into the Beautiful North" is the story of 19-year-old Nayeli, who lives in a remote Mexican village

and dreams of her father, who left years ago to find work in the United States. Most of the men in her village have left to go north, which makes the village an easy target for a group of drug-dealing banditos. After watching the movie "The Magnificent Seven," Nayeli and three friends are inspired to travel to the United States to recruit seven Mexican men to defend and repopulate their village. This story has unforgettable characters and is a timely tale of an irresistible young woman's quest to define herself without borders.

"For younger readers, Hood River Reads has select-

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Word count countdown:

Page contest nearing end

Michele Dearing, Collection Development Specialist for the Hood River County Library District, updated the Million Page Challenge board at the Hood River Library last week. And we've got sad news, Hood River County – we're in last place.

The Hood River Library District was challenged by the Pendleton Public Library and a combined team of the Harney and Lake County libraries to a three-way race to see which library's patrons can reach one million pages first. The contest started Feb. 1.

As of last Thursday, Hood River County has read 76,486 pages,

putting us in last. Pendleton is in second with 171,296 and Harney/Lake in first with 484,223.

Books, audiobooks, newspapers and magazines all count in the contest. The catch: They must be read or checked out from the library, and participants must be 16 years or older to qualify.

Assistant Library Director Rachel Fox said patrons are encouraged to fill out their Million Page Challenge book-marks (or write the number of pages read on any sheet of paper) and regularly turn them in for tabulation to any county library branch. The contest ends March 15.



Photo by Mike Glover

SMART TONGUE TWISTER Tournament competitors, from left, are: Sean Counihan, Noah Tauscher, Kelsey Stewart, Sierra Lavoie and Morgan Graves; educators Rich Polkinghorn, Heather Laurance, Jennifer Graves, Dan Goldman, and T Dalbey. Emcee Kirby Neumann-Rea is at center.

'Gorge Lit' seeks writers

The Gorge Literary Journal, a new voice for writers in the Columbia Gorge, is soliciting short original works for publication. Partnering with The Hood River News, selected items will appear in a special newspaper section this summer. There is no financial remuneration for acceptance. All submissions are anonymous (the online submission process connects writers' names to their pieces after they are accepted).

The editors are looking for previously unpublished work in the following categories: poetry, essay and flash fiction, centered on living in the

Gorge. Funny or poignant, satirical or lyrical, they want to know what the essence of the Gorge is to you. What delights you? Infuriates you? Inspires you? Accessible, meaningful writing is preferred.

The editors are not interested in political or religious manifestos or work that promotes hate. Also not eligible are longer fiction excerpts that cannot stand alone as flash fiction ("flash fiction" refers to characters and a conflict that is introduced, explored and resolved concisely, in this case within 500 words). While there may be a place and time for adult lan-

guage, this is not one of them, as the pieces will run in a family newspaper.

Because Gorge Lit is entirely volunteer driven, it does not have the resources for extensive editing, but the editors reserve the right to edit for publication.

WANT TO SUBMIT?

Please consult gorgelit.org for submission guidelines and instructions.

Submission deadline is April 22.