

Fisherpoets on stage, and writers share North Coast fiction

February may be the shortest month, but the Cannon Beach Library has planned a full complement of free public events, beginning with Ellen Notbohm’s appearance in the Northwest Authors Series.

Author of internationally popular books about autism, Notbohm received Forward Book of the Year Awards in psychology and in parenting for “Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew.” She also has published numerous articles on historical, genealogical and community topics.

This Portland author will read from and discuss “The River by Starlight,” her first novel, at 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 9, in the library, 131 N. Hemlock St.

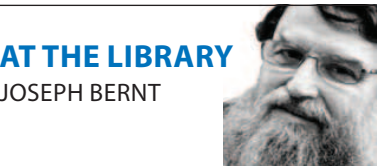
Set in early 20th-century Montana, “The River by Starlight” finds Annie Rushton, having left her ex-husband and child in Iowa and homesteading with her brother following her episodes of postpartum depression. Annie encounters Adam Fielding. They buy out Annie’s brother and form a business and romantic partnership. Efforts to have a child prompt further depression. Still, Annie



Cannon Beach Library
Ellen Notbohm reads at the Cannon Beach Library on Feb. 9.

loves Adam. They persist, facing difficulties.

For this historical novel, Notbohm researched her characters as if she were writing a nonfiction book. Interviewed by “Rose City Reader,” she described years traveling to the actual Montana homestead, visiting Edmonton and driving North Dakota backroads.



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Her extensive research into historical materials and locations, as well as her innate talent, resulted in her debut novel receiving the 2018 Independent Publisher Book Award for Best Regional Fiction, West-Mountain.

Fisherpoets Jon Broderick of Cannon Beach, David Densmore and Rob Seitz of Astoria and Geno Leech of Chinook lured 66 North Coasters to the library last month on a cold, damp Thursday night for “Northwest Authors: An Evening with the Fisherpoets in Cannon Beach.” They perform next with a school of other fisherpoets gathering in various Astoria venues, Friday through Sunday, Feb. 22-24. Check “The FisherPoets Gathering” website for details. Trust me. Catch several of their presentations.

Josh Saranpaa, executive director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, will present “Lifecy-

cle and Rehabilitation of the Common Murre” at the Friends of Haystack Rock meeting in the library, at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 13.

The center in Astoria, the only wild-care hospital on the central and north Oregon Coast, specializes in seabird rehabilitation and provides medical care for native wild birds and mammals. Returning healthy creatures to appropriate habitats is a primary goal.

Cannon Beach Reads members, led by Sandi Lundy, will discuss Kenneth Grahame’s “The Wind in the Willows” Wednesday, Feb. 20. This children’s classic, based on bedtime stories Grahame wrote for his son, assigns woodland critters human characteristics, not always attractive.

Cannon Beach Reads meets monthly at 7 p.m. on every third Wednesday. New members are always welcomed and share conversation, coffee and bakery items.

On Friday, March 1, Northwest Authors is sponsoring a new event, Writers Read Celebration, in the library at 7 p.m. Local writers were invited to submit poems, essays, personal stories or fiction that reflects their reaction to living

on the North Coast.

Forty-nine submissions have arrived. So, a group of writers, writing teachers, readers and bibliophiles spent last week reading and ranking submissions. Last Monday they decided who will read their submission at Writers Read Celebration.

In addition to writers who submitted entries, the public—especially residents, visitors and writers from the North Coast—are encouraged to enjoy this free event and share refreshments.

Library members, volunteers and board members want to thank everyone who responded to this year’s annual appeal letter. As of Jan. 28, 362 members and supporters renewed their library cards or donated to the library.

Donations responding to the appeal letter constitute a third of the library’s annual budget. Volunteers, who together donate thousands of hours to staffing, maintaining and servicing the library, send a big thank you to everyone who responded this year. The library, and our community, benefits greatly from so many thoughtful and generous supporters.

Making the incomprehensible comprehensible

By **BOB DIETSCH**
Cannon Beach Gazette

It has been decades but its a good bet that his former students still think of him once in a while. It would be hard not to.

Kester Svensen was the head of the University of Oregon English Department, one of the two most knowledgeable people on the subject of John Milton, the host of a TV show called “The Poet’s Eye,” and the author of “Milton and Science,” a thoroughly incomprehensible book.

There should have been a sign on the door over his classroom reading: “High Scholarship Inside: Enter at Your Own Risk.” Kester had a penetrating stare. I



called it “the ray.”

I felt it the first day of class when he announced, “There are two kinds of students who sit in the back row — the very very good and the very very bad.” I was sitting in the back row.

It was all lecture. In rolling cadences of crisp, precise prose, Svensen proved beyond a reasonable doubt why Paradise Lost is the greatest epic poem in the

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English language. I still remember the day he told us about the “fortunate fall” of Adam and Eve. I sat there in total silence, spellbound, waiting for his next revelation, afraid I might cough.

His grading system went like this: an A in almost any other class on campus would

get you a C from Kester. If you got an A from him, it was something to write home about — literally. He liked to show off by reciting Shakespeare’s sonnets. He had memorized all of them. Once when he missed a line, he stopped, smiled slightly, and said: “You are witnessing the disintegration of a brilliant intellect.”

He got a standing ovation on the last day of class. He never even acknowledged it. With one last condescending look at us, he marched down the aisle, out the door, and the applause played on.

Bob Dietsche is a Manzanita resident. He the author of “Jumptown, the History of Portland Jazz” and “Tatum’s Town, the Early Years of Toledo Jazz.”

Portraits of women military veterans

Cannon Beach Gazette

The Seaside branch of the American Association of University Women is bringing the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs exhibit, “I Am Not Invisible” to Seaside’s Public Library on Feb. 13.

The exhibit features 20 portraits of Oregon women military veterans. These portraits will be displayed in the library from Feb. 13-16, when Elizabeth Estabrooks, women’s veterans affairs coordinator, will speak at 10 a.m. in the community room at the library. Her presentation will be to create awareness of Oregon women veterans, their service to our

country and the challenges they face. Women veterans continue to face significant barriers and challenges in accessing necessary health care and other services, while experiencing a lack of recognition unlike their male counterparts.

There are more than 28,000 women veterans in Oregon — a number that has risen steadily over the past three decades — representing almost one-10th of Oregon’s veteran population. By spotlighting the many faces of this diverse and important segment of the Oregon veteran community, I Am Not Invisible aims to increase awareness and dialogue about women veterans.

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