

## Between the Covers

ESTHER MOBERG

## Controversial books have many reasons for being controversial

With the announcement of Harper Lee finally releasing a second book 55 years after she published *To Kill a Mockingbird*, there has been a lot of controversy swirling around this surprising revelation.

Harper Lee has been notoriously private, and many people are questioning whether she truly wants to release another book or is being manipulated or pressured into doing so.

Many other books have been controversial in their time. *Harry Potter*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *50 Shades of Grey* all seemed to provoke immediate strong reactions either for or against their content.

The book, *Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, has had a lot of controversy. In fact, it was most controversial when first pub-

lished in 1884 because of its anti-slavery message. Because of its use of a racist word to describe black people as well as its vulgarity and making the black characters in the book oversimplified, the book still remains controversial to this day.

The *Anarchist Cookbook*, by William Powell, is controversial because of its anti-government themes and descriptions about how to build bombs as well as other potentially illegal substances. On the positive side, it is worth noting that many criminologists have actually used this book to help them in their work of understanding the effects of drugs or what types of weapons criminals may be using.

It is interesting that the author, who wrote the book in 1969, recently



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wrote an opinion piece for The Guardian in December 2013, explaining that his perspective has changed regarding using violence to prevent violence. He argues for no longer printing this book because he feels it only serves to incite people who already feel alienated and alone, as was his perspective when he

wrote the cookbook. Sadly, this book has often been found in the possession of youth who in the past have staged attacks on their schools.

Typically, controversial books aren't DIY books on war or destruction. More often than not, it is the ideas that they espouse that can set the world on fire. Some of the more controversial of those books include *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler, and *The Communist Manifesto*, by Marx and Engels, which gave rise to communism in the 19th and 20th centuries. *Mein Kampf*, grew in popularity in Germany before Hitler rose to power. He wrote it as an autobiographical book to put forth his personal ideas on political and ideological understanding for his hatred of communism and

Judaism. The rest, as they say, is history.

Books can shape the world, and the ideas contained in them can stir up strong reactions even to the point of rallies, book burnings or picketing. Picketing an author or book often seems to occur when the book is in the political realm. For example, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo was picketed last year at a book signing by anti-rackers. A controversial book, by its very definition of being controversial, means that not everyone agrees with the ideas behind the book or what it symbolizes or stands for. While hundreds, if not thousands, of people stood in lines to get the latest *Harry Potter* novel, many others had book burnings because of the themes of sorcery and magic.

Sometimes books are controversial because they are made up. *A Million Little Pieces*, by James Frey, was published as a true memoir, but later it came out that many of the events described in the book never occurred.

The bottom line is that books contain ideas, and ideas can lead to the forming of strong opinions or actions. The Seaside Public Library believes in the freedom to explore new ideas and that "the freedom to know is the foundation of democracy." So the next time you read a book, think about whether it challenges you and whether it is written in a way that causes you to think more about new concepts or ideas, or, if it stirs you to strong emotions, why that is and what that tells you about your personal viewpoints.

## Let's PLAY

DARREN GOOCH

## New activities are available for adding more life to your years

Abraham Lincoln once wrote, "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years."

However, advances in modern medicine have led to longer lifespans for many people. Health conscious approaches to diet, eating organic whole foods and getting plenty of exercise have also added to our increasing lifespans.

Adding more years to our lives is great, but looking back at what Lincoln is suggesting, what are we doing to add more life to the years we are continually adding? That is a question we had the opportunity

to ask a focus group of seniors about a month and a half ago.

The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District teamed up with Northwest Senior and Disability Services to better understand the needs of older adults in our community. The five small groups were made up of 10 members each, representing very different segments of the area. The groups met at the Bob Chisholm Community Center over a two-day period and discussed the many facets of life as a senior citizen.

Attendees of the groups overwhelmingly agreed



DARREN GOOCH

that they would like to see more activities directed specifically at their age group. Ideas were plenty and were passed along

to staff at the community center. Center staff members worked to put together implementation strategies, and less than a month later, they have introduced two new activities.

On Tuesdays, the Knit-Needle-Crochet group meets at 10 a.m. in the drop-in room at the community center, and on Thursdays, a senior matinee movie is shown in the drop-in room at 2 p.m. Popcorn and drinks are provided. All activities are free.

There are plenty of other new activities that will be added in coming months as well. Starting in March, mahjong will be added to

the list. Even if you don't know how to play, there will be lessons for new players.

We are accepting ideas; all of the new activities were added at the request of participants in the focus groups, and we want to hear from you, too. Contact Ricia Parcher at 503-738-7393 and submit your ideas for new activities.

If you're a card player, every Monday at 1 p.m., a small group meets in meeting room 1 at the community center for pinochle. For those wanting to learn how to play, there is a learner's session at 1 p.m. every fourth Thursday

of the month in the same room.

Just because we get older doesn't mean we have to just sit at home. Come by the Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A in Seaside, and add a little more life to your years!

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## Scene and Heard

CLAIRE LOVELL

## Cooking up a life of observations, loss of friends, good books

As for home cooking with which I'm not spectacular, I had a serendipitous discovery for a better one-egg omelet. Shredded cheese always goes in them but having a little left over cooked rice, I put in a couple of tablespoons of that, which made a more substantial meal and tasty, too.

## Two friends gone

I was so sorry to read of the death of John Hurd on Jan. 8. "Jackie" was my baby. I went to work for his parents when Jack was 18 months old. We had some interesting times at his house. It's hard to realize that he was 78 years old. The last time I saw Jack I had done some nursing procedures for his mother, Avis. He was living with

her as her caregiver then. Wednesday night when I read the news, I had already been thinking about him an hour before. I was going to call his brother Jim to ask him if Jack ever came home to visit. So many of those I love have moved on.

Another friend has gone. Barbara Gustafson, who has not been in robust health for a while, died Feb. 7. Barbara was often at the coffee shop at Safeway, which is where we had our chats. She was a long time Seaside resident with a happy disposition and a good sense of humor. Her husband died quite young, but she had children who were close and in earlier times, she was a regular at the old Holladay Drug. Our



CLAIRE LOVELL

sympathies to her family.

## Eight lives left

How many of you saw the TV story of the kitty that was struck by a car and apparently killed? He may just have been unconscious. His owner got someone to bury him in his

back yard. In three days, the little creature had dug himself out. He was surely already named but I'd call him "Jesus" or possibly "Lazarus." Such a miracle so close to Easter — or maybe I'd call him "Easter." His owner took him to the vet to fix all the sore places because he was so beat up looking. I think it's a wonderful story.

## Dogging the skateboard

Often when I'm people-watching on Broadway, there are lots of dogs to see, too. On several occasions I've noticed a young man riding his skateboard while a little dark puppy, maybe 11 or 12 inches, trots along behind. There's no kind of

protection for the dog. He's on his own. Sometimes if he's too tired, the guy will carry him awhile. One day I saw him put the pup on the front of the skateboard and they sailed off together. So cozy!

## Book review

I'm reading the most wonderful book, a loan from a friend. It's called "Gilead," by Marilynne Robinson, which won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. It's so good it makes me feel bad that I can't write that well. I read it in small sections at a time because I don't want it to end.

For instance, someone remarked that the grandpa in the story lost an eye in the Civil War to which grandpa replied, "I told

them I rather remembered I kept one." Some of the characters in the book remind me of my mother and her people from the Midwest, although the setting was in Iowa. The mother in the novel was so frugal she had coins in the lard, sugar sack and flour can for emergencies.

## Sore loser

I shouldn't watch sports events, especially when there's allegiance to one team. I care too much about the outcome, and defeat takes a while to get over. Guess I'm a sore loser, tsk.

## Laugh Line:

I wanted to marry Mr. Right. I just didn't know his first name would be "Always."

## Business owners voice concerns over proposed new tax

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chess players. Events also were finding larger venues and moving out of the center, Vandenberg said.

In addition to more breakout and meeting room space, the 40,000-square-foot expansion would enlarge the center's current 4,000-square-foot ballroom to 10,000 or 12,000 square feet. This would enable the center to bring in groups of 500 to 600 people and to provide dining space for everyone. As it stands now, dining is limited to 300 people, Vandenberg said. The expansion's cost is estimated at \$25 million.

Expansion would occur on the center's west side and would remove at least 40 parking spaces. To make up for that loss, and to provide more needed parking in the city, a \$6 million parking structure, possibly four stories high and con-

taining 500 spaces, is being considered.

To pay for the \$31 million project, which would require payments of \$220,000 a month, the latest of several studies commissioned by Vandenberg suggests three options: a joint agreement between Seaside, Cannon Beach and Astoria to raise lodging taxes by 2 percent each, with the proceeds to go to the convention center; a 6 percent increase in lodging taxes, which would bring Seaside's total lodging taxes to 15 percent; or a combination of a 2.75 percent "business improvement district" tax on restaurants, retail sales, gas and groceries — "everything that's sold in Seaside," Vandenberg said — along with a 2 or 3 percent bump in lodging taxes.

"These were options presented to us," Vandenberg told the business op-

**Greg Boat, owner of Del Sol in downtown Seaside, said he would have to eliminate at least one job, just to cover the proposed sales tax**

erators. "Nothing has been decided."

The business owners, however, asked Vandenberg just who wants the center to be expanded and how it would benefit Seaside. Vandenberg replied that most business operators believe the current center has had a positive impact on the city's economy. If the expansion were to occur, it would, in 10 years, bring 20,000 more people a year to town and add \$20 million more to the economy, he said. However, Vandenberg did not say how the estimates were derived.

But those attending worried about how the

additional cars would affect traffic flow, whether there were enough hotel rooms and whether the popularity of conventions overall was decreasing. If Seaside had a population of 300,000, the impact could be spread out, they said, but Seaside is too small to absorb it. Larry Donnelly, of the Shilo Inn Oceanfront, noted that, in the next 10 years, several area hotels would have to undergo extensive remodeling just to keep up with the expanded convention center.

They also noted that additional parking spaces would be removed during construction and that visi-

tors might be discouraged from staying in Seaside.

"There are challenges; you can't build without some disruption," Vandenberg replied. "There will be a loss of parking and limited access. That's the price of growth."

Greg Boat, owner of Del Sol in downtown Seaside, said he would have to eliminate at least one job, just to cover the proposed sales tax.

Val Perry, of Trendwest Resorts, worried that the project and the proposed financial scheme would "drastically change" the character of the community where businesses and residents, who would also be subject to the sales tax, would have to "pay for the right to live and work in this town."

"Why would people come to Seaside when they have to pay 6 percent more for lodging and more for

sales tax?" Perry asked. "You're switching funds from visitors to residents, and that changes the paradigm."

Wayne Poole, owner of the Pig 'N Pancake restaurant, agreed. The convention center's food service operation originally came from 10 local business operators who invested \$1,000 each, he recalled. They were willing to pitch in because they were persuaded that the convention center would be good for the community, he said.

But this time, Poole told Vandenberg, "You're missing the buy-in of the business community. It hasn't really been sold to us."

Others wondered if the expanded convention center would be too large for downtown Seaside.

"I think we're trying to get too big for our britches," said Marge Diebolt, owner of The Man Store.