

# A crystal ball for the library's future

Spring is in the air and in my current position as president elect of the Oregon Library Association, this month I am heading off to see the cherry blossoms on Capitol Hill. I will be in Washington, D.C., as part of the National Library Legislative Day to talk to legislators about Oregon libraries. When I say that I am talking to legislators about libraries, the first thing people ask me is if libraries are in trouble. The good news is, the answer is no. Most libraries in Oregon and across the United States are not in trouble. In fact, the most ill-informed, fake news these days is that libraries are going away. Libraries are here to stay because libraries are so much more than just a book on a shelf. They are community centers for information and resources both printed and digital.

Many people visit their library for resources from A-to-Zed. Job seekers, food handlers cards, computer use, free Wi-Fi, DMV manuals, photocopies, printing out travel boarding passes, these are just a few of the zillions of reasons people visit the library. I've had people come to us for books when they are going through a divorce, books on self-help, learning a new skill or hobby, travel, whatever it is you are doing in life, chances are we have a resource or book you need, or

**BETWEEN THE COVERS**  
ESTHER MOBERG



at the very least can point you in the right direction. So, while the reason I am going to our nation's capital is very important, but it doesn't mean libraries are in crisis.

I will be one of four librarians from Oregon representing at the national legislative day for libraries, along with other librarians from across the United States. At this two day event, one day for training, and one day for meeting with the legislators, we plan to talk to all of our Oregon representatives about two things. The first is the Institute of Museum and Library Services federal grant. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. Their goal is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grant making, research, and policy development. Their vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. You can visit them for more information at [www.imls.org](http://www.imls.org).

Many libraries receive a small

amount of money through the institute grant annually in Oregon (typically between \$1,000 to \$5,000 per library based on population served) as an annual grant called the Ready to Read grant. The goal of this Ready to Read grant is focused on early literacy readiness for all children in Oregon. For small libraries in our state, this is often the only budget they have for their library programs and especially for their summer reading. The Seaside Library uses this grant every year for our summer reading programs to help keep children engaged in reading all summer long.

Other grants in our area that the institute grant has supported includes the start of the libraries reading outreach program. Through this grant we were able to help offset the gaps in library services in our community by providing free library cards for kids throughout our entire county. The entire program for Libraries ROCC started with this grant back in 2009 and is still going strong today with a very sustainable model, thanks to the first few years supported by this grant. Because of this, children who are nine years old have had access to a free library card in this county every year they have been alive.

The other talking point we feel is very important is inexpensive broadband Internet access through libraries. By making sure this access



SEASIDE SIGNAL

Esther Moberg, president of the Oregon Library Association and director of the Seaside Library.

is affordable through libraries, we will reduce the digital divide gaps through services provided by libraries throughout Oregon. Our library is fortunate in that we have fiber optic which is very high speed internet service. However, for many rural libraries they often have slow or even dial up internet access. This may be the only internet access for folks in some areas across Oregon. Douglas County and Jackson County have had the least amount of access with lack of funding even to keep their libraries open.

Librarians believe we should continue to break down barriers between

those who have access or not and broadband access within the library is one of those ways. Every day, people walk in the Seaside Library with little to no understanding of how to use a computer for the most basic of searches or job applications because every new option can be confusing if you are not constantly using a computer. We would hope that someday through more advocacy and training, along with affordable access to broadband internet, this will be a thing of the past and proficiency online won't be based on how much money you have or where you live.



FIRE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

Kids at Fire Mountain School around the May pole.

## Engaging students, engaged in community

By Liz Beckman  
Fire Mountain School

Imagine this: first- and second-graders studying their local watershed and visiting the local water department so that they can understand where the water they drink comes from and why we have a responsibility to keep our streams and rivers clean. Or this: third- and fourth-graders surveying the number of visitors for the local state park to determine if needs of the visitors are being met. These are hands-on experiences for elementary students, but they are also examples of democracy in action, an effort to educate young citizens who will understand the importance of being actively engaged in their communities.

In place-based education schools and local organizations become partners with students. The authenticity of each project they create together guides students to feel like citizens who are participating in their community.

Place-based education is a style of schooling that immerses students in local history, cultures, environment, economy, literature, and art, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects in the immediate schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community.

Many parents focus on exposing their children to the big wide world and have them take in the magnitude to enlighten and enrich them. But children tend to focus on their immediate surroundings. While the vista may be spectacular, the rocks underfoot or the moss growing on the bark of a tree are closer and often of more interest in their world. Encouraging curiosity helps children build confidence to explore a bigger world.

The goal of place-based education is for children to learn about and love the place where they live enough to want to become actively engaged in caring for their community. When students are engaged in projects that satisfy some levels of their curiosity, they become interested in acquiring the core academic skill of reading, writing, and math. These subjects become tools to explore the world rather than simply assignments. They begin to see that learning is not something that you just do at school — it is part of everyday life.

More than 100 years ago, John Dewey wrote about the value of teaching hands-on democracy. He wrote, "education is the preparation for the social position of life, the preparation of the individual to play his proper part in the community or state of which he is a member."

For more information visit [FireMountainSchool.org](http://FireMountainSchool.org) or email [firemountain-school@gmail.com](mailto:firemountain-school@gmail.com).

# Remembering Victor the lobster

## Remembering the life of the aquarium's mascot, Victor the lobster

By Rebecca Herren  
Seaside Signal

It was early in 1993 when the Seaside Aquarium became the new owners of one very large lobster. The lobster originally was caught off the coast of Maine by commercial fishermen for Safeway and had been placed in the holding tank ready to be sold. However, it was a large lobster and, as any lobster devotee knows, lobsters are sold by the pound.

At April's History and Hops lecture presented by the Seaside Museum and Historical Society at Seaside Brewing Co., Keith Chandler, general manager of the Seaside Aquarium, recalled the story of the much-admired lobster named Victor.

Safeway store manager at the time Vickie Fomey removed the lobster from the confines of the tank and donated it to the aquarium. Chandler said they held a name-the-lobster contest and Victor as in "victory over death" suggested by a local nun was chosen. "She was a nun and I wasn't going to go against the church," Chandler quipped, adding the name was also to honor Fomey who was kind enough to rescue Victor from the tank and an ignoble death.

At the aquarium, Victor was placed in a shallow tank for all to admire. Much like many firsts for the aquarium, Victor became headline news. It was Sunday, Sept. 4, 1994, of Labor Day weekend, Chandler recalled, and Becky Bierly was taking tickets when she noticed a man walking out with Victor under his arm. Frantically, Bierly called Chandler who, with a baseball bat in hand, gave chase.

Chandler spotted the thief with Victor under his arm running down the Prom. Chandler is in quick pursuit and eventually confronts the man who drops the lobster and retreats. Though it appeared to be in good shape,



SEASIDE AQUARIUM

The aquarium's Tom Thies examined Victor the lobster after it was stolen and dropped by a hungry thief in September 1994.

Victor landed on a curb and had cracked his shell. Unfortunately, there was no happy ending for Victor the lobster. He died four days later, succumbing to internal injuries.

Police found Terry Lutz, 35, of Estacada and arrested him on a theft charge. The case was handed over to a newly sworn-in Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis. One of Marquis' passions he said, during a phone interview, is animal rights. Unfortunately, animal rights laws in the 1990s were not what they are now, Marquis pointed out.

"I couldn't get (Lutz) him for cruelty to animals because you can boil lobster when they're alive. [Victor] he was a priceless lobster that's only worth so much per pound according to the law," Marquis explained. "No one knew how to care for a lobster that the law considers a giant insect," noting that no local veterinarian was trained to care for crustaceans.

The best Marquis could do was to charge Lutz with theft II, a misdemeanor. Lutz pleaded guilty to second-degree theft, received 18 months of probation, ordered to perform 120 hours of community service, and pay \$800 to the aquarium.

Lobsters are known to live over 120 years, Chandler said.

At the time of Victor's death, he weighed 28 pounds and was estimated to be 80 years old.

When asked why Lutz stole the lobster, Marquis answered, "He was hungry."

Marquis said he is not a vegetarian and enjoys eating lobster, but, as he continued, "anyone knows you don't want to eat a lobster that old."

The news about the abduction, capture and death of Victor the lobster traveled worldwide. "It was staggering that the news traveled all the way to Australia," Marquis said. "It's hilarious. It was so bizarre that (this story) has gotten more publicity than any other case I worked on."

True, the news went global. Paul Harvey, a well-known radio broadcaster reported the theft to his audiences. Marquis received a call from Susan Orlean, a writer for The New

Yorker, to fact check the story. Orlean mentions the case in a 2002 article titled, "The Lady and the Tigers" as well as in her book, "My Kind of Place." There's also a paragraph mentioned in "The Mammoth Book of Weird News."

As for Terry Lutz, more trouble followed. It seems he has a long history of violence and a very long criminal record. Before the abduction of Victor, Lutz was convicted of animal abuse in 1988 when he shot an officer's canine partner. He received jail time in 1982 for child neglect, and in 1996, Lutz received 30 years for attempted murder, and is currently in Snake River prison until 2022.

Victor is fondly remembered. After his death, Victor was sent to Kent Israel Taxidermy and is on full display inside a closed case for all to, once again, admire.

**WOMAN'S WORTH** ♀ **MAN'S WORTH** ♂  
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Please call to confirm your space

Kathleen Dudley, Certified Reflexologist  
503-717-5129  
[SeasideReflexology@gmail.com](mailto:SeasideReflexology@gmail.com)

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