

# Four new 'little libraries' are connecting more people to free books

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

The Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) is a nonprofit organization that supports the distribution of free books to our local rural communities through “little libraries.” Little libraries build community spirit and are a way for people in rural areas—who may lack internet and electronics or feel especially isolated due to COVID-19—to connect with the Jackson County Library Services.

With health restrictions still in place for their smaller public space, FORL can't operate the A-frame Bookstore yet. This means FORL has lots of books to share! So the Friends' idea of encouraging more little libraries in our communities has taken off.

The first one was the McKee Bridge Little Library, designed and built by students at Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS). Bryan della Santina, FORL board member and volunteer at the school, prepared the structure for mounting and installed it. He also keeps it stocked weekly with books and has noticed that the local community donates books and even non-perishable food to share with neighbors. Located close to the old historic bridge, it has proven to be a positive addition to the community.

Myron Hauser built the unique, tall, ROCS Little Library just inside the campus on the one-way entrance. The students helped install this one and helped prepare a nice parking pull-off for easy access by the community to use it. Julie Barry, ROCS principal and a very creative painter, had fun giving it its bright and delightful color scheme. Bryan also keeps this one well stocked weekly. It's open to the public to borrow and exchange books. Please drive slowly through the campus and follow the road out to the exit on Highway 238.

Folks on China Gulch have created their own China Gulch Little Library for their community. They are keeping it supplied themselves, and Bryan supplements books, as needed.

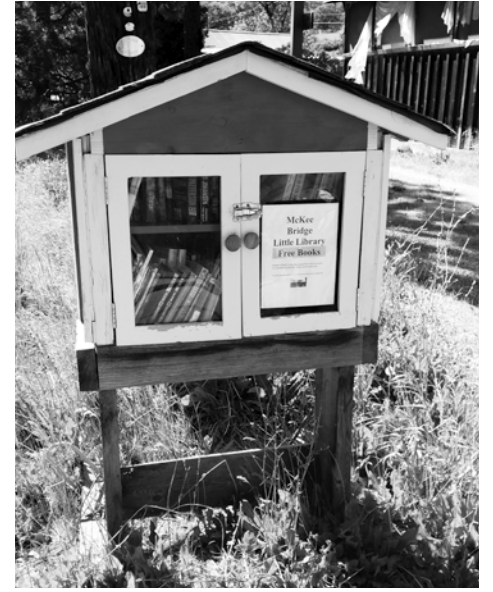
The newest, Cantrall Buckley Little Library, was installed by park ranger Jonathan Bernhardt in April. This one was designed, totally created, and painted by Steve Rhodes and Wende-Martin Rhodes. They have since moved from our community but loved doing this service. FORL supported their efforts by supplying the materials. Just after you pass through the fee booth at the park, look for the parking lot on your right and the pollinator garden. You might also see the new monarch sculpture, too. This little library is also a borrow-and-exchange-if-you-wish setup. Thalia Truesdell, Ruch Branch manager, restocks it frequently, with my assistance.

FORL really appreciates your support of our communities with your book donations, which help keep our little libraries well stocked. Many FORL members volunteer to help sort the wonderful donations we receive. Some go to Ruch Country Store to sell, some go to the Book Barn for the first-Saturday-of-the-month sales each month (as allowed by health regulations), and lots are set aside for free distribution to the little libraries. If you have books to donate, you can drop them off during a first-Saturday Book Barn sale.

FORL has received requests for several more little libraries, The Ruch Fire Station would like one, and the communities of Buncom and Humbug are both interested in adding a little library next to their new community bulletin boards sponsored by A Greater Applegate. If you are crafty or



Myron Hauser built the Little Free Library at the Ruch Outdoor Community Schools. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.



As you approach the historic McKee Bridge, this Little Free Library sits to the right, in front of the old restaurant and store. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.

know someone who might be interested and would like to build a Little Library, please contact me.

Remember, you are welcome to add a book to any free little library that you borrow from. Also, if you would like to get involved with Friends of Ruch Library, ask for a membership form at a Book

Barn sale or at the Branch Library. For more information, call Thalia at Ruch Branch Library at 541-899-7438. She will pass your question on to the appropriate FORL contact.

Janis Mohr-Tipton  
541-846-7501  
janis.agapark@gmail.com

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## Food bank still here to help

The Ruch Food Pantry, one of 22 pantries operated by ACCESS throughout Jackson County, is open from 11:30 am to 1 pm on Mondays (closed holidays) on the backside of Ruch Elementary School. These pantries provide a variety of fresh and shelf-stable groceries to low-income families and individuals. Each food box contains a three-to-five day supply of food.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Deborah Price, Manager  
541-826-9149

Michelle Bollinger, Assistant Manager  
541-218-6471



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