

The Olympic Peninsula Online Connection in Washington State Since 1998

# www.peninsuladailynews.com




**THE NEW 2011 CHEVROLET SILVERADO DURAMAX HD**  
**BEST IN CLASS PAYLOAD\* BEST IN CLASS TOWING\***



**In Stock Now!**

6.6L TURBO DIESEL 397 HORSEPOWER 765 FT.LB. TORQUE

CHEVROLET SUBARU UTILITY TRAILERS KOENIG VESPA PIAGGIO MOTO GUZZI

\*Manufacturer's Data. Go to www.chevrolet.com for details.

**SEARCH PDN ONLINE**

All

<a href="#">Homes</a>	<a href="#">Autos</a>	<a href="#">Jobs</a>	<a href="#">Classifieds</a>	<a href="#">Place a Classified</a>	<a href="#">Peninsula Shopping</a>	<a href="#">Local Coupons</a>	<a href="#">Photos</a>	<a href="#">Hot Properties</a>	<a href="#">Peninsula Biz Directory</a>
<a href="#">HOME</a>	<a href="#">NATION/WORLD</a>	<a href="#">SUBSCRIBE</a>	<a href="#">COMMUNITY LINKS</a>	<a href="#">TV/MOVIE SCHEDULES</a>	<a href="#">OBITUARIES</a>	<a href="#">VIDEOS</a>	<a href="#">ABOUT PDN</a>	<a href="#">SEQUIM THIS WEEK</a>	

Path: [HOME](#) » [NEWS](#)

## Port Angeles bookseller leaves to run recovery organization

By Diane Urbani de la Paz  
Peninsula Daily News

[Print This](#) | [Email This](#)  
[SHARE](#)

### Recent Headlines

[2 dead in murder-suicide shooting in Forks -- 7/27/10 - 01:20 AM](#)

[Logs scattered after collision; crash closes U.S. 101 for more than 2 hours -- 7/27/10 - 01:18 AM](#)

[Utah family, Seattle man OK after crash that destroys vehicles -- 7/27/10 - 12:52 AM](#)

[Sheriff's deputy testifies against accused gunman -- 7/27/10 - 01:12 AM](#)

[Prosecuting attorney candidate cries foul over sign thefts in Port Angeles -- 7/27/10 - 01:17 AM](#)

PORT ANGELES -- Some 40 years after starting a new life on the Olympic Peninsula, Mr. Odyssey is beginning again.

Craig Whalley, who bought and named the Odyssey Bookshop back in 1971 after moving here from Bremerton, is moving on to a new chapter as of Wednesday: a new, unpaid job running LifeRing, an international recovery support organization headquartered in the San Francisco Bay area.

And though Whalley, 63, will be working at the LifeRing office in Oakland, Calif., he'll live in Berkeley, the city known for the free-speech movement birthed at the University of California in the 1960s, and for a generally free-spirited attitude.

"He's like a kid going to college," said April Bellerud, the longtime employee who bought the Odyssey Bookshop, 114 W. Front St., from her boss last September.

"I'm excited for his new opportunities," she added. "But I'm also very sad . . . he's like a family member."

### 'Amazingly tolerant'

Whalley, for his part, is looking fondly over his shoulder at Port Angeles, a community he describes as "amazingly tolerant."

When he pulled into town 39 years ago, Whalley was two years out of college and the new proprietor of Encore Books, a tiny shop he'd bought for \$2,850.

"I didn't know anything about running a bookstore; it was the perfect situation for learning," he remembered.

"Rents were cheap, and big money was not what everybody was pursuing."

And the "logger mentality," if I can use that phrase, was far more accepting of different approaches to life."

The loggers and mill workers of remote Clallam County "didn't feel like they fit into the larger culture," he said. So they accepted people like him, who didn't fit right in either.

"It was so different from Bremerton," where Whalley had worked as a reporter for what is now the Kitsap Sun.

There, "the military-based culture seemed to me to be far less tolerant of those like myself who carried the faint whiff of 'hippie-ness.'"

### Name change

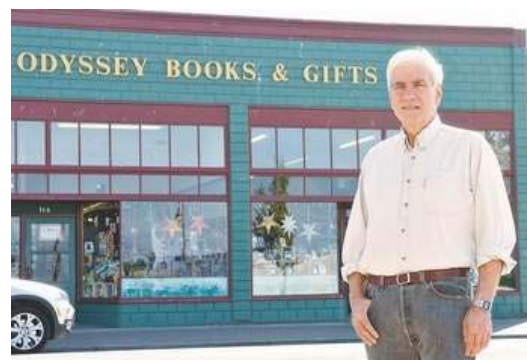
So the new bookseller changed Encore to Odyssey, and the shop prospered.

And in Port Angeles and environs, "the '70s saw a steady influx of people like me -- what I term urban refugees: young, educated and carrying an urban sensibility even as they sought a rural home. Clallam County was an attractive place because of its great beauty . . . and the inviting tolerance of the local culture."

Over the years, Odyssey provided him with a good living; the independent shop, like downtown Port Angeles, wasn't overtaken by the big-box bookstores spreading across the nation's big cities and suburbs.

And as a small-town promoter of good books, Whalley got to connect with people.

"My customers, and the people of this area generally, are so easy to like, to deal with, to live among," he said.



**Craig Whalley, former owner of Odyssey Books & Gifts in Port Angeles, stands outside the store on Wednesday. Whalley is moving to Berkeley, Calif., to run LifeRing, an online support group for recovering alcoholics. – Photo by Chris Tucker/Peninsula Daily News**

But Whalley isn't one to paint a Pollyannaish picture of his past.

"My decades here were marked -- as most people's lives are -- by numerous ups and downs . . . I've been divorced twice," he said, "and developed a serious drinking problem that plagued me for years.

"The drinking, or rather the not drinking that has marked the last 10 years or so, is why I'm leaving. I managed to quit with the help on an online support group," LifeRing.

**No 12-step process**

This is different from Alcoholics Anonymous, Whalley said, in that it's not centered around reliance on a higher power; there's no 12-step process. LifeRing is based on the "3 S's," which are sobriety -- as in abstinence from alcohol and other drugs -- secularity and self-help.

"You get to keep whatever religious beliefs you have, and you are under no pressure to acquire any if you don't," the website, [www.LifeRing.org](http://www.LifeRing.org), says.

"LifeRing supports recovery methods that rely on human efforts rather than on divine intervention."

**Sharing belief**

Through online chat rooms, social networking and other venues via the website, recovering users find one another. They share the belief that "you do have the power to quit drinking on your own," Whalley said. "There's an addicted self and a sober self; we try to strengthen the sober self."

He's already started learning the executive director job: working on the website, planning the organization's table at a forthcoming conference in Los Angeles, connecting with meeting organizers all over North America.

"It's important work, and extremely satisfying," Whalley said.

New people come in feeling scared and desperate, and LifeRing's veterans -- the experts -- offer their support.

"When you share the recovery process, you expose yourself, and you become very close to people," the new director said.

Heading LifeRing "is an adventure and a job at the same time. . . I'm having the time of my life."

Whalley added that he's fortunate to not need an income at this point; he'll be living on his savings, including those from the sale of Odyssey Bookshop, and Social Security.

"I'll be taking Port Angeles and the Olympic Peninsula -- and all of the people here with whom I've experienced so much -- with me.

"And I won't hesitate to come back if that seems best at some point. Port Angeles is my Robert Frost home," Whalley added.

Frost, one of America's best-loved poets, wrote: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

Features Editor Diane Urbani de la Paz can be reached at 360-417-3550 or at [diane.urbani@peninsuladailynews.com](mailto:diane.urbani@peninsuladailynews.com).

Last modified: July 27, 2010 1:27AM

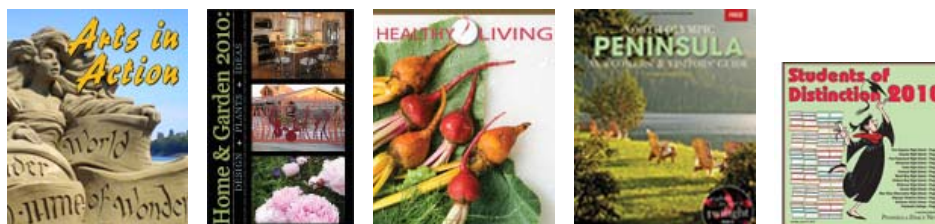
**Reader Comments**

No comments.

[Login to post a comment](#) [ You must be [registered](#) to comment ]

[Login](#) | [Register](#)

**From the PDN:**



All materials Copyright © 2010 Horvitz New papers. • [Terms of Use](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Associated Press Copyright Notice](#) • [Contact Us](#)