

Big Move to Tiny Libraries

By Dianna Troyer

A grassroots national movement to erect little free libraries is taking root in places as diverse as urban restaurants and rural roadsides.

Instead of browsing shelves at a traditional library, readers now can browse, borrow and return books to tiny weatherproof libraries, some the size of a suitcase.

Many of the tiny libraries have whimsical designs that resemble schoolhouses, castles, covered bridges, school buses or whatever the builder can imagine.

"The libraries create informal gathering places where neighbors share their favorite literature and stories," says founder Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin.

Todd launched the program in 2009 to honor his mother, who was a teacher and avid reader. Since then, more than 15,000 free little libraries have been built worldwide to promote literacy and the love of reading.

In remote northeastern Nevada, Catherine Wines sponsors the little library recently erected at the



Don Post, a retired farmer, built detailed little libraries in northeastern Nevada to resemble schools. They have shake roofs and Plexiglas windows.

Photo by Donna Webster

community hall in Starr Valley, where she grew up 20 miles from the nearest library.

"Sharing books through the little library helps create a sense of community," says Catherine. "The hall is a perfect place because there are seasonal events and gatherings there."

Catherine and her bibliophile mother, Claudia, helped stock the library with books.

"We love books and anytime you can get people of all ages to read, it's great," says Catherine. ■

To see if a little library is near you, visit www.littlefreelibrary.org.