

Friends' News

Friends of the Bellingham Public Library — November 2009

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Maude Heyes Fischer Award

Coming Sat., Nov. 21, 11:00 = Noon!

Be sure to mark your calendar to attend the 20th Anniversary of the award this year! If you have suggestions or ideas for making it extra special, or would like to help with this delightful event, please call Vicky Marshall at 671-6861.

December 2 - 5, 2009 Book Sale

Wednesday, Dec. 2: 1 to 6 p.m. - Preview Sale
Double the marked price.

Thursday, Dec 3: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Regular price.

Friday, Dec. 4: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Half price sale.

Saturday, Dec. 5: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - \$3.00 a bag.

The book sale after the December one will be from February 24 - 27, 2010.

Fairhaven Library Opening

The anticipated opening of the Fairhaven Library is **January 4, 2010.**

Save the Date—Annual Meeting

The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library annual meeting will be held on **Saturday, April 24th at 1:00** in the Library lecture room. Jim Henterly, local children's book illustrator, will share his artwork and process of illustration with us. Join us for refreshments and fun!

Membership Renewal Time

Our membership runs for the calendar year. Enclosed with this newsletter is an envelope for your 2010 renewal. Be sure to indicate if you want to be included on the membership list for the Branch. Thanks so much for supporting the library through your membership!

Library Update

As you may already know, budget reductions citywide have had a tremendous impact on the Bellingham Public Library. Already, the library book budget has been reduced by 20%, several staff positions have been eliminated, and hours at the Central Library have been reduced. Outreach services to three senior residences have been discontinued. Holds lists have been limited to 20 items at a time. Waiting lines are getting longer as the remaining staff struggle to keep up with the ever-increasing workload. All programs and services are being scrutinized for cost savings; there is a chance there will be further hours reductions, another staff layoff, and another hit to the materials budget. This is despite the fact that the library is experiencing record use, with over 13% more items checking out than last year. During this stressful time, we appreciate more than ever the support and encouragement of the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library, whose daily presence and good cheer remind staff that we're all in this together. We are particularly grateful for your financial support of projects that will have a direct impact on the way we do business, making it easier for the staff we have left to serve the public. We look forward to trying a new, more efficient method of checking in and shelving returned items, something we couldn't attempt without the Friends' gift of a fleet of new booktrucks. In 2009, Friends' donations made it possible to enhance our high-demand Children's DVD collection, replace ragged fiction classics, and secure our music CDs, among other projects. We thank everyone for their efforts this past year and look forward to a brighter 2010. from Christine Perkins

Message from the President

What an incredible time it has been since the board transition in June! We had huge shoes to fill, with the departure of long-time book sale coordinators Ken and Phyllis Weber as well as former board president Christine Walsh changing roles. We are so fortunate to have had their leadership to help shape the organization and give us guidance as we carry on their good work. Moving forward seemed, at first, a daunting task. Luckily, we have a strong and committed team of volunteers who have taken on new roles and responsibilities, as well as shared their expertise. Special thanks to Catherine Reade, who stepped forward to chair the last two book sales; Barbara Shepard, who helps in so many areas; Dot Banister, who has been helping to train new folks in the pricing/sorting area; Nancy Newstrom, for her financial wisdom; Garland Richmond for his on-going and cheerful support, and Doraine Jensen, who notices what needs to be done, then does it!

The library is facing many challenges these days, with on-going budget cuts and the vision of a new library on hold. I am proud and grateful that we can be advocates and supporters for their important work. Our contributions add so much to their services and materials, and will be needed more than ever in the upcoming year.

We are often looking for extra help. Do you have a friend who would like to join our organization? Would you like to help at the next book sale? Please call us at 778-7250 for more information or to volunteer.

In peace, Kathie Wilson

Teen and Children Book Sales

Due to an abundance of Young Adult/Teen books, we decided to have a book sale targeted to this difficult to reach population. The sale was held in the lower lobby on July 31st, in conjunction with the Library's Children's Craft Faire on the lawn. The books were very reasonably priced, and we sold all 8 boxes of books and made \$220!! Many thanks to **Marcia Leishman** and **Dot Banister** for cashiering, and special thanks to **Doraine Jensen** for cashiering and for arranging for and depositing the money from the sale. The students, teachers and families that purchased books, and those of us that worked, truly had a GREAT time!!

The following Friday, we coordinated a Children's Book Sale to coincide with the awards ceremony for the Summer Reading Program. All the children who completed the program received a certificate for a free book from the Friends.

The lecture room was filled with a selection of books for the give-away, as well as additional books and videos available to purchase. What fun to see the children stream into the room to search for their prize! We took in 180 book coupons that day, as well as sold an additional \$650.00 worth of materials. Children who weren't able to attend the ceremony were later able to choose a book from carts prepared by the Friends and Helen Scholtz, Children's Library staff member. An additional 500 books were awarded in this way to happy readers.

Thanks to all the folks who helped with setting up, cashiering, taking coupons, and taking down for the sale. We not only made extra money to help with future programs—we had a great time watching the eager children come through the door and seeing the satisfaction of leaving with the gift of a book..



Internet Sales

The great generosity of our community in the quantity and quality of book donations has made it possible for The Friends to fund many expensive and needed enhancements to the library we all love so much. The money for these projects comes from both community and on-line book sales.



A person shopping for books at one of our regular book sales should expect to find good quality books, fiction and non-fiction, at very modest prices – fifty cents or a dollar for most items. By using an outside vendor to market books that either do not normally sell well locally – text books, technical manuals, and older specialty books – or whose value far exceeds what we charge at a book sale, we have been able to nearly double our income. Other than some older novels with very limited, but avid fans, we seldom designate fiction for online sales.

We are currently using Once Sold Tales in Auburn to market our books. We box the books. They pick them up and do the rest. Our percentage of each sale ranges from 35%-60%, depending on the amount of the sale. The more valuable the book, the higher our percentage. Their site provides up to the minute sales reports which we monitor daily.

As library budget resources become more and more constrained, maximizing our income is a high priority. We will continue to look for ways to improve, but are pleased that the pairing of online and local sales has been working well, serving our local community as well as readers far afield.

Tale From the Sales

Volunteering at the Friends' book sales provides a wonderful opportunity to observe Bellingham at its most interesting and endearing. Here is one scene from the last book sale.

On the Thursday of the September book sale, a gentleman came to the cashiers' table as if to pay, except that he had no books in his hands. Instead he had a check, which he extended to the cashier with a smile, saying: "I had some books to sell, and I figured I could get more for them than the Friends could, so I sold them myself and here are the proceeds." The check was for well over a hundred dollars! Now that's a Bellingham story!



from Garland Richmond

Book Sale Proceeds

May sale total:..... **\$8,400.00**
Sept. sale total:..... **\$9,853.75**
Internet Sales March - Sept..... **\$11,793.44**

September Sale/New Pricing Method

Our September book was a huge success and we were able to sell nearly all of the 350 plus boxes culled in advance and much that was donated during the sale. We want to personally say "Thank you" to all the Friends who volunteered to help out. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication and effort by Friends and Library staff to host a book sale of this size.

Our next sale in December will see an exciting change. We are converting our pricing on adult and teen books to a standardized format. You will not find prices written in most of the books. To increase efficiency in preparing for the sales, we have decided to try a new method of determining book value. Principally mass market paper backs will be priced at 50 cents; the larger trade paper backs are \$1.00 as are hardback books. Exceptions will be marked clearly with a bright orange dot on the front cover. The value of these specially-priced books will usually range from \$2.00-\$5.00. The value of children's books range widely, according to the size and condition, compelling us to price them individually as usual. Hopefully this will make cashing in as easy as it has made the sorting and culling efforts in the back room. See you at the next sale!

Beyond the Bottom Line

Bellingham is home to many dedicated and enthusiastic readers of all ages and walks of life. Thanks to their generosity, as well as that of local bookstores and other organizations, we've received an unprecedented number of donations in 2009 and still counting. The surplus promises exciting book sales throughout the rest of the year and into the next, just as it means the continued growth of our online catalog of hard-to-find and specialty titles.

What about the books we don't sell? Anyone who's passed through the ground-floor level of the library has seen them: shelves, sometimes whole carts, of books free for our readers. Typically, these are titles that for one reason or another we don't think will sell, while still merit reading. I personally love the free-book area. It's one place where supply and demand are always in harmony. There are no orphans; each book will eventually find a home. The free-book area is a tribute to our library's commitment to encourage reading and provide access to books in every possible way to every possible reader.



Some books have yet another fate. Donations in mint condition, published within the last three years, are set aside for possible use by the library's own collection. We also assemble reading kits for local book clubs upon request.

Donated children's books are used as rewards for various school reading programs as well as the library's own summer program. This year seven-hundred books were given to young readers who successfully reached their reading goals. Children's books are also set aside for local schools and parents and children who attend Parenting Education Classes. From our adult collection we look for books of interest to the Literacy Council, the Museum of Radio and Electricity, the Railroad Museum, the Heritage Flight Museum.

The large-hearted dedication our volunteers makes all of this possible. And while our mission is to raise money for the library, we are just as committed to efforts that don't add to the bottom line but are a direct, personal outreach to the community.

Purchases April - Sept 2009

The Friends of Bellingham Public Library made the following purchases between April and September 2009:

Slatwall panel project.....	\$2,079
Art, puzzles & games from Whatcom Museum.....	365
Society Tote bags.....	1,652
"I Love My Library" patches.....	267
Summer Reading Program.....	1,693
Thursday Night Spotlight.....	350
"Turn off TV" Week performance.....	350
Teen Library Committee.....	611
CD/DVD Security System.....	11,900
Barkley Branch shelving/sign.....	970
"We Share a Story".....	228
Whatcom READS!.....	1,300
Total:	\$21,400

Volunteers Needed

Magazine Exchange Volunteer Needed!

Could you spend an hour a week helping to insure that magazines are shared with others, then properly recycled? If so, why not join our volunteer team that operates the magazine exchange at the Library? Duties include keeping the magazine bins in the downstairs hallway neat, and culling damaged issues. Call Garland Richmond at 752-1423 to volunteer.

Be a Village Books Picker-Upper!

A volunteer is needed to pick up donated books once a week at Village Books in Fairhaven for the Friends' book sales. It generally takes about an hour to pick up the books, take them to the Central Library, unload them and carry them down to the Friends' work area on the bottom floor of the Library. A relatively strong back and a car with some trunk space are needed. Call Garland at 752-1423.