

Friends' News



Friends of the Bellingham Public Library
210 Central Ave, Bellingham, Washington 98225

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Phone: 360-778-7250

e-mail: friendslibrary3@gmail.com

Co-Presidents' Report

2020 was a year that brought surprise, chaos, hardship and change to nearly everyone. The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library were fortunate to have one very successful book sale for the year in late January, earning \$14,497 for the Friends. We were able to give \$45,000 to the library this year for their projects.

As soon as the book sale was over, we began to sort, cull and clean the many donations of books for the next sale which was planned for May. In mid-March all of our activities were curtailed when the library closed. It soon became apparent that there would be no more book sales during 2020. The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library are not only hard-working individuals, they are also creative thinkers. We were aware that there were many books already prepared for the next sale that were left sitting on the shelves in the Friend's work area. See the article to the right for more details.

We are continuing to reach our goal of increased membership numbers by developing better ways to remind people when their dues are needed. We are also trying to reach out to folks who have worked at book sales, but who have not joined. This is an important source of revenue for the Friends. If you have not joined, you can find instructions for joining elsewhere in this newsletter.

The library renovation project is moving along on schedule and should be completed in the early spring. The closure of the library is hard for both staff and patrons, but the new changes and additions will be very welcome when we can once again enter the library.

We are grateful to Library Director, Rebecca Judd, and all the staff, for their ability to be flexible and helpful during this very difficult time. The online services, curbside service, and the friendly voices when we call are so welcome.

We are also grateful to you, our library Friends. Your donations and membership dues have made it possible for us to support our library, even in this pandemic year.

May 2021 bring open library doors and the possibility of more wonderful book sales to come.

Faye Hill and Chris Johnsen, Co-Presidents

An Invitation To You –

You are invited to the Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library, via Zoom, on Saturday, April 24th at 10:00. This year you will have to provide your own coffee and goodies, but we offer you the following highlights of the meeting.

- ◆ Library Director Rebecca Judd will take us on a virtual photo tour of the new renovations that are nearing completion on the first floor of the library.
- ◆ Librarian Katie Bray will give us her much-enjoyed annual book talk and will share new and favorite titles from the library collection.
- ◆ You will be able to vote for a new slate of officers for the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library.
- ◆ You will be the first to hear the most recent updates on what the Friends are doing during this time of library closure.

We hope you will join us. Zoom invitations will be sent later, as the day draws close.

FOBPL/Food Bank Partnership

We are excited to tell you about an outreach partnership the Friends initiated this summer with the Bellingham Food Bank. This new opportunity arose as a result of the excess books we had due to the cancellation of our book sales. A small committee of FOBPL volunteers met to discuss distribution ideas. Concerns were voiced that due to COVID-19, access to books for some children may be limited. It was therefore decided to make dispersal of children's books the top priority. The Bellingham Food Bank was then contacted to see if we could partner with them to give away free books at their food distribution drive-through sites. The Food Bank was excited to work with us. We then needed to find a place to store and process books. An email request was sent out to FOBPL members and thankfully Carol Berglund responded. Carol offered the FOBPL the use of



her garage which was adjacent to her home. It was perfect! Now we needed the books. Vicki, Kathie and Scout with Rebecca's support were able to get access to the FOBPL book stacks inside the library.

They marked and boxed books on multiple occasions. Bethany and other library staff also culled children's books and boxed them up. Rebecca and her staff then moved the books up to the front lobby for the FOBPL volunteers to retrieve. FOBPL volunteers cleaned, sorted and bagged books according to the following categories: children's picture books, kindergarten-2nd grade, 3rd-5th grade, teen, children's Spanish books, children's nonfiction, adult fiction, adult mystery and cookbooks. The Food Bank staff and volunteers set up a table and canopy for the FOBPL adjacent to their food distribution drive-through sites which were located around town. Two FOBPL volunteers handed out bags of books at each site to the Food Bank clients per their request based on their interest or the age of their children. A combined total of 2880 books of which 80% were children's books were distributed over a one week period in both August and September. All of the community members who received books were grateful but the smiles on the kid's faces and on their parent's faces were the best! A big thank you goes out to everyone involved: the very dedicated Bellingham Food Bank staff including Melanie Danner and Van Dartt and their volunteers, Carol Berglund, Rebecca Judd, Bellingham Public Library staff, and the FOBPL volunteers. This was a fun and rewarding experience to connect with the community and support literacy!

Carol, Kathie, Scout, Barb, Faye, Chris, Vicki, Leigh Ann and Jennie

Newsletter Archive

Copies of our newsletter can always be found online. Go to the library website. At the bottom you will see *Friends of the Library* under *Get Involved*. At the bottom of that page you will find the archive.

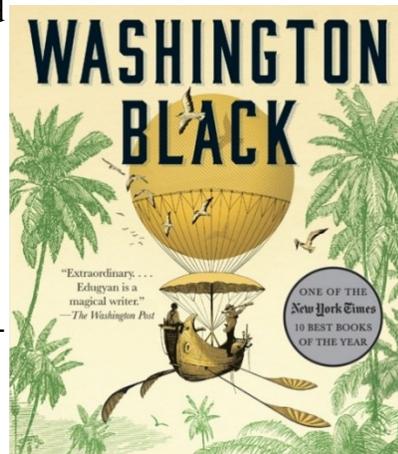
Whatcom READS 2021 Features *Washington Black* by Esi Edugyan

Whatcom READS kicks off 2021 with a thought-provoking slate of programs inspired by this year's featured title, *Washington Black* by award winning author Esi Edugyan. The novel "is an enthralling meditation on the weight of freedom, wrapped in a rousing adventure story stretching to the ends of the earth," says Renée Graham, Boston Globe.



"Inspired by the book, a series of free online events and discussions in January and February will examine the themes of race and belonging and illustration and the natural world," says Ann McAllen, chair of the Whatcom READS committee. The popular Whatcom Writes and Allied Arts Art Challenge will also return.

In addition, resources for community organizations and book clubs will include the availability of facilitators to assist with discussions of the book and of the social justice efforts underway in Bellingham and Whatcom County. To request a facilitator, email whatcomreads@gmail.com. Groups can also purchase a special themed cocktail available from Whatcom READS partner Evolve Chocolate + Café.



Learn more about Whatcom READS programs and register at whatcomreads.org/events.

THEME: RACE AND BELONGING EVENTS

Jan 14, 7 – 8 p.m. Poetry Reading with Robert Lashley

Local poet Robert Lashley has connections to the deep South and is a survivor of the Hilltop gang wars of the early '90s. His poetry makes sense of the multitude of voices that have surrounded him over the years.

Jan. 23, 7 – 8 p.m. Angel in the Outhouse: Stories of the Civil Rights Movement by Kathya Alexander

Through stories based on her own experience growing up in the segregated south, award winning Seattle storyteller Kathya Alexander makes this time in history come alive. Made possible through a Lift Every Voice Grant.*

Jan. 24, 6 – 7 p.m. Let's Talk About Race with author and professor Clyde Ford

With warmth and openness, author and professor Clyde Ford leads a discussion on race in America with emphasis on audience participation. Meant for people of all races, participants will gain tools to engage in honest, transparent and meaningful conversations about race. A Humanities Washington program.

Feb. 5, 7 – 8 p.m. African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle and Song Poetry Reading

Dr. Bill Lyne, coordinator of African American Studies at Western Washington University, moderates a discussion on African American literature that invites us to rise up and honor these voices. Made possible by a Lift Every Voice Grant.*

Feb. 11, 7 – 8 p.m. Technology and Social Justice with Clyde Ford

Author, scholar, and activist Clyde Ford shows how the issues his father faced as the first black software engineer in America are present in high-tech today, and what concerned citizens must do to advocate for human and civil rights in the modern technological age.

Feb. 25, 6 – 7 p.m. I'll Fly Away: A Sojourn Through Poetry and Spirituals

Award-winning poet, performer and distinguished scholar Gloria Burgess explores the rich heritage of spirituals and poetry from the African-American tradition in a spirited sojourn through words and music. Made possible by a Lift Every Voice grant.*

**Lift Every Voice is a year-long, nationwide celebration of the 250-year tradition of African American poetry. Learn more at africanamericanpoetry.org.*

THEME: ILLUSTRATION AND THE NATURAL WORLD EVENTS

Feb. 13, 1 – 2 p.m. The Smart Skin and Amazing Brains of the Octopus

The octopus has fascinated investigators since Aristotle (and sparks innovation for *Washington Black*). Join Dr. David Gire on an exploration of the neuroscience behind how octopuses think and behave.

Feb. 20, 4-5 p.m. What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Sleeping—What Birds are Doing, and Why

Renowned ornithologist David Allen Sibley will discuss his latest book with a focus on nature illustration. He is the author and illustrator of the series of successful guides to nature that bear his name, including *The Sibley Guide to Birds*.

WHATCOM WRITES

Feb. 21 and 28, 2 p.m. Listen as local writers share their work inspired by the theme, "Reconciliation."

AUTHOR EVENTS WITH ESI EDUGYAN

Mar. 4-5 The award-winning author visits Whatcom County via live video events to discuss her creative process and her powerfully beautiful book.

ALLIED ARTS ART CHALLENGE

Create art inspired by the book for display at Allied Arts during the month of March. Visit alliedarts.org/whatcom-reads-art-challenge for details. Submissions due: March 2-3, 2021. Opening reception: Friday, March 5, 2021. Exhibition: March 5-27, 2021.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

We are especially grateful for your membership to help us get through this troubling and uncertain pandemic year. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for your membership support. Something you might like to know is that membership dues are used to pay for our operating expenses and the costs for holding our book sales. So, it's your dues that enable us to donate 100% of the revenue from our book sales to the Bellingham Public Library.



This year, we've made it easier to join and renew your membership to the Friends. For our current members, we will send you an email reminder to let you know when your membership is about to expire and you'll be able to renew and pay online. We've also updated the membership form on our webpage to take online payments. We'll still provide our paper membership form and a printable online membership form, however, for anyone who would like to pay either by mail or at the Help Desk in the library.

We are excited to say that we have also made membership free for Junior Members, which means for anyone 18 years old or younger, there is no cost to become a Friend of the Bellingham Public Library.

Now that we simplified the process for joining the Friends and made membership free for Junior Members, we'd like to ask for a favor. Would you be willing to invite three of your friends to join the Friends of the Library this year?

If you do, be sure to let your friends know that they shouldn't feel obligated to volunteer; however, if volunteering sounds like fun, taking a two-hour shift as a volunteer for our book sales is a great way to meet other readers in our community and support a very good cause.

Treasurer's Report

The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library had the following financial activity Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2020:

Income

Book Sales: in 2020 (January only)	\$ 14,497
Nearly New Books	\$ 3,200
Display Case Books	\$ 1,108
Miscellaneous Books	\$ 181
Online Book Sales	\$ 2,155
Bags and Bumper Stickers	\$ 427
Membership	\$ 7,006
Donations & Memorials	\$ 9,837
Dividends and Interest	\$ 579
Total Income:	\$ 29,251

Major Expenses for the Library

Summer Reading Programs	\$ 5,500
Books for Babies	\$ 5,000
Special Library Projects	\$ 12,000
Adult Reading Program	\$ 1,000
Books for Book Club Kits	\$ 3,000
Whatcom Reads	\$ 5,000
Library Staff Professional Development	\$ 3,500
Library Main Floor Remodel	\$ 10,000
Total Purchases for the Library:	\$ 45,000

For Amazon Users

You can donate to the Friends through the AmazonSmile program. Simply go to smile.amazon.com on your computer or mobile device. When you make your first purchase, you will be asked to select a charitable organization – **Friends of the Bellingham Public Library**. Every eligible purchase you make on smile.amazon.com will result in a donation of 0.5 % of your purchase price to the Friends. In 2020 we received \$87.04, but your help can increase that amount.

Library Director's Report

By Rebecca Judd

2020 was definitely the year that did not go as planned, but our resilient Library staff persevered and invented new ways to serve our community. Although the worldwide pandemic forced our buildings to close in March, we were able to create and unveil a Curbside Holds Pickup service by June 15 to keep materials circulating. This service became wildly popular and by November we were providing 2,000 weekly pickups consisting of up to 12,000 materials per week.



At the same time, our Central Library main floor underwent a complete remodel that we are excited to complete in early 2021. It will include a new drop off space for book donations, as well as new study rooms, an automated book sorter, new furniture, and even new restrooms on the main floor.

We are so grateful to the Friends for your contributions that allowed us to purchase Wi-Fi Hotspots and to respond quickly to the racial equity protests in June, and to fund The Unrooted Experience video project to be unveiled in January 2021.

We hope to welcome our Friends and the public back into our Libraries in 2021. We miss seeing all of your smiling faces, as we already have patrons asking when the Friends' popular book sales can resume.

Ryan Dowd Workshop

By Kathie Wilson

A few years ago, I read Ryan Dowd's book, *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness, an Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflict, and Serving Everyone*, which I was fortunate enough to borrow from our library. I was extremely impressed and moved by his perspective as a long-time director of a homeless shelter near Chicago. When the Whatcom County Library System enlisted him to give a series of workshops last spring based on his philosophy, I was thrilled! And, when COVID made it necessary to pivot from in-person to on-line instruction, I was certain that the experience would be less than inspiring.

Boy, was I wrong! He is an engaging and dynamic speaker and the series of workshops was both fun and incredibly educational.

The Whatcom County Library System decided to make the program available to our Friends' members. When the offer went out to folks, about 40 replied with interest and will be watching the videos at their leisure. It is heartwarming to know how many of our members chose to participate in these workshops to learn more about our homeless population and ways to engage positively with them.

Here are a few of the comments that people made about the training:

"Dowd's sense of humor and great examples kept this course interesting and easy to follow."

"Although the training is fast-paced, it gives very practical tools with clear illustrations to increase the odds for favorable outcomes in almost any human encounter."

"Ryan Dowd's homeless training was excellent! I learned a lot about homelessness that I didn't know."

If you missed the sign up and are interested in participating, the subscription is actually good until May! We think it offers so much and encourage you to check it out. You can email Kathie at kathiejo1733@gmail.com and a link will be sent to you.

Many thanks to Ryan Dowd for sharing his insights and to the Whatcom County Library System for including our Friends' members in this opportunity!