

FRIENDS' NEWS

MARCH 2025



FRIENDS OF THE BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
210 CENTRAL AVE, BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON 98225
PHONE: 360-778-7250 ★ E-MAIL: FRIENDSLIBRARY3@GMAIL.COM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I get close to the end of the second year of my presidency, I am so very grateful for all of the work that is put in by our volunteers. Our sale volunteers, our backroom staff, and our board members all put in so many hours to make this organization the incredible success that it is. Together we have raised money in this last year through our major sales, the Nearly New sales, and the Display Case sales. All of those funds have enabled us to fund all of the library programs, events and materials that have been requested as well as to provide major funding for the Whatcom Reads program. We were able to increase our funding level for the library for 2025 and we are looking forward to being able to contribute to the library renovation which will begin in 2026.

We have had some changes to the Friends' board in 2024: Joan Killingsworth joined us as our secretary, Kate Riordan re-joined us as our treasurer, Chris Johnsen moved to a position as our volunteer coordinator, and Treasure Samuel came on the board as an at-large member. Carol Comeau has served us very well as our vice-president for the past year and a half. In April she will move back to a position as an at-large board member and Treasure Samuel will take over the vice-president position.

Barbara Shepherd, who has been a long-time member on our board, will retire this year from the board. She will continue as a backroom volunteer as well as being there for every sale. Thanks so much to her for her dedication to the Friends!

We are also very grateful for the support of the library staff. From the folks on the mezzanine who assist us in so many ways to the friendly greetings and the appreciation that we get from everyone, we love working with them all.

In addition to the money we raise to support library programs, our mission also includes support of community literacy. We donate books that we can't use for our sales to a number of community groups as well as making books available to library patrons in the lower lobby area of the Central Library branch. We are very grateful to a community that supports all of the work we do through the donations of books from your collections as well as to Village Books, which donates several boxes of books to us each week. Whether those books get sold or are given away, our goal is to help every book find a new home and a new reader. Thanks to everyone for making that possible!



NEARLY NEW BOOKS AND DISPLAY CASES

Nearly New: Don't forget we have our Nearly New area on the main floor of the Central Library.

You can shop for high-quality, barely used, nearly new books, children's books, and puzzles whenever the library is open. Prices range from \$2.00 to \$5.00.



Display Case: If you are looking for something special or unusual, check out our Display Case located on the lower level of the Central Library next to the Free Bookshelves.

Here you will find classics, rare and collectable books, as well as books about Bellingham and Whatcom County history.

You might also find tarot cards, special edition boxed books and out of the ordinary items. The display case is locked but there are instructions on how to contact the Friends to set up an appointment to view display case items.

UPCOMING BOOK SALE DATES

Join us for our two remaining Book Sales in 2025! This is your chance to acquire gently used books in fantastic shape. Think ahead to upcoming birthday and holiday gifts you need to find—you will undoubtedly be able to handle all your gift purchases here!

May 21-24 (4-day sale)

Wednesday: 10 am - 6 pm

Thursday: 10 am - 6 pm

Friday: 10 am - 6 pm, half-price

Saturday: 10 am - 1 pm, \$5/bag

September 25-27 (3-day sale)

Thursday: 10 am - 7 pm

Friday: 10 am - 6 pm

Saturday: 10 am - 1 pm, half-price
1:15 pm - 4, \$5/bag



Our book sales are always well attended.

For those who prefer less crowded conditions, it's best to avoid the first and last days, and to arrive after 11:30. Book sales take place in the downstairs lecture room of Central Library.

There are many opportunities to volunteer at Book Sales—with the added perk of being invited to attend the pre-sale!

The 2025 Whatcom READS selection is *No Two Persons* by Erica Bauermeister. The book presents a wide range of discussion and event opportunities leading up to the March 13 - 15, 2025, in-person author events. Visit whatcomreads.org to learn more and to register.

Newsweek selected *No Two Persons* for its Best Books of 2023 list. The magazine's Senior Editor Meredith Wolf called it: "A breathtaking novel about the power a book can have. It takes you inside the hearts of a complex web of broken personalities, empowered and made whole by the same book. The characters brought to life are delicately interwoven throughout, forming a seamless, beautiful fabric." The audiobook of *No Two Persons* won an Audie Award for multi-voiced performance.

Erica Bauermeister is the New York Times bestselling author of five novels, including *The Scent Keeper*, *The School of Essential Ingredients*, and *No Two Persons*. She also has written a memoir, *House Lessons: Renovating a Life*, and is the co-author of two readers' guides, *500 Great Books by Women* and *Let's Hear It for the Girls*. Her books have been Reese's Book Club and Indie Next Picks selections and have been published in over two dozen countries. She lives in Port Townsend, WA.

2025 author events will include the following:

Book Discussion with Erica Bauermeister
Thursday, March 13, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Lummi Island Grange Hall, 2215 N. Nugent Road, Lummi Island

Lummi Island bears a suspicious resemblance to a nameless island featured in *No Two Persons*, so it's only fitting that we gather there for this lively book discussion with the author. Space is limited; registration is required.

Sip and Savor with Erica Bauermeister
Thursday, March 13, 7-8:30 p.m.
Bellewood Farms, 6140 Guide Meridian, Lynden

Join us at Bellewood Farms for an evening of beverage and book pairings inspired by Erica Bauermeister's personal selection of favorite books. Learn what books have impacted her life and what drinks go down best with each one. There will be a selection of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages available for purchase. Space is limited; registration is required.

Art and Craft of Writing with Erica Bauermeister
Friday, March 14, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Village Books, 1210 11th St., Bellingham

Gain insight into the writing process as Erica Bauermeister discusses the art and craft of writing. Bauermeister is an excellent writing instructor. This class is perfect for all experience levels or for anyone who is simply interested in the craft of writing. Space is limited; registration is required.



An Evening with Erica Bauermeister and Friends

Friday, March 14, 7-9 p.m.

Mount Baker Theatre, 104 N. Commercial St., Bellingham

Join us at the beautiful Mount Baker Theatre for our premiere Whatcom READS event. Following her lecture, Bauermeister will answer audience questions and sign books. We'll also announce our 2026 Whatcom READS title. New this year: Bushwick Book Club Seattle will open the event with original music composed by local musicians and inspired by *No Two Persons*. This event is free. However, tickets are required. Reserve tickets here.

A Conversation with Erica Bauermeister

Saturday, March 15, 11 a.m.-noon
online

This year's Whatcom READS author events close with a lively virtual conversation between Erica Bauermeister and Katie Bray, a librarian with the Bellingham Public Library (BPL) and a former member of the Whatcom READS steering committee. Bray is an avid reader and promoter of stories who loves to help others find their next great read. You can usually find her at BPL's Central Library. Pre-registration is required.



Borrow *No Two Persons* as a book, eBook or audiobook from the Bellingham Public Library or Whatcom County Library System. Or purchase a copy from Village Books, which donates 10 percent of each sale to Whatcom READS.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BY REBECCA JUDD

Over the past year, Bellingham Public Library has partnered with the Friends to provide a wide range of programs and services for our community. January began with additional Light Therapy Lamps added to the BPL collection thanks to the Friends' donation. This combined with kits purchased by WCLS allowed for 65 circulating kits in our community.

Our Whatcom READS title for 2024 was *Red Paint: The Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk* by Sasha taq̓w̓šəblu LaPointe. BPL hosted the free, in-person author event at Mount Baker Theatre on Friday, March 15 at 7 pm. Pre-registration was 1,375 as of 3/15, or 91% of capacity, and final attendance was 755, on the first sunny Friday of the year.

Friends funding also allowed BPL to create and share 16 versions of the BPL Summer Reading Activity Cards, including versions in English, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese for Early Learners, Kids, Teens and Adults. Between June 1 – August 31, we had 1,542 children finishers, 114 teen finishers and 264 adult finishers, and 38 staff finishers. Library Card Night at the Bellingham Bells Game on June 20 at Joe Martin Field, was a fun way for the community to celebrate Summer Reading together.

A new initiative in 2024 allowed BPL to build capacity to offer programming and events for adults. In the spring and fall, the Library partnered with WWU's Sustainability Engagement Institute and Center for Community Learning to bring our community together, with college students, local professionals, and local retirees talking about sustainability at a series of successful Learning Together Forums.

As part of National Recovery Month in September, Bellingham Public Library and numerous partners hosted the all-community event "What Is Addiction? Plain Talk for Our Community" at Bellingham High School on Sept. 12, attended by approximately 150 people. The collaboration featured a keynote on the basics of addiction by local expert Dr. Shannon Boustead and a panel discussion by community members in recovery talking about their experiences. The Library also distributed 100 free copies of the book *Un-Addiction: 6 Mind Changing Conversations That Could Save a Life* by Nzinga Harrison, MD with Lynya Floyd.

In November, Monica Koller of Connecting Community completed a new series of digital storytelling videos in partnership with Bellingham Public Library, titled *Somos Comunidad*. This series highlights the voices of our local Latino community.

To close out the year, we celebrated the 120th Anniversary of the Fairhaven Branch Library on Friday, Dec. 20, 2024. The library was built in 1904 with a \$12,500 grant from Andrew Carnegie on land donated by C. X. Larabee. The building has been renovated numerous times over the decades and has remained an important thread in the fabric of the Fairhaven neighborhood.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library had the following financial activity January 1 - December 31, 2024:

Income

Book Sales:	\$ 54,016
Nearly New Books	\$ 12,608
Display Case Books	\$ 2,421
Miscellaneous Books	\$ 320
Online Book Sales	\$ 3,657
Bags and Bumper Stickers	\$ 358
Membership	\$ 5,545
Donations & Memorials	\$ 83,183
Dividends and Interest	\$ 6,102
Total Income:	\$ 168,211

Major Expenses for the Library

Summer Reading Programs.....	\$ 8,830
Books for Babies.....	\$ 5,000
Adult Reading Programs.....	\$ 2,000
Teen Programming.....	\$ 1,000
Community Relations and Outreach.....	\$ 1,000
Whatcom Reads	\$ 7,500
Total BPL Expenses:	\$ 25,530

Other Expenses for the Library

Digital Storytelling.....	\$ 9,000
Happy Lights.....	\$ 1,000
Special Events.....	\$ 22,500
WCLS Funding.....	\$ 5,000
Total Other BPL Expenses	\$ 37,500

Administrative Expenses

Insurance	\$ 2,243
Bank fees/Square charges.....	\$ 922
Fees and Licenses.....	\$ 221
Meetings and gifts.....	\$ 237
Tax preparation fee.....	\$ 295
Miscellaneous.....	\$ 660
Total Admin Expenses	\$ 4,578

Book Sale Expenses

Supplies.....	\$ 203
Advertising.....	\$ 3,033
Refreshments.....	\$ 50
Total Book Sale Expenses	\$ 3,287

2025 FUNDING PLANS

BPL Programs:

Adult Programming	\$2,000
Summer Reading	\$8,000
Teen Programming	\$1,500
Whatcom Reads	\$7,500
Youth and Family Programming	\$2,500

Collections Support:

Book Clubs	\$3,500
Board and Picture Books	\$5,000
Collection Program Support	\$10,000
Here and Now Collection	\$11,500
Wonderbooks	\$10,000

Community Relations & Outreach:

Community Outreach	\$1,000
Library Branded Shirts for Staff	\$3,500
Lived Experience	\$1,000

Special Projects:

All-Staff Learning Day	\$1,500
Staff Recognition	\$1,500
Wifi Hotspot Replacement	\$5,000

Total: \$75,000

SPECIAL DONATIONS

We would like to recognize the following generous financial and other donations that were made during 2024:

Christy Wise in memory of Julianna Guy.

David and Karen Hannah in memory of Bruce McLeod.

Robert Hepker donated the book collection of his late wife, Nola Hepker.

Carolyn McCarthy and Kent Chasson

Anonymous donor: \$5,000

Anonymous donor: \$25,000

ANNUAL MEETING 2025

Annual Meeting

We invite you to join us on Saturday, April 19th for our Annual Friends of the Library Membership Meeting! It will be held in the Lecture Room of the Central Library from 10-12. We will have a short business meeting. Come and celebrate the work of the Friends.

Then we'll hear reports from the President of the Friends about the work we are doing, from the Library Director about what is happening in the library, and from the Trustees about the latest plans for the library renovation.

For our program, Greg Hope from the Whatcom Unified Emergency Coordination Center will give a presentation on Disaster Preparedness. He has done this presentation for the library staff and for the Friends of the Library board. It is interesting and informative and we know you'll enjoy hearing him.

We'll also get to hear Katie Bray's list of recommended reading, which is always a favorite for the members.

There will be coffee, tea and cookies and each member attending will be able to choose to receive either a Friend's book bag or a "Book Buck" coupon. Hope you can join us!



BOARD MEMBERS

Friends of the Bellingham Public Library Board Members 2025-2026

President: Scout Mitchell

Vice-President: Treasure Samuel

Secretary: Joan Hollingsworth

Treasurer: Kate Riordan

At-Large members:

Jane Brooks, Publicity

Carol Comeau, Trustees representative, Little Free Libraries

Chris Johnsen, Volunteers

Wendy Westgate, Newsletter

Brigid Wilson, Membership

Board Meeting Schedule

March 19

May 14

September 17

November 19

All are from 1-3 in the Lecture Room at the Central Library. Members are welcome to come to the meetings (you can find out more about how the work of the Friends gets done!). Only Board Members can vote.

BY REBECCA CRAVEN, CHAIR

I'm so pleased to have an opportunity to introduce myself as the new Bellingham Public Library's (BPL) Board of Trustees Chair and to update the Friends on highlights of the Board's last year or so. I'm entering my ninth year on the Board and was elected Chair for 2025. Our longtime leader, Rick Osen, has now completed his two 5-year terms on the Board. His work will be appreciated by future Boards for many years. We have chosen, and the City Council has approved, Shirin Deylami, a WWU political science professor to be our fifth member, filling Rick's vacancy. You can find a short bio of Shirin in the February BPL newsletter. We are excited to have her join us starting this month.

This summary (mostly prepared by Rick at the end of 2024) contains selected highlights for the year's work by the BPL's Board of Trustees in its role as the governing body of the library, working closely with Library Administration and City Administration to serve the community. Our work is guided by the Library's Strategic Plan and benchmarked by our adopted Level of Service standards.

The Board recognizes, appreciates and admires the library staff for their dedication, willingness and thoroughness in providing quality library services and programs to our community in what can sometimes be very challenging circumstances. Also, we heartily applaud and value the Friends of the Library for their steady, long-term financial and public support to the library.

Board Personnel:

- Hannah Stone was welcomed as the Board's new City Council liaison in 2024 and she will continue to serve that role in 2025.
- Jim McCabe ended his term after 7 years of service on the Board at the end of February. Deborra Garrett was nominated and approved as a new Trustee to fill the vacancy.

Level of Service Standard: Library Materials

The Library Materials standard was adopted in 2017 and is based on dividing the library's materials budget by the Bellingham population. Since 2017, both the cost of library materials and the Bellingham population have increased. The Board approved a new dollar per capita based on these factors, and agreed to review every three years to reflect changes in cost and population as may be appropriate.

Library Budget

Facing deficit funding both now and in the 2025 budget, City Administration asked departments to submit budget requests that reflected this reality. With input from the Board, the Library submitted three options for the one-year 2025 budget.

As the budget process proceeded, the library ended up with a reduction in the library materials budget and the salaries/benefits for some vacated staff positions frozen. We will continue to work toward improving the library's services to the community, and to protect BPL staff numbers in the face of some very challenging budget times.

Additional Funding

- With the generous donation of \$5,000 in matching funds from The Friends, Library Giving Day netted just over \$22,000 in 2024. We have determined that the proceeds from Giving Day 2025 – April 1 – will be directed toward the Phase II renovation project of the Central Library. Please share widely the [web page for this year's Library Giving Day](#), including a donate button.
- The Library Board committed \$1 million of donated funds toward the Phase II renovation project. The primary sources for this funding were the accumulation of distributions from the Bragg-Muldrow endowment held by the Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF), and what had been an agency fund held at WCF prior to it being more properly transferred into the Library Gift Fund a couple of years ago. The rest of the total was made up of individual donations to the Library through WCF.
- After working with consultant Rachel Myers for the past couple of years, the Board has completed a framework making it more evident that the library is an option for those doing their estate planning. An agreement with WCF for managing the logistics of planned giving donations was signed by both the Library and WCF in early 2025. You can find more information about the program on [this new web page](#).

Central Library Phase II Renovation

- As the year ends, the total amount of funding for the project remains a question mark, thus putting in temporary limbo the breadth of the project. We're hoping that we will hear good news on a state grant, a state legislative earmark and a federal earmark in the next few months so we can move the project forward soon. Schematic Design has been primarily completed on the project, but Design Development is awaiting updates on the funding situation.
- The Board did set aside funds to hire Miller Hull to provide some ideas and costs for refreshing and upgrading the Central Library's exterior. This information can be used for future funding requests.

In closing, I want to thank you again for your steadfast support of the Bellingham Public Library. We appreciate the dedication and support of the Friends of the Library and look forward to continuing our positive relationship for years to come.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We are excited to report that our membership grew this year to 375! We welcomed 49 new members in 2024. Many of our new members indicated that they were also interested in volunteering and we are looking forward to meeting many of them at our upcoming book sales. Our volunteer corps remains strong with people taking on roles in our organization that help us to put on our sales.

You can join the Friends and not volunteer and we welcome the support that memberships give us, but our group is all-volunteer and we really appreciate all the work they do! The easiest way to renew your membership or join the Friends is [online at this link](#); paper membership forms are available in the Nearly New area and at the cashier table of every sale. If you want to volunteer, you can indicate that when you join. When you volunteer for the Friends, you not only contribute to your community, you get to know a wonderful group of folks that become your friends!

Of our 375 members, approximately 70-80 volunteer to work at each of our book sales, doing everything from sorting incoming donations to cleaning and pricing, to setting up for each big sale, then cashiering and restocking books at the sales.

Another 36 members are Hospitality volunteers. That means our Hospitality Coordinator, Trudie, can call them for help to provide snacks for every day of the book sales, as well as providing baked goods for various times like staff appreciation and our Friends annual meeting.

We have 3 volunteers who regularly pick up book donations from Village Books and another 4 who sometimes pick up personal donations when the donor can't make it to the library, or their donation is quite large.

There are another 42 members who volunteer to staff a table at various times throughout the year and provide information about the Friends to members of the public and encourage them to join us.

One of the satisfactions of volunteering with the Friends of Bellingham Public Library is how much we support the library. Everything we do is to that end and it's always needed. And, of course, it's a lot of fun!

In Memoriam:

Bruce McLeod, who served as a volunteer picking up donations from Village Books for many years.

Retirement:

Barbara Shepherd, who served as a backroom volunteer and board member.



VOLUNTEER REPORT

Thank you, Volunteers, for making everything possible!

The entire workforce of the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library is composed of volunteers. It all starts with volunteers picking up books from our great partner, Village Books, three times per week. Many members of the public also bring bags of books or offer whole collections to donate.

About 25 volunteers in the backroom process the books for sale (sorting, boxing, cleaning, computer look-up, etc.). In addition, folks handle magazines and free, Nearly New, and Display Case books. Books that do not meet our sale criteria are distributed by volunteers throughout the community via Little Libraries, the Food Bank, and other organizations. All of this takes about 300 volunteer hours per month!

Throughout the course of a year, around 200–250 volunteers help with the Book Sales (setting up, supervising, cashiering, roving, and taking down). It takes a lot of manpower! Together, they put in approximately 525 hours per sale.

In addition, volunteers help advertise the Friends by tabling at a number of public events, serving on the Friends board, and providing hospitality at events that support the library and its staff. All of this adds up to over 5,500 volunteer hours per year!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERS

Encouraging literacy is a part of the mission of the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library. For books that aren't a good fit for our fund-raising sales, we seek opportunities to get them into the hands of readers who might enjoy them. Our free books and magazines in the downstairs lobby of the Central branch are very popular. In addition, we work with library staff and community organizations to share books in other locations.

Our current projects include:

- Weekly drop-off of books to the Bellingham Food Bank for their clients.
- Regular donations to The Way Station Health and Hygiene Center serving the unhoused population.
- Monthly donations to Lake Whatcom Residential and Treatment Center for adults with mental illness.
- Regular donations of children's books to the Kiwanis Club, Cordata Community Garden and Park Free Little Libraries, the Interfaith Council, Unity Care clinic, and Brigid Collins House.
- Children's books have also gone to Title 1 schools for book fair give-away events.

We are thrilled to be able to support so many efforts in our community.



**Friends of the
Bellingham Public Library**