

Minutes for the Upper Skagit Library Foundation
2017 Annual Members Meeting
Concrete Theater
March 19, 2017, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Laurie Thomas, President of the Upper Skagit Library Foundation.

Laurie briefly explained the purpose of the Foundation as a nonprofit public charity dedicated to raising funds through donations, grants, fundraising events and book sales to support the Upper Skagit Library. Through outreach activities in the community, the Foundation also raises awareness about the services the library offers. She then invited those who were not already a member to join (\$5 per year), and those who were already members and needed to renew their membership to do so at the end of the meeting.

She thanked the Concrete Theater and the Upper Skagit Library for co-sponsoring the event. She also thanked Leatha Sullivan, Gail Boggs, Nancy Johnson, and Becky Schmidt for bringing cookies and encouraged the audience to come up and enjoy them at the end of the meeting.

Laurie outlined that the program would include a brief business meeting, a few highlights of library developments from Brooke Pederson, Library Director, and a couple of volunteer awards. Then, the guest speaker and poet, Judith Adams, would give her presentation, accompanied by Leia Vilardi on the viola.

Business Meeting

Laurie noted that the minutes for last year's annual members meeting were e-mailed to members in March 2016 and posted on the Foundation's website. She then entertained a motion from Rob Thomas to approve the meeting's minutes. Bill Pfeifer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Laurie thanked Carol Barnett for stepping in as Foundation Treasurer after our previous Treasurer, Kathy Pfeiffer, moved to Spokane.

In 2016, Laurie noted that the Foundation took in over \$27,000; \$6,300 of which was unrestricted income. Fifty-three percent of this unrestricted income was in the form of donations and dues. Our used book sales brought in 46%. We raised a record amount of money from this year's book sales, nearly \$3,000 in

total, thanks to the tremendous work of the co-chairs John Boggs, Gail Boggs, and Brad Sukolsky, and the many people who volunteered to help.

In addition, we raised over \$21,000 that is temporarily restricted for the new library facility or library programs. These funds include many donations, proceeds from the Frozen-in-Concrete event, and a \$10,000 grant from the Janson Family Foundation.

We spent about \$3,300 in 2016. Sixty-seven percent of our expenses went to support library programs, community events, and volunteer awards. Thirty-one percent paid for the help of a professional grant writer, and 2% was for operations.

In summary, the Foundation began 2016 with \$24,007 and ended the year with \$48,157 in the bank. Of this amount, \$34,496 has been earmarked by contributors for the new library facility and \$209 is for library programs. The remainder has no restrictions on its use.

A list of individuals, businesses and organizations that contributed more than \$25 to the Foundation in 2016—above and beyond their membership dues—was printed on the back of the program and handed to everyone at the meeting.

Membership

Laurie explained that although our fundraising results are excellent, we've done less well growing, or even maintaining, our membership. As of March 15, the membership roster comprised just 34 people who paid dues within the prior 12 months, and 85 people who have allowed their membership to lapse. She encouraged people in attendance to renew at the table in the front and encouraged others to renew or join.

Current Board of Directors

Laurie happily announced that there is no need to call for board nominations from the floor this year. The Board has a full complement of 12 willing and able Directors. A slide was shown listing the names of the USLF Board of Directors.

Introduction of Brooke Pederson, USL Director

Laurie thanked Brooke Pederson, Library Director, and her tremendous staff: Slav Kislyanka, Cora Thomas, Nancy Sparkowich, and Laura Moffitt, for their hard work, consistency, and creativity in running a vibrant, relevant, and responsive library in the midst of some pretty significant trials, small stuffy spaces, and limited resources. Then she invited Brooke to the podium.

Upper Skagit Library Report

Brooke thanked Laurie and the audience for giving her an opportunity to highlight a few of the notable happenings at the Library since the Foundation's last annual meeting.

She began by saying that Concrete's vote to annex into the library district has resulted in a quadrupling of the number of town residents with library cards. They now have the same library privileges as patrons who live in the district outside of town limits.

The number of town patrons increased well before the library saw any property tax revenue from Concrete. But the library levy went into effect this year, so our property tax revenue—the funds we use to pay staff, buy books, and operate the library—increased this year by 44%. This increase might surprise people given Concrete's small size, but we benefit from PSE's high-value property within town limits.

We have seen other big increases in how people use the library:

- Over 1400 patrons now have a library card.
- Last year, the gate count approached 30,000. That's 141 people on average entering the library each day we're open, up from 116 in 2013.
- Our circulation exceeded 38,000 items last year, up from 71% in 2013.
- We saw enormous increases in the popularity of our DVD collection (more than twice the number checked out in 2013).
- And digital books are really taking off—14 times more were downloaded than in 2013.
- Over 55 hundred hours were logged on library computers in 2016, up 33% from 2013.

Brooke then showed slides of the American Legion Hall. She said that given the large growth in library use, the library staff is really looking forward to moving into their new home later this year. She added that work is well underway to prepare the former American Legion Hall to become the library, and she promised to keep people informed of the progress on the renovations.

Brooke then explained the various programs the library offers. First, she said that the Cache in Concrete project has been very popular. They distributed 1,500 pamphlets last year, and over 1,000 of them were picked up and engaged with on some level. Cache in Concrete gave Concrete a Concrete-specific pamphlet that provided visitors and locals a fun activity to do around town while learning some of Concrete's rich history.

Due to high demand, Cora Thomas has increased her technology tutoring appointments to two days a week--Wednesdays and Fridays. Students can improve their computer or mobile device skills, and get help with resumes, cover letters, and job applications.

On March 25th, 2017 from 3:30-5:00 p.m., Brooke said the Library will be partnering with the Concrete School District and their Young Authors Program by hosting a Young Authors reading event at the library. The public is invited to celebrate the hard work and creativity of our local Young Authors and the books they have created during this special youth literacy program. During the event, the library will accept the student's books into the collection. Brooke thanked TEI Landmark Audio and Marianne Glick and Mike Woods Charitable Fund for sponsoring the event, as well as Baker River Woodworks and 5b's for their support. She hoped many people would attend the event.

Brooke expressed her gratitude for an outstanding staff and a very supportive Board of Trustees (showing a slide with pictures of everyone), and noted that they were all in attendance. She noted that Gail Boggs was appointed to the board this year, replacing Ingeborg Hightower, whom she thanked for serving on the board since 2011.

Upper Skagit Library Volunteer Awards

Brooke specially recognized Keith Alesse, who has served as a volunteer on the library's board of trustees for 10 years. She said he has devoted enormous time, thought, and energy to the library. As a very deserving recipient of a volunteer award from the Foundation this year, she presented him with a T-shirt that says "Books: Chocolate for the Brain"—apropos for someone who co-runs a candy factory and store in Birch Bay.

Laurie Thomas announced that the second volunteer award was for Jack McCormick, a longtime resident of Concrete who was one of the library's founding trustees. He played important roles getting the library started and opened in 2005. He served on the library's board from 2002-2009 (7 years), which makes him the next most long-serving trustee behind Keith Alesse. Jack's wife, Carol, accepted his gift of appreciation--a coffee mug with the words, "When in Doubt, Go to the Library."

Guest Speaker and Poet, Judith Adams

Laurie introduced the guest speaker, Judith Adams, an English-born poet who has lived in the U.S. since 1976. She has published four books of poetry and recorded several CDs of her work. Her poems have been published in magazines and anthologies and choreographed for dance. Judith has taken poetry to patients

at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance and held readings at the Frye Art Museum, and Third Place Books in Seattle. Judith conducts poetry workshops for youth and adults. She worked as a teacher for children with disabilities in Waldorf schools. Most recently, she has been leading Grief Writing programs at Healing Circles in Langley, Washington.

Judith has been selected for the Washington State Speakers Bureau for 2017-2018. This roster of speakers is billed as “Fascinating Talks by Fascinating People.” Humanities Washington is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to sparking conversation and critical thinking. They use story as a catalyst to nurture thoughtful, engaged communities across our state. In addition to the Speakers Bureau, Humanities Washington provides a rich array of cultural programs, exhibits and experiences to hundreds of thousands of people throughout Washington each year. By visiting their website at www.humanities.org, you can learn about their other programs and ways you can support the humanities.

Laurie turned over the program to Judith Adams and Leia Vilardi, a local violist, who provided music to accompany Judith’s presentation.

Judith began by saying she fell in love with poetry at a very early age. Although she had difficulty reading at first, her mother solved that problem by introducing her to verses—something she loved. The song “Ring around the Roses” that talks about falling down and then getting back up again is, after all, just a metaphor for life. She then recited the old nursery rhyme, “Who Killed Cock Robin” and remarked that children love the cadence and rhyming of this poem, plus it exposes them to the reality of death. As we grow older, adults are often put off by poetry because it is presented line by line looking for symbolism. Instead we should just let it sink in.

Judith spoke of many poets that had inspired her and recited some of their poems which were her favorites. She said there was great value in reciting poetry by heart. She spoke of the ability of poetry to convey love, terror, pity, pain, wonder—all the emotions. Poetry represents a “pre-verbal beingness” and brings us the essence of life. Poems invite us to look around, listen, and feel the air.

After reciting “Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal,” she said a tough life needs a tough language. We don’t need a hiding place but a finding place. She shared a story about working with a Russian girl who had immigrated to the U.S. and seemed quite depressed. Judith decided to arrange for her to hear a recording of Russian folk songs. This reconnection to her cultural past through musical poetry uplifted her heart. She also mentioned that when Nelson Mandela was in prison in South Africa, the night before an execution, all the prisoners sang, all night long in solidarity of spirit.

Finally, she spoke of the importance of acknowledging our mortality. David White, the NW poet, said “If you don’t live your own life, somebody else’s will flash before your eyes when you die.” She shared a poem she wrote after her husband died, and said that poetry is not afraid of embracing every aspect of humanity.

She assured the audience that “everyone is a poet—in the kitchen, the garden, or at your desk.” We all share a larger life.

Closing

Laurie thanked both Judith and Leia for coming and allowed time for questions or comments prompted by her presentation. Judith’s books and CDs were available up front for sale.

Then Laurie encouraged everyone to come down front and fill out the short questionnaire for the Speakers Bureau program. She thanked everyone for coming, Val and Fred for hosting the group in the theater, Barb Trask for her help in organizing the event and the cookie bakers. She welcomed new members and encouraged people to come down front to chat with Judith and others.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Attendees Mar 19 2017 USLF Annual Members Meeting

Judith Adams

Keith Alesse

Dottie Anthony

*Carol Barnett

Erma Baude

Em Beals

Gail Boggs

John Boggs

Merlene Buller

*Sacha Buller

Cheri Cook-Blodgett

*Sharon Dillon

Eve Goode

Sally Goodwin

Ingeborg Hightower

*Nancy Johnson

Saara Kuure

Salem Levesque

Carol McCormick

Tara McGown

Jason Miller

Brooke Pedersen

Bruce Pedersen

Donna Rae Pedersen

Joanne Peterson

Bill Pfeifer

Sally Pfeifer

*Becky Schmidt

Karen Smith

Nancy Sparkowich

*Val Stafford

Cora Thomas

*Laurie Thomas

Kathy Thomas

*Rob Thomas

*Barb Trask

Ger van den Engh

Leia Vilardi

(38, including 9 USLF board members * marked with asterisk)