

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the
Upper Skagit Library Foundation and its Board of Directors
March 6, 2016, 1:00-3:00 p.m., at the Concrete Theatre**

Barb Trask, President of the Upper Skagit Library Foundation, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Annexation of Concrete into the Upper Skagit Library District

Barb announced that in November, the ballot measure passed to annex Concrete into the Upper Skagit Library District. Although as a non-profit organization, the Foundation stayed on the sidelines of this political campaign, many of its members worked very hard: going door-to-door; recruiting 33 people to sign letters in support; and, and staffing bake sales to fund the annexation effort. Barb thanked a long list of people, including Jason Miller, Mayor of Concrete, the Town Council and Brooke Pederson, the Library Director for their efforts on behalf of the annexation. One of the first things Brooke did, as new library director, was to go to the Concrete Town council to explain the issue and start the ball rolling. At this time, Concrete School District is the only school district in the county in which every resident can obtain a library card without having to pay a card fee.

Library Project Update by Barb Trask

Next, Barb outlined the excellent progress made in 2015 on various fronts involved in the future library building project. Members of the Joint Task Force (JTF) did a great deal of reading and research to learn how to go about building a public library. Under Greta Movassaghi's leadership, the JTF selected, and the library hired, two people with enormous experience in public construction projects: Roger Howard as project manager, and Brad Furlong, as project attorney to help with contracts and land use issues. Roger, who was introduced to the members at the meeting, worked as a project manager for the County for many years before becoming an independent consultant. Presently, he is working on the county jail and serves on the Burlington-Edison school board.

Under Roger's guidance, numerous experts have been hired to analyze the building site. It has been determined that the donated building site is safe and suitable for a new library. No wetlands will be disturbed, past uses make it very unlikely that we'll find hazardous materials on the site, the soil tests indicate that it's a stable building site, and the title report shows no easement that would unduly interfere with our use of the land. In addition, we have a detailed topographic survey of the site.

At this point, Barb explained that we have moved into the design phase of the project. The JTF vetted and finalized the building program, a 50-page document prepared by Brooke and her staff detailing the requirements and desired adjacencies of the functional areas of a building to meet the community's needs. The JTF has toured various area libraries to refine design goals. It interviewed several architect firms, and the library has hired the JTF's top choice, HKP Architects, to design the new building. The JTF has already had several productive meetings with the HKP team. Julie Blazek and Russ Weiser of HKP Architects were introduced, and Julie spoke to the members about her personal and professional interest in community projects. She said that HKP is committed to working on projects in three main

areas: Education and Literacy, Affordable Housing and Cultural Institutions. She explained that she grew up in a small town and emphasized what a critical role her town’s Carnegie library played in her own life. Russ Weiser spoke briefly about how he first came to work here on the North Cascades Environmental Learning Center, and reiterated the firm’s commitment to projects that enrich communities like ours.

Library Project Update by Brooke Pederson, Library Director

Brooke gave an update on library achievements in 2015 and plans for 2016. Due to the recent annexation of Concrete into the library district, Concrete School District is now the ONLY school district in the county in which EVERY child is eligible to receive a free library card. She noted that the Join the Library Campaign Committee did an amazing job of encouraging and enabling civic/community engagement. Since November 24, 2016, 97 new cards have been issued to Concrete residents. Out of that 97, 58 cards are brand new, 32 are children’s cards and 65 are adult cards. This means there will be some changes in store for library users: more open hours, additional outreach services, and more programs.

Brooke mentioned the positive partnerships with cooperative programs (both in-house and outreach) thanks to Cora Thomas’ help—like the Skagit Eagle Festival, Concrete Youth Activity Day, Concrete Summer Learning Adventure, EDASC, Concrete Elementary Parent Teacher Organization, the 5b’s Bakery, Marblemount Community Hall, the Upper Skagit Library Foundation, and Cache in Concrete.

Library usage is at an all-time high, saying the numbers speak for themselves. She showed a slide listing the following statistics:

Average Day in the Library	2014	2015
Days Open	204	202
Gate Count	108	133
Computer Users	31	34
Computer Hours	25	26
Books Checked Out	71	79
DVDs Checked Out	64	70
Items Checked Out	143	156

Brooke shared a few stories about how the library serves the community, beyond being a provider of books. During a recent storm a young woman came into the library asking if she could use the library’s Wi-Fi for an online job interview. Brooke offered her a laptop to use instead of her phone and she was very grateful. Another patron who teaches an online class and homeschools her children was thrilled to find out that a Wi-Fi hotspot was going to be installed in Marblemount soon.

As far as what’s in store for 2016, Brooke mentioned the recent library survey, planning for logistics to serve increased patrons, and most notably, planning for the new library and fundraising activities. She reminded everyone of the current library card design contest, and encouraged people to come by and vote for their favorite designs. In closing, she thanked everyone for their support, and enthusiastically explained that the details of the Summer Reading Program would be coming soon.

Fundraising – The Next Phase

Barb Trask explained that volunteers had decided to hold off on the fundraising campaign while the annexation campaign was underway and to await sketches from HKP to show potential donors what a new building might look like. However, Barb said she would like to move forward in fundraising efforts now, hoping to raise at least one million dollars on top of the six hundred thousand dollars that the Library has already earmarked for the new building and the donated land. She emphasized that the more we raise, the better and bigger the library can be. And the sooner we raise enough funds, the sooner we can move into the construction phase.

On that note, Barb reported that she has begun to submit grants, the first to the Janson Foundation, and ten to fifteen more foundation grants are in the queue. She thanked Carol McCormick and Becky Schmidt for their help in researching grants. In addition, Brooke and Barb have explored possibilities for a USDA rural development loan and state funding.

Since the majority of funds will ultimately come from individuals and companies, Barb asked everyone to encourage their friends and acquaintances near and far to support the project. Val and Brooke will be designing brochures in the coming months to help communicate the need and the vision for the new library. Barb also encouraged members to give or pledge as much as they possibly can this year and next.

Em Beals made a surprise appearance with Olaf to report how successful the “Frozen in Concrete” event was the day before. The event raised money for the new library, awareness about the project went far beyond Eastern Skagit County, and it was a wonderful event for children in our community. Barb thanked the organizers, sponsors, raffle prize donors, volunteers, and guest speaker, Barbara Jean Hicks, as well as the 120 plus attendees.

Honoring Volunteers

Barb and Brooke recognized several exceptional volunteers for their efforts on behalf of the library in 2015.

John and Gail Boggs were not able to be present, but were recognized in absentia for their extraordinary get-out-the-vote efforts in the annexation campaign. Gail baked up a storm and staffed countless hours of bake sales. Among his many contributions, John wrote and paid for a full-page commentary in the Concrete Herald, came up with the wonderful ad that featured his photos of 100 library supporters, and went door to door to encourage people to vote and to vote “yes.” It’s estimated that John made direct contact with 51 of the 88 people who voted yes on the measure.

Greta Movassaghi was also recognized for the extraordinary amount of volunteer time and energy she devoted to the building task force. She provided outstanding expertise and leadership to the project. Barb noted that Greta has an amazing ability to take a complex project, with many moving parts, options and stakeholders, and forge an effective, efficient path forward—and is fun to work with, too.

Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes

Barb explained that the minutes for the Annual USLF Members Meeting, dated February 18, 2015 were e-mailed to all USLF members in March 2015. The minutes are also

on the website. Bill Pfeiffer moved that we approve the minutes. Sharon Dillon seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the members unanimously approved the minutes of the February 18, 2015 annual meeting.

Financial Report

Barb Trask thanked Kathy Pfeiffer, Treasurer, for her expert help with the financial records of the Foundation. In 2015, USLF took in \$19,792.96, 86% of it in donations or dues, 14% through book sales, and less than 1% “other.” We spent \$3,514.07, 76% to benefit the library or community (library programs, events, “wish list items,” scholarships, and volunteer awards) and 24% on fundraising and operations. About \$1,500 is recorded on both sides of the ledger of in-kind support, e.g., contributions from 5b’s Bakery and Concrete Theatre, as well as Nicola Pearson’s donation of her books that we sold to raise funds for the new building. Barb reminded members that revenue and expenses were both less than originally budgeted because of the decision to defer major fundraising efforts until after the annexation campaign.

In summary, USLF began 2015 with \$7,728.43 and ended the year with \$24,007.32 in the bank. Of this amount, \$13,342 has been earmarked by the donors for the new building fund and \$232.77 for library programs. In addition, \$10,432.55, plus a \$10,000 pledge, has no restrictions on its use. Barb said we are in an excellent financial position to mount a strong fundraising campaign. This includes the ability to get professional help preparing compelling brochures and/or a grant writer, as needed, to complement what volunteers and library staff are able to do, while continuing to provide support for library programs and community-building events as we have in the past.

Book Sales

Barb thanked Nancy and Steve Johnson for their many years of coordinating our used book sales to benefit the library. She announced the new co-chairs of the book-sale committee: Brad Sukolsky, Brandy Henry, John Boggs, and Gail Boggs. Brad Sukolsky stood up to be introduced to the members. Barb noted that Brad has helped Nancy Johnson for the past year with online book sales to benefit USLF.

USLF Board of Directors

Barb stated that no board nominations were entertained from the floor this year because all twelve current members of USLF’s board of directors have two more years to go in their elected terms.

Kathy Pfeiffer moved that the Board approve the 2015 Financial Report and the Working Budget for 2016, both of which had been sent to board members for their review before the meeting. Sharon Dillon seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the Board unanimously approved the 2015 Financial Report and the Working Budget for 2016.

Sacha Buller moved, Kevik Rensink seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved re-electing the following officers for one-year terms: Barb Trask, President; Val Stafford, Vice President; Becky Schmidt, Secretary; and, Rob Thomas, At-large member of Executive Committee. All five had previously agreed to stay on in their current positions.

Kathy Pfeiffer moved and Sacha Buller seconded the motion to retain the membership dues at \$5 per year. After some discussion from the members of the advantages and

disadvantages of increasing membership dues, the board unanimously approved a motion to retain the membership dues at \$5 per year.

The Board agreed to defer decision on an independent financial review until provided more information on options, requirements of granting organizations, and costs.

Guest Speaker, Barbara Jean Hicks

Cora Thomas introduced guest speaker, Barbara Jean Hicks, who lives in Ferndale, Washington. Relevant to her appearance at the “Frozen in Concrete” event, Barbara Jean talked about how she was approached by Disney to write two companion books for the movie “Frozen.” She has authored 20 books altogether and appears at children’s events as “Barbara Jean, the Story Queen.” She gave a heartwarming talk about her childhood and the factors that contributed to her love of words and her career as a writer.

She spoke eloquently about what we all can do to encourage writers and literacy in general:

Honor books and learning.

Have fun with words.

Encourage children to read.

Engage with life and all the wondrous experiences the world has to offer.

Listen to the stories others have to tell.

Several members asked Barbara Jean questions and she gave answers about her books and the art of writing.

Barb thanked Barbara Jean for spending two days in Concrete to benefit our library and community. She noted that Barbara Jean’s books would be on sale at the end of the meeting, and that Barbara Jean intended to donate a portion of the sales back to the Foundation. Barbara Jean was given a couple of thank-you gifts, including a beautiful snowflake made by Brooke to illustrate a Grimm fairy tale.

Closing

In closing Barb thanked Val and Fred for hosting the meeting at the Concrete Theatre; Greta Movassaghi, Kathy Pfeiffer, and Carol McCormick for helping members check in and pay dues; Bill Pfeiffer for help setting up; and Becky Schmidt, Nancy Johnson, Linda Carpine, Joanne Peterson, Laurie Thomas, Karen Krause, and Betty Seguin for bringing cookies.

Bill Pfeiffer moved, Laurie Thomas seconded, and the members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:20 p.m. Everyone was invited to enjoy refreshments, purchase Barbara Jean Hicks’ books, and chat with guests and each other.

USLF Annual Member Meeting Attendees

Keith Alesse, USLD Trustee
Dorothy Anthony
Carol Barnett
Em Beals, USLD Trustee
Sacha Buller, USLF Board member
Sharon Dillon, USLF Board member
Nancy Johnson, USLF Board member
Kathy Manzoor
Carol McCormick, USLD Trustee
Greta Movassaghi
Brooke Pederson, Ex-officio USLF Board member
Bill Pfeifer, USLD Trustee
Sally Pfeifer
Kathy Pfeiffer, USLF Board member
Jan Raschko
Kevik Rensink, USLF Board member
Becky Schmidt, USLF Board member
Betty Seguin
Val Stafford, USLF Board member
Brad Sukolsky
Eve Syapin
Laurie Thomas
Rob Thomas, USLF Board member
Barb Trask, USLF Board member
Ger van den Engh
Rowena Watson
Robin Wood

Guests

Barbara Jean Hicks, Author
Mariko Sakaguchi, assisting Barbara Hicks with book sales
Julie Blazek, HKP Architects
Russ Weiser, HKP Architects
Roger Howard, Howard Consulting