

**LIBRARY BOARD MEETING NOTES  
JANUARY 26, 2023**

Meeting, which was held at Sophie May Library, opened at 3:35 PM

Present: MaryAnn Anderson, Marnie Bottesch, Becky Ketchum, Gloria Nicholson

Minutes of last meeting (12/15/22) approved with one correction. The purchases to be made for outdoor events/advertising will be funded through miscellaneous donations fund, not the Eastman Fund.

Unfortunately, the meeting fell on a stormy day and the library was closed so the librarian did not attend. Thus, the main agenda item "2023 Planning & Policy" will be re-visited at the next meeting. The Board was able to fill in the 2023 Calendar events that they have committed to overseeing at this point in time and came up with a number of **suggestions/ideas** about other events /programs the library/librarian might want to consider and/or might already be in the works. (Calendar Appended to this doc)

**Planning ahead:** MaryAnn has committed to overseeing Feb/Apr/May, and a fall adult program. Ideas for adult programs and their implementation in other months TBD next meeting. The Storytime/children's programs are locked-in through June. Summer scheduling/programs are to be determined at the next meeting. One event that we know the librarian will schedule is the annual visit by the Fire Department the first weekend in August.

**New Business:** The Chair shared feedback received from the Town Manager regarding book purchases. (Attached transcript of this document). After everyone had reviewed the document, a very productive round-table discussion followed. Some of the key points made:

- Circulation/marketing of some of the new books has been an ongoing, often-vocalized concern of the Board for several years. One or more trustees check the new/recent books every single time they go into the library.
- Some inroads have been made over time in addressing this issue, from simple things like separating new books by fiction versus non-fiction; shelving by genre and where possible, within genre to promoting the books on Facebook/in newsletter and displaying jackets on the bulletin board (not sure this has been kept up?), having a take-away list of books at the desk/other locations.

**Bottomline, however: You cannot judge a book by its cover (formula writers aside).**

- Two key trustee suggestions: the Board has urged having book reviews from the librarian/Friends of Library/trustee picks displayed along with the books. At some point, forms were made for this purpose, but have seldom been used. A quick implementation suggestion: The book picks each month include brief synopsis or reasons for selection and/or portions of published reviews such as *Goodreads*.

Maybe the librarian could put these comments on a card? Additionally, maybe a form could be made for patrons to check off their rating of the book. (The form and potentially an incentive to be reviewed at next meeting, *if* the librarian is interested.)

The second key fix that the Board *suggests* is to be more proactive in terms of communicating and engaging interest in the new books; approach patrons with recommendations and guidance without being asked. We've observed many patrons just walking by the display or barely looking at it, heading straight to the bookshelves that house their tried-and-true authors. What genre do they like? Who is their favorite author? Show them what's new in the catalog that might be a good fit for them?

- Selection Process itself. First, in an effort to meet the goal of bringing new patrons into the library, in selecting our picks, an effort has been made to include not only the basic formula writers/cozy books, but also some titles that appeal to a different audience. We've polled people who go to Skowhegan and Waterville because the selection is better. We wanted to get some of that business and also get the people who already use the library to expand their literary journey. We recognize that we will always have a percentage of the base that are not interested in change and with this the largest share of our suggestions each month are directed accordingly. Patron suggestions should always be marked as such on the list and then selected based on the potential breadth of their appeal (we need to keep in mind both inter-library loan and the advice given to trustees some time ago: the library should not be used as a Barnes & Noble store).

\* We don't think this is a major issue in circulation shortcomings, but worth looking into --we wonder if the catalog is up to date. Several times in the past few months, various trustees have mentioned they could not find a book in the catalog even though they know we ordered it.

- In general: Better promotion of the catalog as a tool has always been one of our recommendations.
- Final comments: it will always be hard to get a reading on checkout of children's books as many of these books are read during visits to the library; put back on the shelf, not checked out. Director could keep track of this with an in-house sticker or code.

The roundtable discussion around the book purchases memo was very helpful for all of us; we hope it is helpful to librarian, as well. We can discuss various points further at the next meeting.

Old Business: **LP books**. Consideration given to offering up to two per month (?), but trustees recommend having a selection plan to ensure wide appeal. Further ideas on this to be reviewed in the next meeting.

**Email:** Trustees would like to know more about this tool. How many names are currently on this list? Do all of them receive notices of events/book club/the newsletter, or is it a selective process? Are all of the trustees on this list? (One trustee mentioned that she has never received a book club notice). For communications between librarian/trustee(s), we believe it is a good practice to show all names that the email is being sent to so we know when/if everyone is in the loop. For mailings to the general public, **only** individual recipient names should be shown—trustee concern that some patrons may not want their address to be public.

**Barbara Winslow:** Trustees are concerned that the two videos that Barbara did for us last year still have not been utilized. At one point this was traced to a technical problem. I believe that problem was fixed. The original idea behind the videotaping was to have a few videos that children, solo or on play dates, could come into the library and enjoy. Hopefully this can be operational and promoted soon.

**January Book Picks** The selections were limited to 8 this month; new releases post-holiday season were not that appealing. Thus, decided to go with only 8 picks. List attached. (Update: post-meeting librarian added four books to bring total to 12, including two large print)

Next meeting: Feb 23/ 3:30 Mercer Road.

Next meeting: February 23, 3:30 PM, Mercer Road.

Meeting adjourned: 4:45 PM

Submitted by Becky Ketchum, 02/10/2023

### **JANUARY BOOK PICKS**

#### **The House in the Pines**

By Ana Reyes

#### **Storm Watch**

By C.J. Box (LP)

#### **The Last Kingdom**

By Steve Berry

#### **Just the Nicest Couple**

By Mary Kubica

#### **Where the Forest Meets the Stars**

By Glendy Vanderah

#### **Shutter**

By Ramona Emerson

#### **The Tree Line: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth**

By Ben Rawlence

#### **Comfort is an Old Bar**

By Amy Calder

#### **Spare**

By Prince Harry

#### **The Book of Maps**

By Ernest Thompson

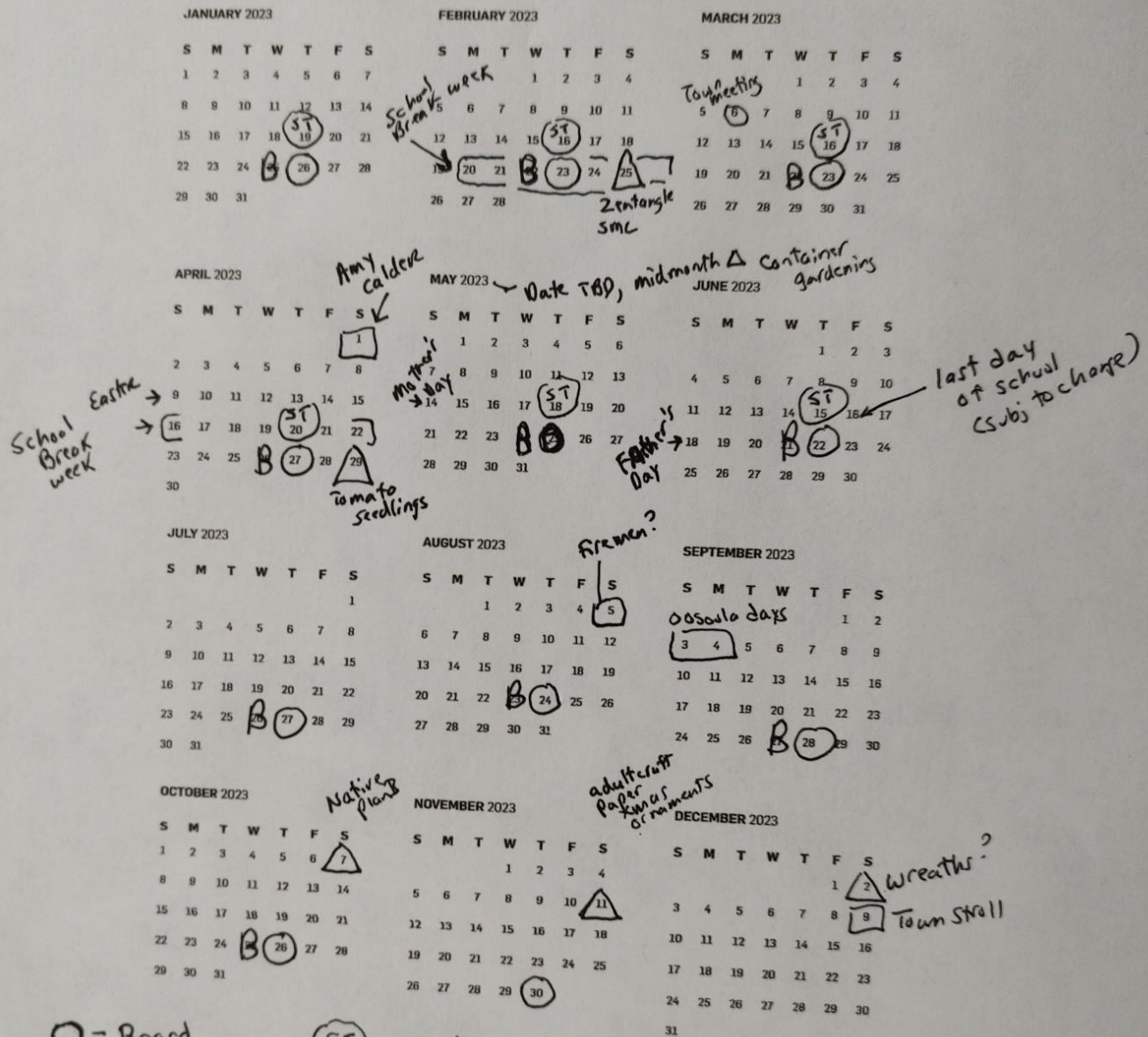
#### **More Than Meets the Eye**

By Irish Johansen & Roy Johansen (LP)

#### **The Other Mrs**

By Mary Kubica (LP)

# 2023 Library Trustee Calendar



○ = Board MEETS  
 (Dec TBD Budget meeting)  
 B = Book CLUB 2pm  
 4th Wednesday  
 day before Board meets

ST = Storytime 10:30  
 △ = Adult craft 10:30

□ = Meet & Greet

\* 15th of every month  
 Book Picks Due

Transcribed e mail Message  
Richard LaBelle to Becky Ketchum  
January 25, 2023

I had asked Robin to review number of times borrowed for each. My thinking was that it was important for the trustees to see what books were coming and going. I was a bit surprised to see the list of books selected this month and thought to myself, "it seems like this isn't what most of our patrons would be looking for". Maybe I'm completely out of touch, but if 50% of the books on the January list actually circulate, I'd be surprised.

I didn't put aside the December ones, which I probably should have, but the rest of the choices indicate that book orders are missing the mark. I'm wondering if a survey about authors, genres, etc. should be considered, as opposed to one focused on programs and other offerings.

RL

