

BCLA Conference

Penticton

April 23, 2010

1.15 pm – 2.30 pm

**Friends.... in the Business of Fun**

**FRIENDS OF CANADIAN LIBRARIES**

**ROLE OF THE FRIENDS**

Jocelyn MacNiel, Friends of Canadian Libraries

This session includes ideas that can be adapted for both large and small libraries to help enhance staff morale and rally the library volunteers, either on staff committees, as trustees or as Friends of the Library. It will describe fun events, fun...draisers, and ways for the library to connect with the community. A outline of Friends of Canadian Library - the national organization will start the talk.

Friends of Canadian Libraries

Role of The Friends

Nourishing Volunteers

Connections

Volunteers

Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteer Recognition

Morale Boosters

Feel Good Events

Fun...Draising

Evaluation

Grants

Connecting With the Community

Friends' Donation And Library's Wish List

Summation

**FRIENDS OF CANADIAN LIBRARIES** [www.friendsoflibraries.ca](http://www.friendsoflibraries.ca)

The Mission of FOCAL is to provide national support and resource network to assist in the formation and promotion of Friends of Libraries groups throughout the library community in Canada. Friends of Libraries are volunteers acting collectively and independently to preserve, promote and strengthen library services in harmony with library management and policies.

Acting at arm's length, Friends are a powerful source in lobbying for libraries.

Approximately 88 Friend groups as well as individuals belong to FOCAL, from BC to the Maritimes, Northwest Territories, CLA and the Australian, British and American national organizations.

There is a Members Only “Question & Answer” section covering many topics relevant to Friends, among them Board Liability Insurance at a reduced group rate from Volunteer Canada, applying for Charitable Status in order to issue tax receipts, books sales and fund raising

## **MEMBERSHIP ADVANTAGES**

### **Leadership**

FOCAL provides leadership and guidance for the formation of library Friends groups nationally with the provision of resource materials and active support.

### **Communication**

Quarterly newsletter, national teleconferences, and advance notices of workshops unite member groups with relevant information and a national collective sense of belonging to the Friends’ concept.

### **Starting a Friends Group**

Have a purpose to enthuse the library community: a one time capital campaign for a new building or addition, creation of new programs, writers-in-residence.

## **ROLE OF THE FRIENDS**

- Advocate
- Increase public awareness of the library and its services
- Raise fund, over and above the library’s operating budget
- Sponsor programming
- Provide support for library programs and special events
- Establish a good voluntary base

### **Advocacy**

Friends can be effective advocates by offering support when the library requires people in your community to highlight specific issues in a coordinated way.

The advent of the internet allows almost instant communication, no matter how geographically isolated some smaller, outlying communities may be, your Friends volunteers can garner a great deal of support quickly and effectively.

An excellent example of a Advocacy Campaign is that of Friends of the Ottawa Public Library. In 2007, after the amalgamation of municipalities in the Ottawa area and in response to the City of Ottawa budget debates in which proposed cuts would have meant the closure of ten libraries and reduction of services, Friends of the Ottawa Public Library ran an amazing campaign called SOS: Save our Services. Thousands of postcards were sent, hundreds of emails, thousands of names on petitions, letters to editors, phone calls to councillors, public debate and pleas to city hall with the result that no branches were closed or hours of service reduced, nor a reduction in the books or materials budget.

### **NOURISHING VOLUNTEERS**

Start-up support: funding for brochures and posters

Provide meeting space

Operational support for fund raisers such as book sales

Recognizing Friends: library should publicly recognize Friends

### **CONNECTIONS**

No situation is fun if the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. So get everyone on the same page.

Has your Library Director recently been introduced to your Friends group?

Has your Library Director recently attended an executive meeting to outline what the Friends could do for the library in the coming year?

Do you have a library staff liaison attending Friends' executive meetings?

Does the Friends president attend Trustee Meetings?

If your library has both a Friends group and a Foundation, do they communicate?

### **VOLUNTEERS**

“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world...indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

Who are they?

Volunteers come from all walks of life. They want to make a difference in the community by giving of their free time and expertise.

They can be new Canadians gaining language skills and looking for the opportunity to integrate into a new community, youth wanting to act on their social awareness, or older adults using their

valuable skills to give back to the community, people from the business community wanting to serve on the library board or library foundation.

What do they do?

They can be involved in one-time events, on-going commitments, out in the community or virtual volunteers in the comfort of their home, hands-on or serve on a board.

## **RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS**

Tips to attract volunteers:

Don't beg!

Don't diminish the job and don't apologize for asking.

Ask one-to-one, face-to-face

It's the best method. If possible, ask face-to-face. 80% of people volunteer because someone they know asked them. 85% of people who don't volunteer say it is because no one asked them.

Try the following approaches:

"I have an opportunity for you...."

"I've heard so much about your skills..."

"Join us. We can really use your talents..."

Know the job to be done.

Have a one page job description prepared. Outline the purpose of the job, its responsibilities and how to get help. Don't overwhelm.

Explain why you asked them.

The trend today is on focussed recruitment. Match the right person with the right job. Don't be satisfied with "any warm body"

Be Honest

Remember to use the "no surprises" method of volunteer management. Even if the individual says no, you've told the story of your organization. This will establish the groundwork for future involvement, or for a referral to others. Think of recruitment as "friend raising". Then, even a NO becomes a success story.

An interesting statistic is that an unhappy volunteer tells 9 people, a happy one tells 3.

## **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Although most people are not seeking recognition, it never hurts to let people know they are appreciated. For Friends groups, it is important to spend some of the money raised throughout the year to honour the volunteers.

### Friends of Libraries

As well as volunteer recognition at an AGM, an annual reception is a nice way for Friends to visit socially while being recognized. It might be a morning coffee party, afternoon tea, or a wine and cheese evening. Invite a speaker - library director, library staff, author, mayor, editor of the newspaper book section or other public dignitaries.

Besides a Christmas Coffee Party, Friends of the VPL recognizes its volunteers at the AGM

### 2 Years Bookmark

3 - 4 Years Bookplate recognizing the volunteer is placed by Cataloging in a new book purchased by Acquisitions.

### 5/10/15 Years Pins

### Honorary Life Membership Certificate

The pins are designed and made by a Vancouver silver jeweller. There may be artists in your community who might design a recognition pin, card or bookmark.

Certificates can be bought at a stationary store and personalized or created on the computer with graphics of the library or organization.

### Library Staff Year of Service Recognition

1. The Vancouver Public Library has a committee of staff members who organize an annual staff recognition for years of service. ecards are sent out to announce the annual recognition event and it is hosted by a master of ceremonies. The cost of the awards is shared by union and management.

5 Years - 20 Years Pen, Mug, Knapsack, Umbrella with VPL logo

25 Years Book Ends

30 Years Picture Frame

35 Years Lunch with CEO and Union President

40 Years Gift Certificate

### Library Staff Recognition of Achievement and Excellence

If funds are available, the VPL Recognition Committee is wanting to pilot a program to acknowledge staff achievement and commitment to the values of the library. As a way to develop peer-to-peer recognition, a website would be designed so that a unit or branch would nominate on a monthly basis a staff person who perhaps found a creative solution to a problem or implemented a special project. The names to be put into a draw and prizes awarded to the winners.

### Community Involvement

VPL staff partner with the United Way Campaign. Management donates a number of days off with pay and all the staff making a donation to United Way are included in the draw. The library becomes involved with community events whenever possible.

Partnerships with other organizations can be beneficial by bringing awareness of the Friends or the library to the community and creating new energy and ideas. Partnerships can be made with cultural organizations, publishers, booksellers, corporations, writers groups, media, other funding organizations, Rotary or Chambers of Commerce.

### **MORALE BOOSTERS**

Days can be long and busy for all, but a little fun can help to boost morale.

The following can be held within a library unit, a branch or a system.

Create a fund for monthly staff birthday parties

Run pools for the Oscars, hockey, American Idol, BC Book Prizes

A Brownie bake-off

Christmas cookie or secret gift exchanges

In smaller libraries, it might be possible for Friends to host a special luncheon for library staff.

Meet and Mingle: invite a new staff member to a pot luck gathering or out for lunch, welcoming them to his or her new work place.

A reception will give new Friends a chance to meet the Friends' Board and sign up to help out with committee and projects.

### **FEEL GOOD EVENTS**

#### 1. Tours

As a group it is possible to arrange special tours of art galleries, museums, wineries or places of historical interest or for a special showing of a movie. Years ago, for its members, Friends of the VPL rented a small art house movie theatre for a special showing of Charlie Chaplin's 1936

movie classic Modern Times. However, now with large screens and the availability of DVDs, classics or made from a book, a movie nights can be held in any suitable location.

## 2. Canada Reads

This book club really is national – from coast to coast to coast.

CBC Canada Reads takes place in March. Perhaps a Book Club could be formed by either Friends or the library, with the five books read before March so the discussions being held on the radio would be of greater interest.

## 3. Christmas Reading

A December event might be a Christmas Reading at a venue with a warm atmosphere and hot apple cider served in a restaurant, coffee shop, or cozy corner of the library.

## 4. Game Nights

MorganHill Library in California hosts Family Game Nights once a month to have fun playing games of skill and logic. Spelling games include Scrabble, Boggle and Bananagrams along with other games suitable for children age 8 to adult.

## **FUN...DRAISING**

### 1. Raffles

February might be the time to raffle a “Love and Romance” themed basket filled with items such a romance novel, a gift certificate to a hotel or bed and breakfast, romantic CDs, all items donated. Silent Auctions can be held for the same items, either at an event or over a period of time, with less work than a raffle.

Don't forget to apply for a raffle license. A class D license requires \$5,000 or less in gross revenue, the maximum permitted ticket price is \$2 each and maximum prize value is \$500.

The fee is \$10. The application is made on-line and processing takes up to 3 days.

### 2. Film Festival

The Ajax Friends have connected with the Toronto International Film Festival. A bank sponsored the evening which showed Cider House Rules, the manager bringing along his staff and threw in popcorn. The evening proceeds were around \$800.

### 3. A Night in the Library - The Library Comes Alive

This could be geared to any age but the one described here is for younger school-age children. Have stations with different performers such as Star Wars characters, a puppeteer, a magician, or a bug expert. The children rotate to the stations. A snack or pizza might be served. There could be a charge making it a fund raiser or it might be a way of attracting children not yet introduced to the library. [mhl.org](http://mhl.org)

For adults it could be a Mystery Night in the Library, a Photo Scavenger Hunt where guests hunt down the clues, snap a photo on digital camera or cell phone, and race to the finish.

#### 4. Quiz Night

I think a Quiz Night would be a good fundraiser, and also a good theme for a staff social.

#### Friends of the Coquitlam Library 7th Annual Quiz Night

The evening starts 7.30 pm with two question periods being an hour each, with a half hour refreshment break.

A team consists of up to 8 people per table. A team can buy a table or singles, doubles and trios can make up a table and act as a team. To promote the fund raiser invite businesses or other organizations to buy a table and send a team.

A stack of 10 quiz sheets (one per round) are handed out when the event starts, along with a schedule for the evening. The MC reads the questions, the teams or singles hand in the answer sheets, and while the checkers are scoring the papers, door prizes are drawn. The scores are posted, so people can keep track on how their team stands. By round 9 and 10, the tension mounts.

A stack of 10 blank quiz sheets, one per round, are on the tables when the event starts. Once all the teams have chosen names, the Quiz Master starts reading the questions. When each round is finished, the teams hand in their sheets to the scorers, door prizes are drawn, and the scores recorded so the teams can track how they stand.

50 questions were developed by the library staff - 5 per page x 10 rounds. The topics included Science, Sports, Geography, History, BC, Literature, Entertainment, Canadiana, Trivia and Current Affairs. The trick is to have the questions challenging enough, but not too many that are impossible.



17 tables x 8 per table x \$20 = \$2,700 from ticket sales. Expenses might include the rental of tables.

## 5. Puzzle Day

Friends of the Morgan Hill Library which holds the Family Games Nights, also has an annual Puzzle Day fund raiser. Workshops are held on Sat. for all levels and ages of puzzle lovers. Sunday is Tournament Day and includes adult crosswords, adult and youth sudoku, killer sudoku and a cryptic crossword bonus round. They are scored similarly to the Quiz Night, but have 3 rounds with time and errors recorded.

There is no set charge to register, but a suggested donation to the Morgan Hill Library Foundation of \$20 for adults (16+) and \$10 for youth is encouraged. Weekend attracts 200 participants. [svpuzzle.org](http://svpuzzle.org)

Quiz Night and Puzzle Day have grown into successful fund raisers, but they can be adapted to any number, big or small, fund raiser or social evening. As long as it is fun.

## EVALUATION

Make sure the planned event is the right fit for the library, and there are enough staff or volunteers to make it work without a major case of burn-out.

Often the event is well planned but the advertising is too little or too late and thus the attendance is poor

Debriefing

Recognition

A phone call or thank you note to will acknowledge a person's contribution

Evaluation

Be honest, if the event wasn't a total success, don't be afraid to admit it - even it was your idea! If it was worth the effort, be sure to say what made it a success.

Wrap-up Report

With a good report including size of the committee, finances and recommendations, the event can be improved upon and more importantly the file can be handed to the next chair of the event!

## GRANTS

One of the key means of tracking funding sources in a community is to network with local politicians and community-based funding. Have coffee with you local municipality, provincial

and federal representatives. Find out what they know about possible funding sources. How many Friends or trustees have had coffee with your City Councillor, MLA or MP - recently? ever?

## **CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

### BookCrossing

BookCrossing is called the world's biggest book club of "catch and release" used books.

It was started in the US 7 years ago and now has 847,000 members in 120 countries. A book to be given away is registered on the website and given a tracking number. A handmade sticker or one ordered on line stating "I am Free" encourages people to pick up the book in a determined place and registered so it can be fast tracked. [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com)

Using this theme, Friends of the Medicine Hat Public Library use BookCrossing to promote reading, to encourage people to use their library and to let people know more about Friends. They include information about the library in each of the used books released in the downtown area.

### Literary Landmarks

This project can be a partnership of Friends and/or the library and the community.

Literary Landmarks recognize authors and their contribution to the literary world.

As Canada is a young country, it is important we recognize the significance of connecting to writers who are contributing to Canadian Literature. Landmarks create a destination for school classes and tourists.

The following is to give you some past US Literary Landmark dedications that might bring to mind an author or a story locale that could be recognized and preserved in your community.

Casa Genotta, Sea Island, Virginia, where Eugene O'Neill, playwright and Nobel Laureate of Literature, lived with his wife from 1931 – 36 during which time he completed two plays. This dedication was in partnership with the St. Simons Island Public Library. I mention this dedication as O'Neill did not live in this house for long, only six years, but it was important to the community to recognize the time he spent there writing.

Robert McCloskey set his 1942 Caldecott Medal book, *Make Way for Ducklings* in the Boston Public Garden. The classic children's book characters Mr. and Mrs. Mallard and their brood resided in the garden pond. The partners in the dedication of the gardens were Citywide Friends of the Boston Public Library, Books for Kids Foundation, and the Historic Neighbourhoods Foundation.

Partnerships are important as there are costs involved – mainly in purchasing the plaques. An inside plaque can range from \$250 to \$350. An outside bronze plaque would be \$600 – \$700, depending on the on the wording. Other expenses might include the promotion of the dedication and a reception.

There are three existing Literary Landmarks in the Vancouver area:

- Malcolm Lowry Walk in North Vancouver
- Pauline Johnson's Cairn in Stanley Park
- Joy Kogawa's childhood home in Vancouver

Following the models of the writer-in-residence programs at the Berton House Writers' Retreat in Dawson City, Yukon, and the Roderick Haig-Brown House in Campbell River, the Historic Joy Kogawa House writer-in-residence program brings well-regarded professional writers in touch with the local community of established writers, emerging writers, editors, publishers, booksellers, librarians and readers. Funding is provided by Canada Council, other agencies, and donations from the general public.

But these are big projects. It can be done on a smaller scale and in the library. A local author can be recognized in the library with a reception to unveil the plaque.

Prepare a budget, seek cooperation from the community such as the mayor's office, Arts Council, Historical Society and contact potential sponsors for financial support.

### **FRIENDS' DONATION AND LIBRARY'S WISH LIST**

It has been a good year, the morale of the staff is upbeat because they have been recognized by their peers and have had several fun get-togethers; the Friends have supported their library by volunteering at library events, its advocacy campaign saved the library budget from being cut and raised money through fund raising events; the trustees have worked hard to keep the library operating within budget.

Now the library is asked to create a wish list which will be in line with the amount of the Friends' annual donation.

There several options as to how the Friends' donate to the library, among them:

The money is given to the library and goes through the library's accounting.

Friends buy the items on the wish list and donate them or pay directly for programs such as author readings.

Besides enhancing the collections and supporting literacy programs, other requests from staff for which Friends of the VPL have raised money are:

- Book Anthology: Youth Services and Programming
- Digital cameras: for Branches
- Branch birthday celebrations
- Emerging Writers' program
- First Nations Writers' program
- Teen Bookmark Contest
- Summer Story Times for Families
- The Canadian Book Club
- Braille labeling for Outreach
- New book display units

## SUMMATION

I hope that I have given you some new ideas you can think about and implement in your library and you are more aware of how Friends of the Library can support and help the library to be “fun” a place.