

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2019

Attending:

Gael Cheek

Wei Lu

George Liao, new member

Rosemarie Lentini

Sylvia Diss

Don Libes

James Donaldson, MCPL Asst Director for Collections & Technology

Jane Williams, Board Liaison

The chair (Carol Leahy) was not present so the meeting is considered unofficial. No deliberations or decisions permitted. Carol may be interested in stepping down. She was not there to confirm but Gael Cheek and Wei Lu volunteered to be Co-Chairs. Don Libes volunteered to be Secretary. All positions must be confirmed by MCPL Board. (Note: Some discussion may be missing in these minutes since the new secretary only started taking notes upon volunteering. In addition, this is a position with which the new secretary has no experience.)

New member George Liao was welcomed.

All members introduced themselves and described their backgrounds.

James Donaldson presented a lengthy report of his and other relevant activities. See his report (attached) for details. James said that he would not return for subsequent meetings unless we specifically requested him back.

James said the same attendance policy would apply for other MCPL staff. That is, we are welcome to invite other MCPL staff to present what they are doing and answer questions.

Summer Programs

We discussed upcoming summer programming, who does summer programming and how. Members were encouraged to find presenters.

How does MCPL advertise?

There was concern over advertising and its effectiveness. We discussed MCPL's own mail lists, Nextdoor, neighborhood mail lists, local newspapers, etc. Several members supported the idea of opt-out as a default. However, James observed that county lawyers do not permit opt-out mechanisms. This means that MCPL, Potomac Library, etc., have to expend effort to convince people to subscribe to lists and other organs to hear about events.

Webinars

Wei Lu suggested carrying Potomac programs as webinars. This means people would be able to watch programming live. This is a minor technical hurdle and allowing 2-way interaction would be another hurdle. In other words, extra effort is required. Who would provide it? It would be useful to learn whether other libraries offer webinars and if statistics are available of their effectiveness.

FoL Programs Attendance

Gael described highly variable attendance at Friends of the Library programs. Some are packed. Some authors draw few attendees - embarrassingly few - in one case, a highly regarded author only had 3 attendees. We discussed ideas that could address this.

Upcoming programs

9/21 Bestselling author Lynne Olson will visit the branch to discuss her new book Madame Fourcade's Secret War: The Daring Young Woman Who Led France's Largest Spy Network Against Hitler.

10/15 Montgomery Parks' historian Jamie Kuhns will visit the branch to discuss her new book Sharp Flashes of Lightning Come from Black Clouds, a new biography of Josiah Henson.
Julie Lansdorfer, Potomac Satire

11/16 Local author Julie Langsdorf will visit the branch to discuss her new hit novel White Elephant. Her satirical debut novel is about a behemoth of a new house in a DC suburb just like Montgomery County.

Future of Potomac LAC

We discussed meeting requirements for Potomac LAC: 5 meeting minimum and tentatively agreed to hold meetings in Sept, Dec, Feb, April and June.

Possibility of joint meetings and open meetings.

Next LAC Meeting: Sept 10, 2019, 1pm

Board Liaison Report

Jane submitted her report in writing based on the June 12, 2019 meeting. The report is attached.

Gathering Info from Patrons

At a previous meeting, we had discussed how we might get a better understanding of how patrons feel about the branch. The suggestion was made to ask Jane. Jane drafted a list of suggested techniques. A brief summary:

- Spend time observing at the branch and taking notes
- Talk to patrons, attendees at programs, staff, etc.
- Attend non-library functions and engage as a library representative.
- Post questions to neighborhood mail lists.
- Invite LAC chairs from other branches to our meetings or send them queries.
- Attend other branch LAC meetings.

- Ask MCPL administrators questions or invite them to attend our LAC meetings.

Warning: LACs are not allowed to conduct surveys that have not been approved by MCPL or MCLB.

See Jane's report for more info.

Meet the Potomac Library Staff

While the LAC typically only meets with the head librarian / manager for the branch, there was interest in meeting other members of the Potomac Library staff, either by inviting them to our meeting for brief periods during which they could talk about themselves, their work, concerns, and suggestions. Alternatively or as well, the LAC could go to where the staff works, and the staff could physically show their workplace and talk about what they do as they do it.

The meeting was adjourned.

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From James Donaldson, June 18, 2019, sent by email to LAC members:

Potomac LAC Meeting, June 18, 2019

Acting Branch Manager Report

Programming

With attention turning to the MCPL's Summer Read & Learn program, "A Universe of Stories", the branch has an exciting line-up of activities planned throughout the summer to complement this year's space theme, and the program in general.

Before looking ahead to the summer, I would like to begin my report by noting the continuation success of regular programs such as the bi-weekly baby and toddler storytime, the Chinese Book Discussion Group, Potomac Conversation Club, and the Great Decisions book discussion series. Over and above these popular events, during May the branch also enjoyed excellent turnouts for a workshop with the Census Bureau on job opportunities working with the 2020 Census, a Panda Karate anti-bullying event for elementary school students, and a Meet a Live Kangaroo and Wallaby program which attracted a full house in the meeting room.

As we move into the summer we are looking forward to some dynamic events, and I will name a few. 'Blast Off to Reading' on June 24th is an interactive musical performance connected to the "Universe of Stories" summer reading theme, featuring songs about space, reading, and books. Science in the Summer offers two sessions in early July for students in grades 2-6, doing hands-on exploration of the biological systems that make humans alike, and the elements that

interact to make a person unique. The Indian dance group, *Rhythmaya* will offer the chance for youngsters to learn about Indian dance and the magnificent costumes that are a part of it, in July 11. On July 18, children will act out an “Aliens: Escape from Earth” educational adventure using science experiments for special effects in this STEM program. July 27th will see a notable event for adults, ‘Celebrating the Expressive Art & Birthday of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald (the wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald)’ a program focusing on an often neglected facet of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald’s life; that of a serious artist. Into August, and to round off the Summer Read and Learn program, a kangaroo and wallaby make a return visit on August 17th, an event which is sure to attract a bumper crowd once again.

Staffing

Staffing is tight, particularly in the Information department with the departures of Sharon McCarthy and Lunden. However, the process for recruitment to fill those (and other) positions is underway.

Facilities

No major facilities issues to report. The Garden Club notified us of several hanging tree limbs. County Facilities are aware of the problem and will be working with their landscaper contractor and arborist to address it.

David Payne

Acting Branch Manager