

Blue Hill Library Notes

Summer 2016

TALKING ABOUT OUR GENERATOR

When snow hit hard and early in November of 2014, the trees were unprepared. Many still had leaves and the heavy snow caused branches to come down all over the peninsula. Power was out in some areas for over a week. During the week that Emera was clearing the lines but we had electricity at BHPL, almost every library outlet was full to capacity with phone and laptop chargers. There was a waiting list for the computers and plenty of people made themselves comfortable in the warmth and light of the library reading rooms.

One of those people was H. Curtiss Martin, who had recently moved to Brooksville. When he died suddenly a few months later, his family wanted to honor his death with donations to the library, in no small part because of the community he found at the library during that time.

Now, thanks to careful planning by the Buildings & Grounds Committee, seed money from H. Curtiss Martin memorial donations, a portion of a bequest from Phyllis Hamabe, a gift from the Friends of the Library, the capital reserve fund, and over 70 donations to an online community crowd-funding campaign, the library has raised the more than \$40,000 needed to buy, install and fuel a generator large enough to keep the library open during a power failure. Wow! Many thanks to all who helped make this valuable extension of library services possible.



--illustration by Lucy Jakob

FROM THE DIRECTOR

FUN FROM THE ARCHIVES



--BY RICH BOULET

Karen Wyatt was recently noodling around in the archives, and found some great documents which suggest that though much has changed since the 1930s, a whole lot has remained the same.

Consider the job posting for a "Bluehill Librarian" dated April, 1931.

The posting was likely written by Miss Adelaide Pearson, who possessed a clear vision of what a vibrant public library could offer a village. Duties included:

- Regular library work.
- General "social centre" work.
- Close co-operation with the schools.
- Co-operation with all near-by libraries.
- Attending library meetings (expenses paid by the committee).
- Arranging art and other exhibits.
- Arranging for lectures or special movies.
- Cultivation of any special interest anyone in the two towns [Blue Hill & E. Blue Hill] may possibly have.
- For much of this it would be necessary that the librarian should drive a car.
- The librarian is also his own janitor.

I am absolutely smitten with how progressive this list was for its era. They were aiming for Movies at the library!

BHPL staff was not to be shushing people, but rather cultivating any special interest anyone had! Art exhibits! Women (presumably) were expected to drive cars in 1931! Engagement with the profession at large! Those early pioneers of what was to become the Blue Hill Public Library were on to something big, envisioning the library as a full-service cultural, educational and community center for the town.

Another piece of writing from that same era also surfaced. It is undated and unsigned, most likely a first draft, but is almost certainly the work of Anne Hinckley, the intrepid librarian who presumably answered the posting above, who carried out Adelaide's vision for a public library and helped to create the building and institution we all love today. The overall thesis of this elegant one-page missive was the importance of friendliness in a public library:

"Friendliness is the most powerful asset a person or an institution can possess. It is the finest sort of publicity. . .

Nowhere is there an institution more in need of a friendly atmosphere than the public library. Nowhere is there a human being who needs more innate friendliness than a librarian. To the librarian and the library come a puzzled public, often with a trivial request that camouflages the real urge. There in the presence of animated knowledge and the storage of minds, unless there is a genuine



Anne Hinckley, former librarian

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feeling of sympathy and interest, the Urge shivers and closes its eyes wounded or actually dying for lack of warmth and spiritual food.

... No longer are libraries tomb-like structures of silence and gloom. No longer do sharp-nosed librarians examine you for visible signs of contagion. Some of the librarians are cordial and many of them smile - - although as yet only a few daring ones laugh aloud. . . Greatly are you to be pitied if your library is still in the "sh-b-b-b!" Era."

Again, I LOVE this. Here is a librarian in tiny Blue Hill, Maine rhapsodizing about how welcoming and interactive libraries can be, about how we should avoid caviling the very people we are meant to serve, and how we should never be judgmental in carrying out our duties.

Mrs. Hinckley concludes with a charming but sad note,

reminding the reader not to blame those in her profession who do not live up to her ebullience:

"If your library is like that [of the shushing era] don't blame the librarian. If you live in Maine the librarian is probably a woman, overworked, underpaid, a puppet dangling from the controls held in the firm hand of gold-watch-fobbed trustees, afraid she may lose her position, harried by fear of illness and lack of funds."

Many a small town librarian then and now can identify with this lightly dramatic assessment. The fear of illness is heart-breaking considering a few years later she didn't move into the brand new library building she worked tirelessly to get built. Instead she resigned due to poor health and died a few years later in Waterville at age 38 in 1945.



"Blue Hill Library is one of the most user friendly & personable libraries I have experienced within & outside Maine."

—patron comment

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EVERY LIFE

BY LIBBY EDWARDSON, YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIAN

When my six children and I arrived in Blue Hill last November, we were mourning the loss of many things. We'd said goodbye to moms and grandmas, to friends and co-workers, to pets and possessions, and to our sweet log home nestled in the rolling Tennessee hills. Each of us carried the ghosts of things we couldn't take with us: the sound of rain on a tin roof, rainstorms rolling across green pastures, puddles popping with frogs no bigger than your fingernail, and the lazy porch swing where you could take it all in. We knew we needed to move – we'd known for a couple of years – but when the time came, the relocation wasn't so much a natural transition as a quick ripping off of a Band-Aid. We were there in Tennessee, in that life, and then, a few weeks later, we weren't. This is what happens when the perfect job comes along.

When we reached Maine, we were unsure but full of hope. We were down a man as we waited for my husband's transfer to

Acadia National Park to come through, which made the move to a new state, new job, new schools that much more daunting. But what we found here in Blue Hill is something that we didn't even know we were missing; we found a community. Not in the dictionary sense of that word, but in a tangible, meaningful, we've-got-your-back-even-if-you-are-complete-strangers kind of way. The first day I spent in Blue Hill I met with a tidal wave of enthusiasm and support, both for me



Libby with her six daughters: Grace, Hattie, Mabel, Bean, Essie, and Zuzu

and for the library. Over the next few months there were home cooked meals, battery jump starts (so many!), flat tires fixed, recommendations for doctors and dentists, invitations to playdates, an egg hunt, clothing swaps, help finding a home, hugs on hard days, and hugs on great days.

Sometimes, when you live in a place for a while you begin to take for granted the things that make it special. What I find so remarkable about Blue Hill is that people who

live here know this community is special and work hard never to take it for granted.

I will admit that I am a bit of a fangirl. So it comes as no surprise that it is a quote from Doctor Who, that loveable

“But what we found here in Blue Hill is something that we didn't even know we were missing; we found a community.”

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time traveler, that is rattling around my head as I reflect on leaving behind our life in Tennessee and making a new one here in Blue Hill:

"The way I see it, every life is a pile of good things and bad things. The good things don't always soften the bad things, but vice-versa, the bad things don't necessarily spoil the good things and make them unimportant."

As the novelty of being new wears off and we settle into our lives here, we continue to be amazed by how this community takes care of one another. And, while we'll likely always miss the sound of rain on a tin roof, we are now blessed with sunlight sparkling on the sea, and girls rushing in giddy after coming face to face with a moose. So when I look at that pile of good things and bad things that is my life, Blue Hill is definitely one of the good things. One of the very best.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Over the course of the year, BHPL partners with many area organizations to develop programming that benefits the community. We facilitate events with Downeast Colloquy, the Blue Hill Historical Society, Blue Hill Heritage Trust, the Camden Conference, Kneisel Hall, Blue Hill Bach, Healthy Acadia, Blue Hill Co-op, the Fisher House, GSA, School Union 93, the Harbor School, and others. If you are interested in working with BHPL to educate, entertain, or inspire the community, please contact Rich at 374-5515.



52 Weeks of Giving members create a story trail on Heritage Trust land (above), GSA workshop (above right) and a Kneisel Hall youth concert.

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75TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY



Very few couples get to celebrate their 75th Anniversary. They must be doing a lot of things right to make it to their Golden Jubilee. The same is true for organizations. So when the Blue Hill Public Library hit that milestone last year, it was time for a big party. To help celebrate 75 years of serving the community from its historic home on Parker Point Road, the library pulled out all the stops: Swing dancing to the tunes of the GSA Big Band, a soda fountain, costume photo booth, dance lessons, 1940's finger food from El El Frijoles, and a really large birthday cake!



The 75th Anniversary Bash was free thanks to our sponsors:
Camden National Bank,
Tradewinds Marketplace,
Grindle Agency, MAE,
El El Frijoles, and EBS .



From top, clockwise: GSA Jazz Band, Swing dance lessons, Soda Jerks: Julie Jo Furble and Sarah Pebworth, Abigail Jakub and Grace Hylan in the photo booth, the BHPL birthday cake regular and gluten-free!

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THE LIFE OF A DONATED BOOK

—BY NINA FLEMING

The Friends of the Blue Hill Public Library sort through thousands of pounds of donated books each year, and book sales transform those books into money for the library. The receiving area for donations is often heaped with anonymous boxes and bags, evidence of myriad book lovers who pass on their treasures. The list of topics shows the range of our collective curiosit: Small engine repair, poetry, collections of sci-fi, leather-bound classics, boat carpentry, fiber arts, beekeeping, tiny house plans, autobiographies, anime, art, legal history, mystery, French postmodern philosophy, Bibles, sheep-tending primers, Zen texts, microwave recipes and macrobiotic cookbooks are a testimony of our practical and impractical knowledge. Donations are taken to the basement Book Nook, where the Friends have a sorting area and hold a sale at least once a month. If you want to know more about your neighbors, then come to a Saturday morning sale and see what came off of their shelves. *To see the flow-chart of book donations see page 12.*

YOUR FAVORITE PLANT SALE NEEDS YOU!

Every Memorial Day weekend for the past six years, the Blue Hill Public Library has raised much-needed operating funds by running the best little plant sale in Maine and perhaps the country (you know it's true). What makes it so special is that all the plants are donated by friends and neighbors, some of whom are really great gardeners. However, in order for the Plant Sale to continue, we need some of you to get involved. Do you have a garden you would like help dividing? Are you able to host a potting party? Do you want to help pot perennials at one of those parties? Do you love the sale so much that you want to help organize it? We want to hear from you! Contact Shelley at the library: 374-5515 ext. 16 or slatham@bhpl.net.



FOL Board member Marjorie Yesley assists buyers at the Plant Sale.

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BOARD NOTES

The level of service that the library is able to provide the community—from a well maintained building to collections that meet the changing needs of our patrons—is made possible by the professionalism and skill of the library's Board of Directors.

Each year the library welcomes new board members and wishes well members who are ending their tenure. After nine years of exemplary service, **Lynn Cheney** leaves a lasting mark on the library's fiscal health having served terms on the Finance and Personnel Committees in addition to being treasurer. She was instrumental in establishing BHPL's Four Seasons Giving program, which continues to grow, and was the mastermind behind the library's Plant Sale fundraiser that has become a much anticipated community event. **Ciona Ulbrich** joined the board in 2010 and has served on Personnel, Building and Grounds, Collection Development Committees, and as Vice President. She has been invaluable in various green initiatives and was crucial in securing a \$50,000 federal stimulus grant for the



Lynn Cheney and Ciona Ulbrich.

The Blue Hill Public Library opens doors to information, culture, community and the world.

--BHPL mission statement

library's switch to a wood-pellet heating system. **Mary Whiting** leaves the Board after a short term, but her commitment to the library is decades-long, whether as a board member, volunteer, or as a member of the staff. In fact, visitors will soon

see Mary at her old perch, the circulation desk.

Bruce Stahnke, from Harborside, is new to the Library board this year, but not to the library. As an architect, Bruce has designed a number of projects for the library including the Young Adult area upstairs. He has also



Lisa Arbontes-Marshall and Nina Fleming at Paint the Peninsula

been a valued community member of the Building and Grounds committee. Penobscot resident **Eleni Koenka** joins the board

and has already assisted in the most successful Plant Sale to date. She is a gardener, dance instructor, and active community member who is excited to continue her support of the library on the board.



Maria Matthews, Will Taylor, Greg Forrest, Sarah Peabworth, Eleni Koenka set up the BHPL Plant Sale.

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STAFF COMINGS AND GOINGS

The library has three full time staff members and 14 part time. This year BHPL has seen the passing of the baton in two key, full time positions: Youth Services Librarian and Assistant Director. Many of you have already met **Libby Edwardson**, who replaced Pat Horton as the head of Youth Services. In October, Libby moved with her husband and six children from Tennessee where she served in the library for Bell County, Kentucky. She has introduced many new, popular programs for kids and teens, such as 52 Weeks of Giving, a community service group, and Rainbow Warriors, a teen writing group.

Beginning in June, we welcomed **Hannah Cyrus** to the position of Assistant Director. Hannah is a graduate of Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Boston, having received her MLS in May. She grew up in Orono, and received a BA from Bowdoin College, having worked in publishing before deciding on a library career.

Of course, welcoming new personnel means that the library has had to say a fond farewell to some beloved and long-



Hannah Cyrus

time staff members. **Pat Horton** left the library in September after eight years running youth services to become a full-time Granny Nanny to her twin grandchildren in California.

Karen Wyatt, has recently retired from her position as Assistant Director. Highlights from Karen's five year tenure include the organizing of the library's archives and museum collections. Patrons and staff can now search for (and find!) important



Leda Beth Gray and Margret Baldwin at the holiday party.

community documents and artifacts that have been donated to the library over the years. Another long-time, familiar and friendly staff member, **Margret Baldwin**, retires from the circulation desk after seven years. Margret's impact on the library extended far beyond the circ desk, though. She was one of the founders of the library's hugely successful Paint the Peninsula Fresh Paint Fundraiser. Margret also developed and ran the popular Art Adventures Series. You can find Margret at her new project, The Little Gallery, in Surry. In other staff news, **Leda Beth Gray** was recently awarded a Rackliffe Pottery mug for ten years at BHPL. **Sheri Sweet** has achieved the milestone of being at the library for fifteen years.



“Could not be more satisfied with our Blue Hill living room with its fine collections, events and especially the Staff.” —patron comment

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IN MEMORIAM

JEAN MESSEX

If you and your family enjoy spending time in the children's room of the Blue Hill Public Library, you have Jean Palmer Messex to thank. She and her children—Hanna (Kris) Henderson, Lindsay McCrum, Elizabeth McCrum, Bo McCrum, Kate Boleyn, and William McCrum—donated the necessary funds during the 2001 renovation and expansion of the library. The Larchwood Room is named after their home on Parker Point Road where Jean spent every summer of her long life.

Jean was also an accomplished painter. Her watercolors were included in numerous group art shows at the library throughout the years. She will long be remembered by her many friends and all of us here at the Blue Hill Public Library. Gifts in memory of Jean can be made to BHPL.

PHYLLIS HAMABE

Phyllis Hamabe, wife of the late and locally-famous artist Francis Hamabe, passed away in late February at her home in Bristol, RI. Phyllis was a long time supporter of the library, making donations for upgrading of the library's basement archive and museum storage, in addition to donations of her husband's work to the collections. The library is honored to be the recipient of a substantial bequest from Mrs. Hamabe, a small part of which was used to bolster

the Generator Fund. Her gift will be a lasting legacy to the memory of Phyllis and Frank Hamabe, who brought so much to the culture and community of Blue Hill during their summers here. She is the latest member of the *Adelaide Pearson Society*, joining other benefactors whose bequest extends their support of the library for generations to come.

TRAVIS ASTBURY

Travis Astbury, who was the library's caretaker, passed away in April. He was 36 years old and, in addition to keeping the library ship shape, was a devoted father, son, and friend. There is a painting in the main reading room that depicts Travis digging BHPL out after one of countless storms from which he shoveled snow from the lot and walkways. It was given to the library by the painter, Alison Dibble, and will be a lasting reminder of Travis' time at the library. He will be missed by many.

GAIL BARTLETT

Before Gail took over the Friends of the Library's online book sales last spring, she was a regular presence at the library as a patron and volunteer. She had been selling her own books online, but when Elvira Bass passed away leaving the Online Book Salesman job vacant, Gail switched gears and began selling rare and sought-after book donations for the library. In the short time that she was at the helm, online sales skyrocketed. Gail gave 100% in everything she did, and the library was gifted with her calm and intelligent attention in the year before she passed away.



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"Thank you for enhancing our community's joy and wellbeing!!"

—patron comment

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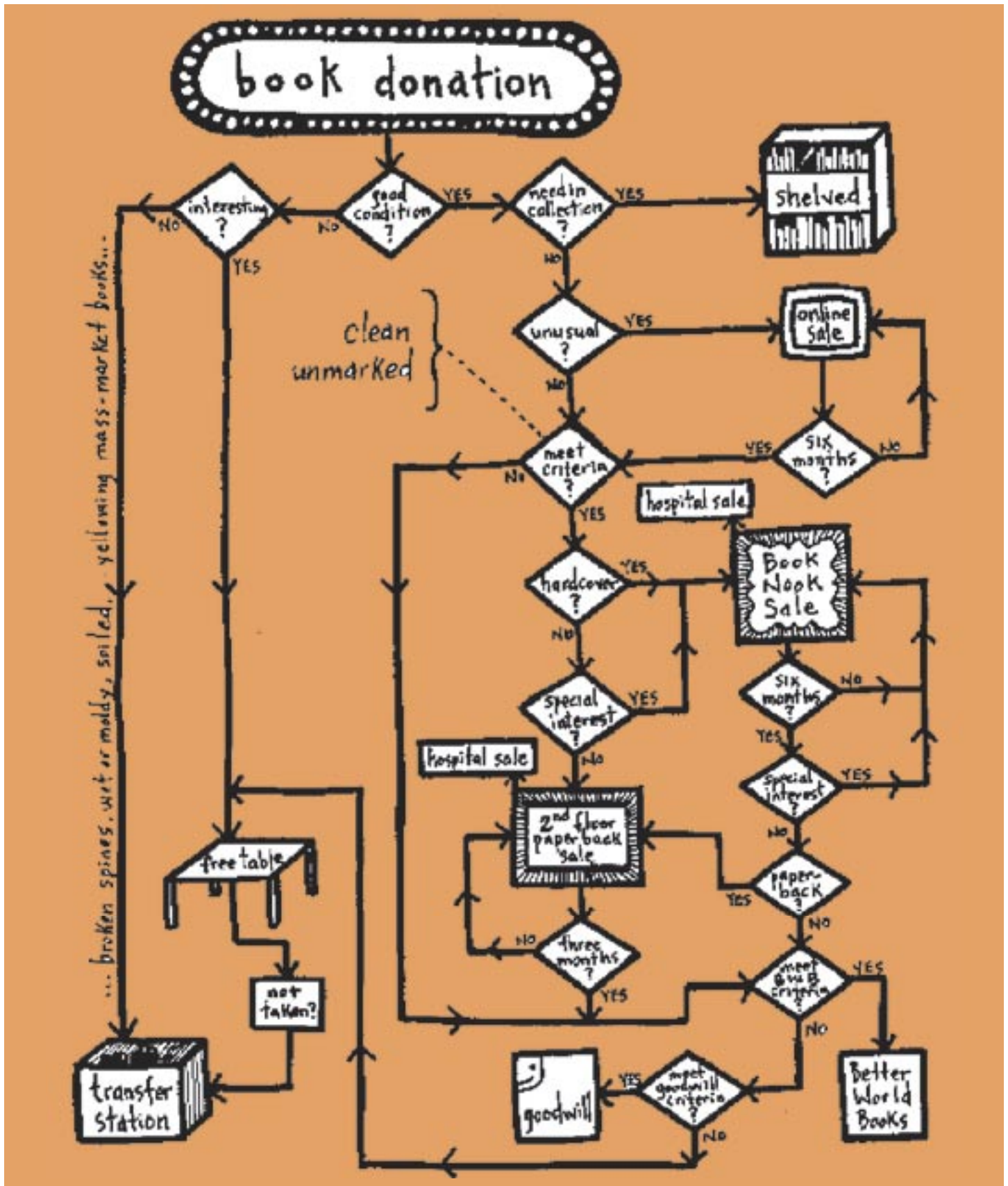
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—BY NINA FLEMING

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