

## Introductions

Cathy (Portsmouth) started by introducing herself and the two other READS volunteers assisting with today's discussion: Maria (Nesmith), Kersten (Nashua). Cathy encouraged all participants to introduce themselves and briefly talk about the book group programs going on in their libraries.

Gwen (Rye)

Library staff leads a book group at the library.

Shawna (Rye)

Again, they run a book group at their library.

Wendy (Lane)

Lane is looking to expand their after school programming and are considering doing a book group for children. Wendy belongs to a book group (personally). She's looking for more than just discussion questions in the back of the books they read.

Claudia (Lane)

Kathleen (Lane)

Her book group has about 30 people who will sign up and about 18 people attend. She facilitates the discussion and would prefer to be a member (not facilitator). She would like to learn how to get people to talk about the book and not about unrelated stories of their lives and multiple side conversations. Currently her book group is going to take a field trip to the Currier after reading *Loving Frank*.

Alyssa (Derry)

Started a YA book group for Teens and Adults. 6 people have signed up – next book: *Wrath and the Dawn* (Renée Ahdieh) – after that: *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell. Alyssa would like to learn how to facilitate discussion and encourage other people to join in.

Hannah (Pelham)

Hannah talked about the difference between a book group sponsored by the library compared to an informal book group of friends who would discuss a book for 30 minutes and then get off topic. She would like to know how to conduct a book discussion in a library setting (without the wine).

Tricia (Wiggin Memorial)

Tricia runs a book group at Wiggin. They have a three-month series and then they take a break. Books are chosen for a particular theme. There are three book discussions (each discussion for one of the books chosen). About 6-8 people participate. They have chosen themes of: art and artist, graphic novels, memoirs, etc. Tricia had originally over-prepared when she facilitated and she felt that seemed to stop discussion.

Daryl (Lane)

Lane has a 6-8 people book group called the Twilight Book Club. They meet once a month. Daryl talked about the fact that often, people don't know how to talk about what they read. They don't understand the methodology of talking significantly about books that you've read. How do we encourage people to speak significantly about what they read? Regarding book selection, it's hard to talk about a James Patterson book, but there are other books that lend themselves to being discussed.

Ruth (Lee)

Ruth runs the book group at the Lee Library. They meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month. About 15 people sign up. This book group has been going for 15-17 years! They may take the summer off or read one book over the summer. In September they construct a reading list for the entire year.

Lauren (Newfields)

Newfields has an evening book club for 10-12 women who have been meeting over 10 years. They choose the books they want to read. (They also create a book list for the entire year). They stay on task and facilitate themselves. One person is assigned to put together questions and be in charge of a meeting. They all bring food. They are very structured with their questions.

Liz (North Hampton)

Liz runs a wellness book club which integrates books with healthy living/wellness. Liz may print out articles/quotes when they meet. They might do stretches/take a walk if it's nice out. Sometimes she has incorporated books with social issues (*Evicted*) – but it can be hard to get them to talk and promote discussion.

Marcia (North Hampton)

Marcia facilitates an evening book group with adults. North Hampton used to pay a woman who would select books, research the book/the author, etc. When she moved on, this task fell to Marcia. The first year they struggled to choose titles. It's still hard to get someone to take ownership of facilitating the group. They meet Sept-June. Last Spring Marcia's new strategy for picking out books was to get each member to suggest/select one title and be willing to lead the discussion. They find background on the author, interviews, etc. and this starts things off – the rest of the discussion just unfolds.

Maria (Nesmith)

They don't have a book group in their library, but a lot of local groups will come in to request their books.

Susan (Madbury)

The book group which met when Susan worked at another library was successful mostly because of the makeup of the group. They tried having each member pick a book and facilitate. This didn't work. Susan started to pick the books (with full disclosure that she was going to be all over the map with the books she chose). The variety worked well with this group. Susan would over prepare sometimes, but would also be surprised to come to discussion to find that the participants had also done their research. Susan talked about Madbury's Senior Facilities and book groups there. Susan has gone to the Senior Facility a few times to facilitate.

Cathy (Portsmouth)

Cathy has helped to co-facilitate for a few years. She's taken over the fiction book group (1pm and 7pm on the second Monday of the month). There are 7-12 attendees for the 1pm group and 6-8 attendees for the 7pm. There is also a nonfiction group that meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday night. There

is a newer group that does speculative fiction. Between those three book groups there are a variety of people who attend. Cathy picks the fiction titles. She orders 25-30 titles through ILL and will put these out on display for the group, but also for other patrons to check out during the time the book group is reading them (the due date is fixed because these ILL books need to be sent back to the lending libraries on time). Cathy preps for the 1pm and 7pm group which will have vastly different conversations. She requests 10 copies for nonfiction and 10 copies for speculative fiction group. Although the speculative fiction group is facilitated by library staff, they meet at the Press Room (a bar/restaurant in Portsmouth - not the library). They have about 13 people which come regularly. They attribute their success to meeting at the Press Room and not the library. They select their own books.

## Discussion

How do people get their books?

- Ruth (Lee) – Orders about 15-20 copies through ILL and about ½ of those books are taken by people who aren't in the book club
- Alyssa (Derry) – being members of GMILCS, all books are from GMILCS
- Lauren (Newfields) – READS-To-Go
  - disadvantage of not letting individual patrons keep their copy longer than the discussion
  - also limited to literary fiction and popular nonfiction
  - can also eventually tap-out of all the READS-TO-GO titles available

How do you handle people coming from other towns without a library card to your library?

- Allowances have sometimes been made for people who are out of town
- Shawna (Rye) – they issue Book-Club library cards (just for the book club)
- One person (with library card) is responsible for all the books – this person can ILL 10-20 copies of a book for their book club
- Ruth (Lee) – this is also why it's nice to have a list of books for the whole year

Using NHUpac vs. NHAIS-L

- Lauren (Newfields) will request through NHAIS-L because she's asking for 10-20 copies
  - It's also nice to have a second pick for a title if you can't get the first pick
- It would be great if we could put in one request through NHUpac for multiple copies

BREAK

Buying extra copies

- Cathy (Portsmouth) – Portsmouth circulates Kindles which have copies of book group titles. This is a good resource to give to book groups who are trying to consider what book they want to read for their group. (One Kindle has about 90 titles on it.)

Discussion questions

- Sometimes the back of the books have questions for book groups.
- [www.readinggroupguides.com](http://www.readinggroupguides.com)
- Some publishers may have discussion questions
  - Often these questions are replicated across different resources
- Cathy (Portsmouth) pointed to the pre-reading list for this Round Table which has a list of

resources

- Interviews with the author
- Playing interview clips or music that relates to the book during the book discussion
  - Author talking about the issues that drove them to create the book
- BookTubeNetwork – (on YouTube - [www.youtube.com/user/TheBookTubeNetwork](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheBookTubeNetwork))
- Book Riot – their website also has people doing book reviews and videos on their website
- General discussion questions:
  - Was there a particular quote that struck you?
  - Your favorite character?
  - How does/doesn't the title relate to the book?
  - What was your favorite chapter?
  - Conversation about the cover of the books
  - Open ended questions that focus attention on the message of the book
  - How did this book change your life?
  - What type of connection did you make with this book? (How did the book matter to you?)
  - Discussion on whether or not the author accomplished their goal
  - How a book illumines parts of participants' lives and the choices they made (which is different than tangent conversations)
  - Have the characters of this book altered your perception of yourself/family/experience?

#### Strategies to facilitate discussion

- Choosing who speaks/who goes first
- Sometimes the less a facilitator brings/gives of her own views, the more the book club will talk
- How do you reign in frequent contributors?
  - Split up the group? - (Some groups are not up for that)
  - Give each person a set amount of time?
  - Make sure to prod people who have only shared a little
- Having book groups that are not just about the book – especially groups where members already know each other. This can contribute to people feeling safe to share with the group.
- Language in Book Groups
  - Difficulty for non-native English speakers
  - Book group members who don't want to read foul language
- Ideal length of book discussion: 1-1 ½ hours (perhaps an hour of book discussion and maybe some social time afterwards)

#### Things that can stop discussion

- Book Discussion that has a list of questions participants have to answer can stop discussion
  - What if you jump in and just talk about the book and then, in the last 10 minutes, pull out the questions and see if there were any that weren't answered?
- Videos may also stop the discussion because of a “teach me” type of dynamic that happens.
- What happens if everyone hates the book?
  - Even in this situation, you can talk about what the author could have done differently
  - Generate conversation beyond why the book was so awful

## Choosing a book

- Going to Good Reads and searching for the negative reviews is also a good way to choose a book. Negative reviews can help decide why to choose/not choose a book
  - Something negative about the book could generate discussion
  - Why was this character despicable?
  - Could this character have changed?
- Choosing books under 300 pages
- Doing a longer book over the summer (although that's harder for time restraints of ILL)

## Creating an environment in the library for the book group

- Liz (North Hampton) tries to create a warm environment, may play some music/do stretches before the meeting (this is for her wellness group)
- Something to snack on; tea and coffee
- Often libraries will have food, especially food that relates to the book
- YA book group ideas
  - Choose a YA book that is also a movie – have a small discussion before the movie and then watch the movie
  - Encourage teens to participate in discussion by offering a free movie pass when the movie came out
- Changing the venue? – In Portsmouth one of their groups meets at the Press Room (bar in Portsmouth) – a librarian goes to the Press Room to lead the discussion

## Book Talks/Senior Facilities/Alternative formats

- Susan (Madbury) – She visits an age 80+ community. It's been hard for the group to agree on one book; for now, they each present a book they've read.
- Gwen (Rye) - Military book group. This is a group with older gentleman. Often they will talk about the book for maybe 5 minutes and then talk about war stories/their past. Regardless of the time devoted to discussing the book, it's still important for this group to get together.
- Cathy (Portsmouth) – Portsmouth chooses two different books on a subject, (or members can also choose their own book on the same subject). They discuss the common subject more than discussion on individual books.
- Susan (Madbury) - “Last Chance” Book Club for titles people don't really want to read – e.g. *Middlemarch*.
- Cookbook Book Club –
  - Liz (North Hampton) – The first book group she did for the Cookbook book group was using one book, *The Smitten Kitchen*. The book group met on a Saturday at noon. 4-5 members attended and each made a dish from the cook book (there was a sign-up ahead of time so there were no duplicates). Great discussion on each person's method and the taste of things. Second attempt was unfortunately during a town meeting/discussion. The theme this time was Soup Swap – unfortunately it was now as successful as the first meeting. It's a lot of prep and maybe not something to do every month. Liz is probably going to wait until the fall to try this again. People were very interested, but not a lot of them actually participated.
  - Wendy (Lane) - Soup program – they have a New World Soup contest. They make up a list of different ingredients and have patrons bring 10-15 soups. The library provides bowls, spoons, water. Each person who tastes the soups votes on them and they have chefs that come in as well. Tasting the soups is open to everyone in the library, not just the cooks.
  - Hannah (Pelham) - Cook Book Explorers – they meet every month with a different theme

(e.g. Amish food, mystery ingredients, etc.) Everyone brings something to share. 6-7 people. The program is run at lunch (1pm) and draws younger people (30 year-olds).

- Alyssa (Derry) – Movie group and cook book group. There is one librarian who runs the cook book group – a lot of the same people attend.

#### Publicizing book groups

- Alyssa (Derry) – Good Reads page for book groups – Alyssa adds what they are reading and when they are meeting
- Rating the book afterwards – especially when you have two different groups reading the same book. This rating would also be good for a Good Reads page. Shawna (Rye) makes these ratings known to other patrons too.