

Christine

This podcast is produced on the ancestral homeland of the Nooksack and Lummi people. They have been its' stewards since time immemorial, respecting the land, river and ocean with the understanding that everything is connected, related and alive. We acknowledge the elders and their collective and individual plights and achievements. We consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration and settlement that bring us together today and we pursue ongoing action to build lasting relationships and grow together so that all may prosper.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

WCLS in Whatcom County presents Library Stories, a podcast to open your eyes to all the ways your local public libraries matter. Join us as we reveal the power of sharing at the library. I'm your host Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator for the Whatcom County Library System. And today... Alright, here I am once again with my boss, Mary Vermillion.

Mary

Happy summer, Neil.

Neil

It is summer now. We're recording it in summer and you're going to be listening to it in summer. And what a wonderful summer. You know, it's always nice to feel the change of seasons.

Mary

Absolutely.

Neil

When fall happens, I'm happy that it's fall and when winter happens, it's nice to have that change. But when summer comes, it's definitely, you know, a time to just smile and take in all the fun.

Mary

Right. Show your arms and your legs and the long days. And yeah, it's nice.

Neil

The long days mean more things are going to happen, and we've had just a busy, busy summer already and a lot more to come.

Mary

Yeah, and there's so many just happy things that have been happening at the library in the last few months. And I know you have a big one to share today.

Neil

I do. I do. So in May, actually on May the fourth.

Mary

Yes, she'll tell you why.

Neil

She'll tell you why. We had a celebration at the Ferndale Library that I don't think we've ever had before.

Mary

It might be a first, yeah.

Neil

I've been here a long time in the county anyway and I haven't heard of this before, but.

Mary

So, if a listener, if you know that we're wrong when we make this announcement, this, you send Neil a note, yeah.

Neil

Sure, send me what you know. If you know something, but what I know is that on May 4th, one of our staff, Catherine Watson got married in the Ferndale Library.

Mary

Yeah. And you shared Catherine's photos. Catherine and her husband, Anthony, and you shared their photos on social media, and it blew up.

Neil

Oh, people love to see just that happiness happening in the library.

Mary

Yeah, everybody loves a love story, right? And a library love story. Even better.

Neil

Ten times more love.

Mary

Yeah, so, Neil posted on Facebook and Instagram. Yeah. And it really, really blew up on our Facebook page. So, wander over there if you haven't seen it already, and attend the wedding, like nearly 70,000 other people have so far. It's pretty incredible.

Neil

Yeah, definitely the most well received Facebook posts that we have made in the time that I've been working here.

Mary

Yeah, absolutely. I think we did a little deep dive and that's our most popular I believe and rightly so because it's a happy, wonderful story and the photos are really cute. Catherine and her Doc Martins and everybody's commenting on the fashion choices and great photos in the shelves at the Ferndale Library, which of course is a beautiful building, a perfect setting and so you said, you know, I think I need to get her on the podcast.

Neil

I just wanted to. I just wanted to share in this and bring this to our listeners here because it's such a wonderful thing and sitting down with Catherine and with Anthony. They're just so nice. I mean, everything was just such a, it was a sweet interview. That's how I would describe it. It was just a sweet interview.

Mary

Yeah. Absolutely. I like I had a sneak peek and I agree. I think especially at the end, I think you brought a little tear to my eye. So yeah.

Neil

Well, that's good, yeah.

Mary

But I'm easy. I'm an easy crier, so.

Neil

You're tough boss, but an easy crier.

Mary

Easy crier. I'm a Romantic, but.

Neil

The heart of gold. Yeah.

Mary

Yeah, all. But that's so. That's one happy thing. But there are a handful, at least, of other really happy things. I think that one is that we recently shared with the public the plans for the Birch Bay Library, which, you know, we have the funding to get started with that, we're still raising some funds thanks to the Friends of the Birch Bay Library, just to help cover unexpected construction costs and other unfunded amenities. But in general, that project is underway and so we had a meeting, an engagement meeting with the community up there to share the plans. And so we've got a little audio from that as well. So that's a happy thing that we'll share on this week. It's the Summer Reading Kick Off parties at all of our branches. So.

Neil

Yeah.

Mary

In the bookmobile we've had people of all ages, readers of all ages coming in to get their Summer Reading cards and to think about what they want to read and to help us plant more trees in Whatcom County with the Whatcom.

Neil

This is the second year.

Mary

Yeah, with Whatcom Million Trees Project. And I wanna say and happily thank the Whatcom County Library Foundation for sponsoring our Summer Reading program and making it possible for us to give free books to everyone under the age of 18 during the Summer Reading Kick-Off Parties and to plant these trees in Whatcom County.

Neil

So, it's free books for everyone under 18, free trees for everybody. Maybe I shouldn't say it that way. Free books for everyone under 18 and for the rest of us, we all enjoy trees being planted throughout the county.

Mary

Yeah. And the activities are really fun, right? Like hug a tree, you know, read a book to a tree and recommend a book. Like, it's really fun things to do with. But, you know, on your own or with friends and family, it's really fun.

Neil

Right. And then you and then you bring those activities into the library and let the staff know they mark them down and we get, we get credit for all of the activities and 100 activities equals one tree.

Mary

One tree. That's right. Yeah. And we're hoping for 250, so.

Neil

So. Yeah. And I've been tracking them and so far we're, so far we're up to 20 trees.

Mary

Ohh wow, last time I looked it was 11, so that's wow.

Neil

Well, that was last week.

Mary

That's going fast, yeah

Neil

This week? Yeah. And next week, by the time the listeners hear this, it'll be even higher than that.

Mary

Yeah. So, you can go to wcls.org/summer-reading. Yeah. And Neil has that, of course, in the show notes, too. And you can look for it. But every week, Neil adds up where we're at and helps the forest grow on our online tracking system.

Neil

And there's a nice little picture of the trees that keeps growing, keeps adding more. I get to add more trees to it every week.

Mary

Ah, isn't that a lovely little other duties as assigned task, yeah.

Neil

Yeah. That's exactly what that is. It wasn't in my job description, but that's what I want to do.

Mary

Hmm. Funny how that works,

Neil

What else is going on?

Mary

Yeah. And then like, well, the last fun thing I want to share today, I think that we should dedicate this podcast to one of our most loyal listeners.

Neil

Yes.

Mary

And one of your best kind critiquers, right?

Neil

Sometimes kind, but always honest.

Mary

Honest critiquers.

Neil

She is all this an honest critique.

Mary

Yeah. So, Carol Oberton, who is WCLS's Facilities Planning Coordinator, retired today, it's Tuesday, June 25th.

Neil

Yeah.

Mary

And it's Carol's retirement. She's worked at the library system since September 2010. So, that's pretty amazing, right? Yeah. 14 years almost. So she. I was asking her, I was like, "What was the first project she did?" And she moved the, we used to have a library in Maple Falls. And then she had to move that library to the new location at North Fork in Kendall. And so that was the very first thing she's done. But she's done everything in between, you know. She was saying she worked on the Sumas Library and then she worked again on the Sumas Library after the flood. She's worked on libraries, you know, again everywhere across the county.

Neil

Yeah, every single Whatcom County Library.

Mary

Yeah. I mean, she's got her hand in everything and the design and the furnishings and the, you know, I think the bottom line way to think about what Carol does for the libraries is to make the physical experience of being in the library the best it can be for patrons and for staff. She improves that experience for those of us who work in the library buildings, and she's definitely always thinking about what could make this a better experience for patrons. How do I improve the physical environment of a library building? So, she works on projects like new carpeting. Lynden's new carpeting just went in. She works on moving shelving around. Take a look at whatever Everson looks like now, considering what it looked like before, it was great and friendly and wonderful and cozy before, but she really helped with sight lines and with spaces, so people felt like they could move around and find what they needed. And have the space that they needed. I mean it's just, she has a real skill and it's very thoughtful, very creative and always, you know, kept budget in mind. So, she made the most of the money that we have. So.

Neil

When I had talked to her today about the Ferndale Library, where she had designed the children's area.

Mary

Yeah.

Neil

And put a lot of thought into it, but it looks just so like naturally, of course, that's what it would look like and I brought my, we brought our grandson there. He's 2 ½, to get his first library card at the Ferndale Library, and he was so at home. It was just so natural the pieces that are in the kids area we're just such a natural place to play and he just felt at home and he was, yeah, he was there. He wasn't, he wasn't going to, you know, he wasn't ready to leave when it was time to leave because he enjoyed it so much.

Mary

And that's Carol's magic. She makes these spaces be a space you want to linger. Makes the space efficient, makes you feel comfortable there. So, Carol, thank you. Happy retirement. And this one's for you. Let's listen to the, listen to what you have for this episode, Neil.

Neil

Alright, here we go.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

Well, as Mary said earlier, she spent some time at the Birch Bay Vogt Library Community Engagement Session and she asked community members what they were looking forward to doing at the library. We're going to hear from State Senator Sharon Shewmake, along with some other Birch Bay Friends of the Library and fans, including Danielle, Di, Dora Lee, Connie, Heraclea, Jan and Ruth.

Mary

So I'm here with Di Marrs Smith. Di, What's the first thing you wanna do when the new library opens?

Di

The first thing that I want to do when the new library opens is be here, read the paper and just greet everybody as they come in. We're really excited to have everybody come to the

library. And I can just see that, you know, sitting on the porch, reading the paper, having a great view and just being able to be in the space, just really excited.

Mary

It's taken many, many years to get to where we are now. What's the secret of success for having a dream and getting it to the end, to the finish line?

Di

That's a really good question. I think the secret to success is never giving up hope, always planning for the pivot and having a great group of people that are a good team, that have the same vision that you do and never giving up. So just really keep going on and moving forward so you can get that vision completed.

Mary

Well and you guys definitely did it.

Di

It's taken a lot of people so we're very, very excited that we've had so many people behind us with this project and that we had so many people stay with us through all of it, all the highs, all the lows.

Mary

And how can people get involved now if they're like, "oh, the library is actually going to happen, I want to get involved." What should they do?

Di

They can contact me at the friendsofthebirchbaylibrary.org site. They can send me an e-mail at fobblpresident@gmail.com and if you really need to look for me, call me at the Lynden Library. You can find me there.

Mary

What's the first thing you're looking forward to doing here at the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express?

Sharon

I want to take my kids here and I want to go play out in the mud and then I want to wipe off their hands and then go look at books to see what they just saw and what they learned

about and have that connection to the outdoors and reading and books and libraries and have those two be seamless.

Mary

Yeah.

Mary

This project has taken many, many years to come together. You've seen this happen. You know when you're in your role, your statewide role. So, what's the secret to getting a project like this to the finish line?

Sharon

It's absolutely community members. Everything cool takes 10 years to do. This is just what I've learned whether you're talking about this project or Lummi Island has a new preserve that took at least 10 years to put together. So, things happened. They don't happen fast. But if you have people that are willing to put in the work year after year, not lose sight of the ball, we do big things together and that's really exciting. The project, there was some folks in the Senate with the scope change, so when they couldn't get the full project and they had to go to 2 million, Dora Lee and some others, they came up and they came and they lobbied us in the Senate and they really there are few people that didn't want to send this library project forward and they charmed the pants out of them. And they saved it and it was awesome to see.

Mary

And Danielle, what does it mean for the Birch Bay community when you know this project itself? What will it fulfill for the community?

Danielle

I mean, this is such a special place, right? Like, this is a fantastic place to have events. It's a fantastic place for families to come and recreate, and I think that it's just going to embody the Birch Bay community in a way that's really, really special.

Mary

And what are you looking forward to doing when it opens?

Danielle

Bringing my kids here, letting them go, and I'm going to read on the porch.

Mary

Sounds like a great day today to me.

Mary

Just chat with me. What's the first thing you want to do in the library opens here at the library?

Speaker 11

Come when the kids are here working on the computers and be so thankful they have a space to work on their homework and do the things that they need to do since school is so far away.

Mary

Yeah.

Speaker 11

That's why I'm here. For the kids, the teenagers and the kids that don't have some place to be in the afternoon.

Mary

What will it mean for them having this library open?

Speaker 11

It's gonna be great. I mean we work on group projects together.

Mary

And what? So, what happens now for Birch Bay kids? They come home from school in Blaine and...

Speaker 11

They're playing video games, I assume. I don't know.

Mary

So, there's just not much of them to do.

Speaker 11

Not much of them do. We're far from having a Birch Bay Elementary School, even though we really need one, we're far from it. It's not going to happen anytime soon with all the cuts that's happening, so this is exciting and the little kids, I mean, I love taking my kids to

Storytime and it gives something for those moms and dads are home with their kids. Something to do some place to go where it's uplifting and you get to meet other parents and not feel so isolated.

Mary

We're here tonight hearing about the new Birch Bay Vogt Library express. What is the first thing you want to do when it opens, Dora Lee?

Dora Lee

Oh, wow. I want to come and I want to sit on the lawn, and I want to get a good book and I want to spend some time here and I also want to be here because this is where the community is going to gather and we have been needing a gathering place and I love people. I love the people of Birch Bay and we're just going to enjoy it. Chit, chat.

Mary

And yeah, a wonderful gathering space, but a library in particular.

Dora Lee

Yes.

Mary

That little addition of it being a library, why does that make it extra special?

Dora Lee

Well, for children in Birch Bay, we need this kind of a facility. You know, we don't have a school and the kids will be able to be here. I know I would. I would get the paper from the Lummi Island Library, my friend on Lummi Island, would send me the little paper of all the activities that go on for children at the library and I just dreamed of that for our kids in Birch Bay and the families in Birch Bay. We need it.

Mary

Yeah. Absolutely. Well, thank you for all the amazing work that you did, yeah.

Dora Lee

Oh, it was great. It was great. We had a great team and we just kept on keeping on.

Mary

It sounds like you're not stopping like you still have more ideas and hopes and dreams. That's exciting.

Dora Lee

Well for sure. You know this space will kind of grow with us and we're excited.

Mary

Great. Thanks, Dora Lee.

Mary

When the library opens what's the first thing that you want to do?

Speaker 9

I want to use a meeting room and I want to have book club in the meeting room with champagne. Can we have? Can we have champagne or do you?

Mary

I think we should look into that. Yeah.

Speaker 9

Yeah, this is Jan. She's in our book club. This is Mary Vermillion.

Jan

Hi Mary

Mary

Hi, what's the first thing you wanna do when the library opens?

Jan

Well, I think that sounds pretty good, but it would be nice to be able to, I don't live far from here, so it'd be nice to be able to walk down here in the morning and sit in one of the comfy chairs, have a cup of coffee and read the paper or read, you know, read my book or whatever. I'm just really looking forward to it. I really am.

Mary

Yeah. Why is it special that it's going to be a library versus you know, the building could have been lots of different things, but what makes it special?

Jan

Ohh for me, I've loved libraries since I was a child and my mom took me to the library in our hometown. I just thought it was a magical place and I've loved the libraries ever since. So.

Mary

Yeah, how about you the Heraclea? Why? Why a library? What makes it special?

Heraclea

Because I'm for a community and a library is like the center and the hub of the community, and I like to be into the hub of things.

Speaker

Yes, you do.

Heraclea

Yeah. So I run for community. I truly am, not only in Birch Bay, but in other areas of Whatcom County. I just love doing this kind of thing.

Mary

Yeah. And you, you've been even leading the Birch Bay Book Club.

Heraclea

Yes.

Mary

What does the book club create for a community?

Heraclea

It creates friendships, it creates new ideas, sharing with people that you don't totally agree with. It just is very full of, I just can't think of the word Mary, but it's very satisfying.

Jan

Really. Really is. Yeah, it really, really is. I feel like I've gotten to know the community a lot better just because I've been coming into the to the club every month, yeah.

Heraclea

Yes, because we have such a wide array of people in this community, all different ages. And so when we have book club, we get Jan's perspective who's 20 years younger than me. We get my perspective, we get Ruth's, we have some..

Ruth

I'm twenty years older than her.

Heraclea

older than her and we have wonderful group of men that come. And they're interesting people, and they've done interesting things, yes.

Speaker 5

Yeah, that I was thinking the same thing.

Mary

Ruth, what's the first thing you want to do when the library opens?

Ruth

Oh my goodness, I just come would come here to glorify the completion. I have told them that they have to do it before I die and.

Mary

We're almost there.

Ruth

We're almost there.

Mary

Why did you get involved with the library project, all those years ago?

Ruth

Oh, because libraries always been part of my life. Reading and it just is an essential part of life, I believe, and we were on rationing of it here with our little bit of library so we needed, we needed it. I think, I think we'll be very educational and collegial, I think it will be very good for us.

Mary

Yeah. When I ask people about the library, you guys always talk about coming here on a nice sunny day, but what about on a gray rainy, long winter's night?

Speaker 9

You know that makes it all the better because then the conversations are really good because then we're really cause that's when we come in here and have book club, when it's been raining like crazy. We just don't want to leave. We're so snug, snug in a rug, you know that. We just don't want to leave. And you know, Ruth was one of the first people to get the idea of even having a library. She was one of the, you are a coffee clutch. You and Dora Lee and Pat . And the three of them decided that you wanted to bring the library to work today and you know just that one conversation and look where we are.

Speaker 5

That's quite accomplished.

Mary

What's the what's the secret to getting a project done like that? Having a dream and seeing it come to the fruition?

Ruth

Well, I don't know because we're still working.

Mary

We're almost there, though, So what have been like secrets that have made this move forward?

Ruth

I just think because we thought it was really important. And our group has not changed very much from the beginning and we were just a group of people that think it's a very important thing that that's been important to us and we believe it's important to others.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

I'm here with two special guests today. I'm here with Catherine, who is a Public Services Clerk at Ferndale. Hi, Catherine.

Catherine

Hi, Neil. Yeah, my name is Catherine. I'm a Public Services Clerk for Ferndale Library. Basically, just doing a lot of clerical work. Filling out forms, doing online registrations,

sending people their library cards to the mail, doing supply orders, stuff like that and with me today is my husband, Anthony.

Anthony

It's nice to be here. Thank you for having me.

Neil

I'm glad to see both of you.

Catherine

Thank you.

Neil

So, Catherine, how long have you been working for the library?

Catherine

The library I've been working here for a year since June 2nd.

Neil

Now that's great.

Catherine

Yeah, I moved here. We moved here in April. So, like two months prior.

Neil

Oh wow.

Catherine

Right. April. May. Yeah, April, may, June.

Anthony

At the end of April.

Catherine

At the end of April, we drove 3 days here from Houston, TX.

Neil

Wow. What made you pick Whatcom County?

Catherine

Anthony's job.

Anthony

There was a job opportunity that we came up for. It was hard to pass up because I like the area. Yeah, I like being able to see green.

Neil

That's, I mean we have a lot of green here. So what, what is your job Anthony?

Anthony

I work as a third party petrochemical analyst. We essentially test gasoline, fuel oil, diesels to make sure it's good to sell between the refineries and then eventually the consumer.

Neil

Wow. And OK and so. The reason that we have both Anthony and Catherine here is because a really special thing happened a few weeks ago. How long ago was that?

Anthony

Almost a month now.

Catherine

Almost a month, May 4th. Yeah, yeah. May the fourth be with you was our wedding day.

Neil

It was your wedding day.

Catherine

We got married here at Ferndale Library.

Anthony

Yeah, it was very special. Very lovely, got the full works, guest and a photographer and people watching on a computer.

Neil

Oh, you live streamed it. Oh, that's great.

Catherine

We did, we had our family in Houston, Texas watch on Zoom.

Neil

Wow. And so this all took place in the in the main library there.

Catherine

Some it actually took place in the meeting room. We did the ceremony. And Maggie Mae, who is my coworker at Administration at Whatcom County Library System, officiated the ceremony.

Neil

Wow.

Catherine

I went, I went on our employee page and was like, "is anybody here an officiant?" And of course, like six people were like "I am. I can marry you. I can marry you." But Maggie Mae was the 1st.

Neil

One of the many services we offer at the library.

Catherine

Yeah, it's just, like, really nice people.

Neil

Really nice people and some of them could marry you. Wow. So, you have the actual wedding here, and then you had a reception?

Catherine

Well, sorta. We brought punch and pie because Anthony's favorite movie is South Park, the movie. And it's like if you bring, if you say punch and pie more people will come. So we brought punch and pie from Costco.

Neil

OK, wow. Perfect. I mean, that really does sound good. I like pie a lot better than cake personally, so.

Catherine

I do too.

Neil

How was the? How was the ceremony? I mean, how did it go? What was tell us about it?

Catherine

So first I reserved the meeting room online. I wanted to do the library because it's like it's a beautiful building. I feel very safe here. I've always enjoyed the library. And then we also picked it because it's free, it's a free venue. I mean, not to be weird about it, but planning a wedding and elopement is really expensive and the, you know, the meet, to reserve the meeting room for a special event is free.

Neil

I mean, that's one of the amazing things about the libraries in general is that all of these. We have all of these things in the middle of the community offered to the whole public for free.

Anthony

Yeah, it was very lovely. It's very nice to be able to come in and be able to plan around having an event, you know where it's going to be, you know where everybody knows where it's at, you know. They know where should be.

Catherine

Yeah. You know everybody who comes in here like. Well me working here I know all the regulars. There's nobody going to be having a meltdown randomly in the middle of the ceremony. Like it's just going to be, you know, like a pretty, pretty normal awesome day.

Neil

And this was a Saturday.

Catherine

This was a Saturday.

Neil

And so the library was open for business and you were in the meeting room getting married conducting a whole different business.

Catherine

I know it was kind of weird. It was really cool because we when we were done with the ceremony, like Maggie Mae, she married us. I don't know how to say it.

Neil

I think that's the way to say it.

Catherine

She married us. We walked around and took photos inside the library. We tried not to bother anybody who is browsing and I got to waved to a few regulars and then people kept walking up to us, giving us little trinkets.

Anthony

Yeah, that was very lovely.

Neil

Little trinkets.

Anthony

Children walk up and give you gifts.

Catherine

Yeah.

Anthony

Celebrate your wedding on top of you know all the important people that showed up.

Catherine

I know. So sweet. I didn't know. I didn't know people did that. Just like here's a rock. Happy, happy wedding. Happy marriage.

Neil

So just these little kids who didn't know that this was going to happen just kind of tried to find something to give you as a wedding gift. That's really amazing.

Catherine

Yes. Yeah, little kids and then little. And then the little and then strangers, just like random people I didn't know, just regulars. Yeah.

Anthony

Yeah, it's very. It's very different to see how nice everybody could be.

Neil

Yeah.

Catherine

Yeah.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

So I do want to talk about something that you had said when we talked in our e-mail before about how you feel about the library as far as being a place of safety or a place of tell me how you feel about the library.

Catherine

So for me, and I'm a little bit biased because now I work here, but like growing up, it's always been like a safe place for me to study, to read books, to learn. It's always been like a safe place for me to be myself. Like just as, like a weirdo bisexual kid trying to figure out, you know, where she fits in. Yeah, it's, I never, I never feel, you know, scared. Yeah. Yeah. My dad's been my dad and my dad and my mom have been taking me to the library since I was a kid. And it's just a free place where you can get books, play video games and chill, be, you know, just, like, kind of like be calm and be peaceful. And then always a good place to learn. Yeah, I'm sorry I'm rambling.

Neil

No, that's good. I mean, this is all good stuff. Anthony, do you have a library experience? Are you a library person?

Anthony

Sure. I don't want to give away my age too much, but in the early 2000s, when I was a freshly double-digit teen that's where all of my friends and I would congregate and play Runescape and Flash Flash Revolution.

Catherine

Yeah.

Anthony

And then eventually end up playing Dungeons and Dragons a bit, just at the library. So, it is very much a place where I can just be around my friends and not have to, you know, worry too much about, you know the things that you worry about as a young teen, like homework and whether or not you're going to get enough sleep.

Catherine

Oh yeah. And it's like a free place to hang out. You don't have to like, no obligatory like I have to buy a coffee every like hour if they want me to stay. You know, the most I have to worry about is whether or not I get too loud.

Anthony

Yeah.

Neil

Right. Yeah, right.

Catherine

You know, that's pretty much the only thing.

Neil

So, I'm thinking that early 2000s. I'm not doing the math or anything,

Anthony

A lot of that's 20 years ago now, so.

Neil

But it seems like that was the time when computers first started coming into the libraries. Yeah. So previous to that and I'm a lot older than you are.

Anthony

Yeah.

Neil

I mean that just wasn't even a thing, you know, and kids who came to the library, you know, they were just reading books. That was really what the library offered. So nowadays

besides computer games, there's also, ohh I don't know, things for kids to do. Well, one of the new things we have is ukuleles.

Catherine

Yeah.

Neil

Anyone can check out a ukulele. I try and get the word ukulele into every one of my podcasts these days because I'm a big ukulele fan.

Catherine

Yeah, I placed one on hold too.

Neil

Did you?

Catherine

Yeah. I want to learn how to play something.

Neil

Mm-hmm.

Catherine

Yeah, we have ukulele books, too you can check out, you know. And I just wanna learn how to play like, I don't know, like, video game theme songs and stuff like that.

Anthony

Ok.

Catherine

Yeah. Something like that.

Neil

That's pretty exciting, yeah.

Catherine

Our like wedding had a lot of video game themes in it, kinda. Did it?

Anthony

Yeah, you made a whole bunch of, made a whole bunch of stuff that had video stuff on it.

Catherine

Yeah. Yeah, we, yeah. We decorated this room with papel picado. This, like white banner that Mexican people make. I'm half Mexican and my mom, my mom was Mexican. My dad was white and this is something we would make for Dia de Muertos, but you can also make it for special events, so I made it for our wedding, and then I also ordered paper lanterns because Anthony is Vietnamese. So the papel picado represents my side. Paper lanterns represent his side, kind of meshed together.

Neil

Nice. Wow, that's great. So, Pep, how do you say that again?

Catherine

Papel picado.

Neil

Papel picado pap, pap, papel picado.

Catherine

Papel, papel picado.

Neil

Oh, papel picado. Paper, I know a little Spanish.

Catherine

Yeah, I don't know that much Spanish. I only know enough to say.

Anthony

Un pequito

Catherine

Un pequito, es tiempo comer, sietete.

Neil

Well.

Catherine

Basically, it's time to eat. Sit down.

Neil

Well, you know, of course you know we have Mango, the language app that's free at the library s, you could do a little Spanish.

Catherine

Yeah.

Neil

Learning if you wanted to.

Catherine

I'm excited. Yeah, that sounds great.

Neil

So did you have honeymoon plan? I mean, did you do exciting things?

Catherine

Yes, like a couple of days afterwards, after we dropped off our friends at the airport, we packed up all of our camping gear and our dog, Tui, he's a corgi mix, into the car and we took a 10-day trip.

Catherine

Basically down the West Coast, we hit up Redwoods National Forest. We went to LA and saw my friend Adair. Then after that we went to Joshua Tree, spent the night there. Then we drove back up, went to this tourist trap called The Trees of Mystery.

Anthony

Yeah.

Neil

Ohh, I've heard of that, yeah.

Catherine

There's like a giant Paul Bunyan statue outside with a giant Babe the Ox. The Blue Ox statue. And then we were heading to an Olympic National Park when we were like, I'm tired. Are you tired? He's like, I'm tired too. And I was like, you want to do you want to just

drive home? And he was like, do you want to drive home? And that's we do that for about 5 minutes where we go back and forth. And then we were like, wait, let's just go home. So, we spent the last three days, I think, just eating takeout and watching movies and staying inside.

Neil

I mean, that's a great vacation too.

Catherine

Yeah.

Anthony

It's very high on my list of priorities of like always wanting to do is just never leave the house.

Catherine

Yeah. Anthony is a homebody.

Neil

I hear you. I could do that too.

(interlude music plays)

Neil

I ran into you the other day. You were, were you training at the on the bookmobile?

Catherine

No, I've trained on the bookmobile before a couple of times.

Neil

OK.

Catherine

Greta the previous person, PSA on the Bookmobile had asked me to, if I could like, substitute on the Bookmobile couple of days in June and I said sure, I love the Bookmobile and I would honestly do it like full time if I could. But I have a lot of hours here right now,

so it's hard to balance it, but it's great like driving around to different parts of Whatcom County that don't have like close access to a library. It's a very rewarding experience. Everybody who comes to the bookmobile is like, "thank you so much for doing this."

Neil

Yeah, everybody loves the bookmobile.

Catherine

"Thank you for being here." Yeah, everyone's nice.

Neil

So, where did you go when you went the other day?

Catherine

Ah, where did we go? Glenhaven yeah.

Neil

Glenhaven, yeah.

Catherine

Yeah. It was, yeah, it was great.

Neil

It's a pretty, very pretty area.

Catherine

It's so pretty. We're right, we parked right next to a pond and a lot of animals and just was beautiful, even though it was windy, it's like a little gray, but I mean, it's a little bit gray all the time.

Neil

Around here, yeah.

Catherine

Yeah, it was nice. Like the kids came in and we're like, "yeah, where's the sloth?" because we, like, hide a sloth somewhere in the bookmobile.

Neil

You hide a sloth in the bookmobile?

Catherine

Yeah, just like a little stuffed animal sloth.

Neil

Oh.

Catherine

And we hide it in different places for the kids to find.

Neil

Oh. I didn't know that.

Catherine

You know, if they just want only a quick little game. Yeah. I don't know if Candace thought of it or Greta, but they're really good about that, like engaging the kids.

Neil

So, all the kids know that it's there and when they walk in, they want to find it.

Catherine

It's there. It's watching. Yeah. Yeah, it was great. And then people pick up their holds and then Candace is like, "Hey, have you checked out this book? Have you checked out this book? Have you checked out this book?" And they're like, "No, no. Yes. No." And she's real good at doing the up sell. So check this out.

Neil

Oh yeah? Well, and they really get to know that, there aren't that many people so they're very familiar with the people who show up.

Catherine

That's true. That's my favorite part, suggesting books and stuff to people.

Neil

Yeah. Yeah, well, that's a really good segue into a question I forgot to tell you that I was going to ask you. But, what, do you have any book recommendations?

Catherine

Oh my gosh.

Neil

Is there anything you're thinking of? Like, what are you reading right now that's exciting or something?

Catherine

I recently read *A Guest in the House* by Emily Carroll. She wrote a previous book called *Through The Woods*. It's like a spooky graphic novel for teens. This one, *A Guest in the House*, is meant for adults. And it's about a newlywed young woman who has moved into a house with her older husband and her daughter, and the daughter starts seeing the previous wife in the lake and then the new wife or you know the new wife who's moved in starts seeing the old wife too, and the new wife and old wife began talking to each other and it becomes very, very spooky. You can't tell what's real or not real anymore. And then Emily Carroll is a phenomenal artist, the majority, the most of the graphic novel's in black and white. But Emily uses red, color red and blue and yellow very poignantly throughout the book. You have to kind of figure out what that symbolism means.

Neil

Ohh wow.

Catherine

It's real spooky and at the end was so. the end was real shocking. And I still trying to figure out what it means. I go online and I'm like, "who's read *A Guest in the House*? Can you tell me what the ending means?" Like when you watch an A-24 movie and you have to go online and read a bunch of articles about it because you don't understand what you watched. This is a book kind of like that, if you like, A-24, you will like *A Guest in the House*.

Neil

OK, we'll get that. I'll put a link to it on the show notes. How about you, Anthony? Have you read anything recently that you've liked?

Anthony

Recently, no.

Neil

Or.

Anthony

I have a bunch I go back to.

Neil

What do you go back to?

Catherine

What about *Goodnight, Punpun*?

Anthony

Goodnight Punpun by Inio Asano. It's very fun book that if I explain any of the summary gives away too much.

Catherine

Yeah, but we do have volumes one through three here at the Ferndale Library. Yeah, and I want to sell it to people, but I'm like, how? How do you sell this book?

Anthony

Yeah, it's hard. I would just say Inio Asano is a very good artist, writer. So, everything is mapped out the way it should be.

Catherine

Yeah.

Anthony

and you find that out as you go along the story. Another one I keep going back to is **Genji Aitos Uzumaki**, which is very fun if you like.

Catherine

Oh yeah.

Anthony

Unexplained horror. There's a cohesive story throughout the entire thing, but it's just it's meant to be scary. It's meant to play with your brain a little bit.

Neil

Hmm.

Anthony

And then as far as the American stuff, I go back to reading *Swamp Thing* by Alan Moore and then Neil Gaiman, *Sandman* a bunch, which are also very famous, very, *Swamp Things* by Alan Moore is probably what epitome of comic book horror should be now.

Catherine

We also have that in the system as well.

Anthony

Yeah. And then Neil Gaiman, very famous for *Sandman*.

Neil

For sure, for sure.

Catherine

Yeah, we have one of the Sandman paperbacks too, yeah.

Anthony

Yeah, and those I go back and read those quite a bit. Those probably high on my list.

Catherine

Mhmm.

Neil

Did you ever read Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*?

Catherine

I did. It was good.

Anthony

I have not had a chance to go through it yet, but I've been meaning to.

Catherine

That's OK.

Neil

I read it, and then I listened to the audiobook and the audiobook was really well done.

Catherine

Really?

Neil

Yeah, it was voiced really well, and I could really get into it.

Catherine

Cool.

Anthony

I'll check it out.

Catherine

Yeah.

Neil

So. Yeah, Neil Gaiman is.

Catherine

Yeah.

Neil

Amazing writer.

Catherine

He's a great storyteller.

Neil

He also did a book about Norse mythology.

Anthony

I saw that recently too.

Neil

And that, I mean, you know that can be kind of dry, but he really brought the gods to life. You know, it just made it really powerful.

(Interlude music plays)

Neil

Well, congratulations on your wedding, and I hope you have, you know, 100 years of fun and graphic comics and things to do and just, you know. Having gotten married this last year, really kind of made me because you know, I always say about her that it's like she's from the neighborhood. She wasn't. We didn't grow up in the same neighborhood but, we grew up in similar situations and it's like we, you know, we know each other in a way that I don't, you know, I don't do that with other people.

Catherine

Wow, that's cool.

Anthony

It's very difficult to find someone on the same wavelength as you.

Neil

Yeah, yeah. And I can see the morbidness. And you know, and the just the fun that you guys seem to have is just kind of, you're definitely, you know, you're definitely partners in life.

Catherine

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, that's kind of how we met because we're both like, I don't know, kind of like depressed, still sort of depressed, but we're both willing to talk about how sad we are and I could tell Anthony's like how sad I feel all the time. And he wasn't like, "oh, don't be sad or don't die. Don't feel that way." He was like, "Oh, me too." And that was great. That was so nice to be around, to be with somebody I could be so honest with. And it didn't scare him or freak him out or make me put, make, he didn't make me push that side of me away. And that was great. Yeah, he's really awesome.

Neil

That's very sweet.

Catherine

Yeah.

Neil

OK. Well, on that note, I'm going to say and once again congratulations and thank you for being here and talking to us.

Anthony

Thank you so much for having me.

Catherine

Thank you so much for having me.

Neil

I hope it was fun.

Catherine

It was fun.

Neil

Well, that's our show. I'd like to thank our wonderful newlyweds, Catherine and Anthony, for sharing their unforgettable story with us. And we want to thank the folks who attended our Birch Bay Vogt Library Community Engagement Session. Connie, Danielle, Di, Heraclea Jan, Ruth and State Senator Sharon Shewmake and of course, thanks to my boss, Mary Vermillion. I expect some new phases of life this summer and shall try to get the honey from each moment. Until next time this is Neil McKay for the Whatcom County Library System. Happy summer, friends.