

# Day 1 Notes - Cohort B

October 18, 2021

## [Link to Agenda Wall](#)

This is the place to share your Open Space Session notes. Use the Table of Contents to click to your room, or scroll down. If you need help, ask one of your hosts!

*These notes will be posted on the Reimagining Bookstores website shortly after the gathering. We suggest capturing what you think others need to see/hear/know versus detailed verbatim notes.*

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## **PRIVACY STATEMENT**

**These notes will be shared publicly. Other participant data is also being retained by the organizers of Reimagining Bookstores for use in future convenings. If you would like to opt-out of your data being shared or retained, please email [support@reimaginingbookstores.org](mailto:support@reimaginingbookstores.org)**

# Breakout Participants Snapshots

## Round 1

Breakout Rooms - In Progress ×

▼ **Unassigned** 1

- Michelle Ferrier-HOST-USA Garden (not joined)

▼ **Butterfly Garden** Join

▼ **Room 2** Join

- Alex Green, Publishers Weekly, He/Him
- Carolee, Kepler's, Bookseller, she/her, SF Area
- Connie Hale writer Oakland CA
- Humaira Ghilzai (she/her)
- Irene (she/her) and Melissa (she/her), Beacon Hill Books & Cafe
- Jahtiek Long :: He/Him :: P&T Knitwear :: N
- Jill Hendrix - Fiction Addiction, SC - Owner/Coach
- Kevin Smokler
- Kristen McLean -NPD BookScan
- Laura Joakimson
- Madi Mullen
- Marilyn McConnell
- Meghan Goel, BookPeople
- Missy - Katy Budget Books
- Robin L / Shelf Awareness
- Ruth NYC PRH publisher
- Ryan Jackson - Open Books (Chicago)
- Sara Look, co-owner, Charis Books and More, Decatur, GA she/her
- Scott James, SF, Author
- Kim - Third Place Books | Seattle, WA

▼ **Room 3** Join

- Bradley Jones
- Christine Longmuir/Two Rivers
- Donna Paz Kaufman

▼ **Room 4** Join

- Andy Hunter, Bookshop.org, he/him
- Diana Montano (she/her), Outreach at Science Friday - Brooklyn
- Eileen McGervey (She/Her)
- Joan Griffin McCabe

Broadcast Message to All Close All Rooms

Breakout Rooms - In Progress ✕

- Joan Griffin McCabe
- Nasim Ghasemiyeh, Alta Journal, she/her
- Robert Martin, MPLS
- Tanya Mills, Bookstore Leader of The Book Bungalow, Utah
- Veronica Liu :: she/her :: Word Up Community Bookshop

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▼ Room 5 Join

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▼ Room 6 Join

- Alana I Schuler Books + Nicola's Books, Michigan
- Christopher Miya, Publisher, Heyday (he/him)
- Dan Gilbert
- Dawn Kepler
- deb leonard
- Donna Liu | Kepler's bookseller (she/her)
- Eric Green Berkeley, CA Mrs. Dalloway's Bookstore
- Eric Knudson, Fable.co (he/him)
- Hannah Harlow / Book Shop of Beverly Farms
- Kate Litondo, Seattle, she/her
- Kristianne (she/her) - Shelf Awareness
- lauren gallagher
- Maya Shanbhag Lang, Author + VP at Zibby Books
- Michelle Montague, Holiday House
- Nick Johnson
- Pam Grange
- Patricia Nelson
- Perla, CEO CommunityConnect Labs
- Shelley Macbeth, Blue Heron Books, Uxbridge ON, Canada
- Vanessa - SF Bay Area - Author (she/her) (V. MacLaren-Wray)

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▼ Room 7 Join

- Amanda Hall- Keplers
- Charlie Kruse (He/Him, Bookseller, Kepler's)
- Dick - VisionWorks Distribution
- Esme, she/they, Asheville, Firestorm Books and Coffee, Co-Owner,
- Jamilah Horton - House Of Pages Bookstore
- Kristin Hall, She/Her, Bookseller, Hicklebees
- Roy Karp - bookseller
- Stephanie Heinz, Print: A Bookstore (she/her)
- Suzanna Hermans (she/her), co-owner, Oblong Books, NY State

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▼ Room 8 Join

## Round 2

Breakout Rooms - In Progress

Room 26 [Join](#)

- Beth Koehler- Publisher, PRH NY
- Bradley Jones
- Carol/owner/BookPeople of Moscow
- Jill Hendrix - Fiction Addiction, SC - Owner/Coach
- Shelley Macbeth, Blue Heron Books, Uxbridge ON, Canada

Room 27 [Join](#)

Room 28 [Join](#)

- Vanessa - SF Bay Area - Author (she/her) (V. MacLaren-Wray)

Room 29 [Join](#)

- Christine Longmuir/Two Rivers
- Dan Gilbert
- Dawn Kepler
- deb leonard
- Diana Montano (she/her), Outreach at Science Friday - Brooklyn
- Donna Paz Kaufman
- Humaira Ghilzai (she/her)
- Joan Griffin McCabe
- Marilyn McConnell
- Ryan Jackson - Open Books (Chicago)
- Sanj Kharbanda /he/him/his
- Sara Look, co-owner, Charis Books and More, Decatur, GA she/her
- Tanya Mills, Bookstore Leader of The Book Bungalow, Utah

Room 30 [Join](#)

- Charlie Kruse (He/Him, Bookseller, Kepler's)
- Donna Liu | Kepler's bookseller (she/her)
- Kim - Third Place Books | Seattle, WA
- Nasim Ghasemiyeh, Alta Journal, she/her
- Ruth NYC PRH publisher
- Stephanie Heinz, Print: A Bookstore (she/her)

Room 31 [Join](#)

- Alex Green, Publishers Weekly, He/Him
- Amanda Hall- Keplers
- caroleehazard
- Christopher Miva, Publisher, Heudav (he/him)

- KUTN NYC PRM publisner
- Stephanie Heinz, Print: A Bookstore (she/her)

▼ Room 31

- Alex Green, Publishers Weekly, He/Him
- Amanda Hall- Keplers
- caroleehazard
- Christopher Miya, Publisher, Heyday (he/him)
- Eileen McGervey (She/Her)
- Elaine Katzenberger
- Eric Green Berkeley, CA Mrs. Dalloway's Bookstore
- Esme, she/they, Asheville, Firestorm Books and Coffee, Co-Owner,
- Irene (she/her) and Melissa (she/her), Beacon Hill Books & Cafe
- Jamilah Horton - House Of Pages Bookstore
- Kelly Munn
- Kristin Hall, She/Her, Bookseller, Hicklebees
- Maya Shanbhag Lang, Author + VP at Zibby Books
- Meghan Goel, BookPeople
- Michelle Montague, Holiday House
- Nathan Halter
- Nick Johnson, Libro.fm Audiobooks, Seattle, WA - He/Him
- Pam Grange
- Roy Karp - bookseller
- Scott James, SF, Author
- Suzanna Hermans (she/her), co-owner, Oblong Books, NY State
- Veronica Liu :: she/her :: Word Up Community Bookshop

▼ Room 32

- Dick - VisionWorks Distribution
- Kate Litondo, Seattle, she/her
- Missy - Katy Budget Books
- Patricia Nelson

▼ Room 33

▼ Room 34

▼ Room 35

# Butterfly Space

## Topics:

- **Bookstore as Community Activator**

**Participants:** Christine Longmuir

## Notes:

After attending 2 sessions-One with Bradley Jones/Real Estate and Non-profits,

# Room 2

**Topic:** How can indie bookstores remain true community spaces in a polarized society? If they can't or don't want to, what are the consequences?

**Host:** Jill Hendrix

**Participants:** Ruth Liebmann from PRH, Connie (writer), Sara Look from Charis, Ryan Jackson from Open Books, Jahtiek Long, Kevin Smokler, Katy Budget Books used bookstore, Alex Green from PW, Humaira (writer/consumer), Kim / Third Place, and many others

## Notes:

What makes a community space?

- welcome: staff, books you recognize
- physical space: community meeting area, reading room, top of mind place to meet people
- cafe/food
- programming (like offered by museums and other cultural institutions)
- wayfinding
- how offering yourself to the community, accessible, holding out olive branches
- how to make everyone feel welcome, whether it's a community demographic that usually shops with you or not
- making sure your staff looks like/represents the actual demographic of your neighborhood
- but also how the community comes at you (especially in more urban areas) and how that affects your frontline staff and their feelings of safety
- semicolon in Chicago given as a great example

Charis as true social mission store vs Fiction Addiction as general indie vs stores that "act as if mission driven, but just a general indie". Where are the lines drawn? Does it matter? What is the goal of the store? As a business coach, I tell clients that the 1st priority of business should be to ensure viability of the business. How is your goal different if you are a social mission store?

How to be profitable enough to:

- offer free things to community
- pay frontline employees a sustainable wage
- be not stressed enough to be truly welcoming
- funding model: author adoption program

Frontline staff

- the first face of your business
- make your space feel welcoming
- usually lowest paid
- safety concerns/issues re books that you stock tend to bring in certain customers, promote certain conversations they don't want to have.
- can't be pedantic/snooty; does becoming a "social mission" make that tendency worse
- need to be a values fit with the store; does freedom of speech as a store value limit staff diversity?

# Room 3

**Topic:Real Estate Trust**

**Host: Bradley Jones**

**Participants:** Donna, Paz, Bradley Jones, Christine Longmuir

**NOTES:**

- Affordable Occupancy is the foundation/essential component for the future of retail bookselling
- Check out Mainvest.com
- Look for community partners with Property or Wealth-Tech titans?
- Community Connection and collaboration to develop concept to present to investors or property owners
- Mine business districts business partners
- How do we get stronger as we are?

*Post-session Note:*

The [East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative](#) an initiative that is breaking new ground in the RE Trust space that is well worth taking a look at. They and their partner, the [Sustainable Economies Law Center](#), are very interested in spreading the model they have developed, comparing notes, etc. [Ben Roberts]

# Room 4

**Topic:** How can indie bookstores get the kind of public support that libraries, etc. get to alleviate the financial burdens?

**Host:** Tanya Mills

**Participants:** Eileen McGervey, Diana Montano, Robert Martin, Joan Griffin McCabe, Veronica Liu, Andy Hunter (John Mutter, Pam Grange, Kevin Smokler, Ethan Nosowsky, Aziza stopped by)

## Notes:

- Are there “grants” that bookstores can apply for that are similar to the kind of support themselves like libraries?
- Asking Veronica: wondering about founding of Word Up (in Manhattan), existing as a co-op + non-profit (although legally you need to be a for-profit to be a co-op)
  - Started as a week-long endeavor 10 years ago that was buoyed by volunteers in the neighborhood, plus crowdfunding to eventually open 8 years ago in its current space;
  - In order to do all the events, spaces, etc. was given advice that we should apply as a “literature access” nonprofit, which exists as a program of the nonprofit; had to work with the board to get approval - had to build the nonprofit board to support that program to give access to people who wanted books/reading in the area
  - Library nearby? Yes, but closed when we opened, and the idea of ownership of books, we wanted to encourage that with our neighbors - although we have a relationship with them and other orgs in the area
  - Created a “CSB” program (like a CSA - pay up front, get wooden nickels and a tote, and come take books and use the nickels) + other member programs
  - Spending time grant-writing - first few were program grants (breakfast with books, kids, etc.) - small ones from local hospital supporting neighborhood, neighborhood committee - now have City Council funding, Manhattan Borough President’s Office, NY Council on the Arts, foundation fundings
- Diana: how do you work with bookstores/sellers and libraries?
  - Manage the Book Club program at a radio program, which has own just from a part of the radio show to an online community that designs events and other programs for readers
  - Want to work more with bookstores in a way that is mutually beneficial, but doesn’t make bookstores feel like they are “competing” with each other - or our relationship with libraries!
- Eileen: what is it about library relationships that you’re interested in?
  - Want to do more community outreach
  - But we’re also in an area where the rent is beginning to outpace the area, so we’re paying more for rent than we have in the past
  - We’d like get funding to support a Teen Book events (800-1000 attendees) but we need money to bring authors to the event or subsidize book costs
  - Eileen in chat: “And to be able to have authors visit schools so kids can hear from them directly. Sometimes there’s an minimum number of books that must be purchased for author to attend. Would be great to be able to provide those.”
- Robert: fruitful way of thinking about non-profit/for-profit bookstore/seller model
  - “Assist in the distribution of books to the general public” can be a way that non-profit bookstores
  - Wondering why bookstores aren’t taking advantage of those tax codes as much
  - Disseminate resources that are available, keep tabs on the resources - and libraries/non-profit relationships is something I’m really interested in
- Joan: was interested in joining a children’s bookstore so joined ABA
  - Background in politics in NYC; was a council member
  - Work with libraries, access to reading, “community worker” and went from politics to education, ended as a reading specialist - best part of my day is connecting kids with books!
  - Want to open a place that has a library feeling or a bookstore feeling that if someone goes into the space, they feel like there’s something meaningful they can take away
  - Want to find a teacher to be more involved in support literacy efforts beyond the classroom
  - Worked with orgs as a “S” corporation - don’t know too much about it but it lets organizations be more flexible with their spending
- Andy: Created bookshop.org to provide add’t financial resources for independent bookstores who can’t start a big online bookstore, help them compete
  - Chairman of grant writer, work for publisher as well
  - I need bookstores! My dream would be that independent bookstores sell the same % of the share of online sales as the big market retailers - want to change customer habits to buying from bookstores at all times instead of online

- Andy in chat: “The biggest difference between C and S corporations is taxes. C corporations pay tax on their income, plus you pay tax on whatever income you receive as an owner or employee. An S corporation doesn't pay tax. Instead, you and the other owners report the company revenue as personal income... B corps are like a C Corp, but put public good over profits, and judge success against their mission, not just growth or profit alone.”
- WHERE do you find grants?
  - Listings that you can get sent to you for a fee (don't do anymore), Foundation Center, on arts email newsletters that post grants and opportunities
  - Have funded things like events, or the mural that's in/on our store
- Tanya: Bookstores could think about sponsorships (like Adopt-a-Highway programs)
  - Veronica: Why don't more bookstores do something like this, or embrace nonprofit?
    - Some might be pride, or feeling like being a nonprofit isn't as good of a 'look' (“We don't get handouts like nonprofits” is a sentiment I've seen in posting sites). But, we have also found solutions to some longstanding bookstore issues through leveraging what we can do as a nonprofit, applying for targeted grants in addition to continuing to sell books.
    - Another issue generally could be that the literary nonprofit and for-profit sides of the lit field don't always recognize that they could unite to strengthen the field as a whole. Also for some of the things that nonprofits do, you don't actually *have* to be a nonprofit, and some of those practices are helpful to have in place anyway. Various ways people get things done (at record stores, at hardware stores, etc) even while being/thinking like a nonprofit.

# Room 6

**Topic:** Young people are the future but teenagers don't frequently read books or go to bookstores. How can Indie bookstores attract teenagers?

**Host:** Perla Ni

**Participants:** Perla, CEO CommunityConnect Labs

LINK to separate notes document. Excerpt pasted below:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/19aF6xk0C\\_o2wjmLTKVP6YYabh5ZiVqSNhuSRqJKzVeE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19aF6xk0C_o2wjmLTKVP6YYabh5ZiVqSNhuSRqJKzVeE/edit?usp=sharing)

**Notes:** Problem statement:

Young people are the future and they are not reading books frequently, or going into bookstores frequently.

Ideas:

- Bookstores can better fulfill teenager's needs: place to meet up, hang out with friends, impress a date
  - Make bookstores a place for teens to hang out: + cafe, or ice cream, candy, or boba tea
- Recruit teenager interns/ambassadors:
  - Teen Ambassadors around causes - connect with bookstore to host an event. Maybe have teens be Tik-Tok ambassadors for you (they can add to their college application). Tagging and sharing your posts. They can be teen reviewers and write reviews and add it to a card in the store.
  - Hire highschool interns in the bookstore: someone closer in age to teenagers and who they feel more comfortable with to 1. Get recommendations of books 2. Place orders for books
- Partner marketing:
  - Schools: promote teen/middle grade 4-6pm weekly/monthly meetup at the bookstore and get a discount. Make it a regular hangout.
  - Cafes: get coffee, get coupon for bookstore
- Parents should create routine early when kids are young: Make a weekly trip to the bookstore
- Audiobooks: Teens are listening more to audiobooks. See bookstore events in the app and then teens can meet with friends and attend a bookstore event.
- Books now tied to games and movies: Interest kids who play games like Minecraft
- Digital Marketing: Go where teenagers are:
  - Host Discord chat around book.
  - Fable.co has YA clubs highschool-college age
  - Record events on Twitch
  - Tik-Tok - People become familiar with your staff via TikTok. And also feel comfortable because they have a chance to see the diversity and authenticity of the people they'll meet there
  - Then connect these digital conversations into real life relationships and meeting at bookstores.
- Teens love providing recommendations of books they really like and teens also like to make videos. Invite kids to record video testimonials about their books at the bookstore
- Book bucks
- How to books: Section for crafts
- Family Trivia Night: Readers can show off their knowledge: greek mythology, history, geography etc. Have regular monthly Trivia night, make it a routine.
- Targeted theme events

Problems we may not be able to solve: How to get teens on zoom events. Teens seem to be done with Zoom.

# Room 7

**Topic: How can cooperative ownership (worker and/or consumer) provide an alternative to traditional economic models?**

**Host:** Roy Karp at Rozzie Bound (Boston, MA) ([roy@rozziebound.com](mailto:roy@rozziebound.com))

**Participants:** Suzanna, Amanda, Charlie, Kristin Hall, Beth, Nathan, Kristen, Esme, Jamilah, Rebecca, Hannah, Stephanie Heinz

**Notes:**

*Introductions - popcorn*

Roy - Rozzie Bound, aspiring cooperative in Boston

Jamillah - House of Page, worker-owned bookstore in Georgia ?

Rebecca - Rediscover Books, looking to become a coop

Charlie - Kepler's, Menlo Park, looking for alternatives to support workers

Suzanna - Oblong Books Rhinbeck, NY grew up in family business, who will run store after me?

Kristen - NPD Books/BookScan, deeply interested in future of books

Amanda - Kepler's Books, gen mgr., community owned, but looking at next level; how can community own the business

Kristin, Hicklebee's but joining Kepler's; interested in alternatives, esp. non-profit models

Dick - VisionWorks distrib in Mass; selling at events/conferences esp. organic gardening/CSA communities; could we create Community Supported Bookstores (CSBs) similar to CSAs for farms

Esme - Firestorm Books and Coffee, 13 yr old coop in Asheville, NC, [bookstore@firestorm.coop](mailto:bookstore@firestorm.coop)

Stephanie - Portland, Maine; generally interested in alternative models, coop or non-profit.

Hannah - co-owner of the Book Shop of Beverly Farms, bought store last January

*What does it mean to be a cooperative bookstore?*

Esme - Firestorm started in 2008, one founding member still with the store, most here about 3 years; have 4 worker owners and are looking to add a 5th.

- We have found a small cohort of full time works better than larger group working p/t;
- Weekly meeting that uses a consensus decision-making
  - Example: decisions about Covid protocols
- Owner share = \$1,000, which you get back if you leave the biz
- Everyone makes the same wage >> liveable wage paid as salary
- Non-hierarchical; everyone does what they are passionate about
- Currently only 4 worker/owners, rotating register shifts and then have additional tasks (events, buying, etc)
- When someone joins they are an employee for first 6-9 months, still involved in collective decision making other than major financial choices. After that period of time they can choose to petition for ownership, typically exit the collective if either they or rest of collective do not feel like it's the right fit
- Questions? Reach out to us at [bookstore@firestorm.coop](mailto:bookstore@firestorm.coop)

*What draws you to the co-op model?*

Roy

- Wanted the store to be deeply ingrained in the community
- Sees co-op business style as a way to obtain a better work/life balance
- Multi-stakeholder cooperative -- worker/owners & consumer members
  - Consumer members involved in general direction of business, not involved in day to day decisions and running the business
  - Envisioning 9 member/owner cooperation, 5 members from the workers and 4 elected by consumer owners
  - Equity buy-in (\$1000-\$2000), but also taking into consideration sweat equity/hours put into creating the space
- Want to be part of growing movement to create better wages and quality of life, feels like there is a lot of potential in this model and a lot of booksellers interested in exploring the model more
- Created a survey on cooperative bookselling to create some sort of network/alliance of cooperative bookstores: LINK TO BOOKSELLER SURVEY: <https://forms.gle/5oAvhLuPqPqZ7bb9A>
- Have had two meet-ups so far with others interested in this model
  - LINK TO Directory of Cooperative Bookstores: <https://rozziebound.com/cooperative-bookstores/>

## *Recruiting New Employees in Co-Operative Model*

Dick

- Started with \$25 and many people
- Pop-up model going to events rather than brick-and-mortar location
- Monthly meetings with 35-40 people
- Started with a large group of people, as time went on people who bought into the store took on more major roles with volunteers taking care of other tasks. Moved into non-profit, viewed themselves more as anti-profit
- After about 10 years Dick stepped down to bring in new leadership
- Co-operative model can still have hierarchy structures and different salary levels
- Eventually had 5 member worker collective working sustainably
- NO BOSSES HERE -- book rec for collectively run businesses
- Worked with other small businesses to offer financial support when needed -- ran into a problem when one of the businesses went out of business without being able to pay back loan

Rozzie Bound curated book list -- <https://bookshop.org/lists/cooperatives-and-the-solidarity-economy>

Firestorm rec's IN GOOD COMPANY --

<https://firestorm.coop/products/638-in-good-company-toolbox-series.html>

Jamilah

- Attended a cooperative economic conference focused on BIPOC community
- [COLLECTIVE COURAGE](#) -- book on cooperative business history in Black community
  - Form of business that has historically been more accessible to communities that traditionally do not have access to the large amount of wealth needed to start business
- Starting a cooperative collective in Atlanta to work with other businesses -- cooperatives are a business model that can create a lot of success in many other industries

Roy

- Rozzie Bound might be the first multi-stakeholder bookstore. Traditionally have been more popular in food services/grocery stores
- Tight labor laws in MA re: for profit businesses using volunteers -- can differ widely in other states
  - One narrow exception is if you are a board member you can coral community members

*What is the benefit for the consumer to buy in?*

Dick

- A lot of people involved right from the start -- people who volunteer their time received a discount
- A lot of debate when people were first starting to get paid for their work. Had to acknowledge that some people needed to be paid to ensure consistency of work -- volunteers might cycle out quickly

Amanada

- Ideological stance of co-operative business
- Kepler's has member program where customer buy in to support store w/o owner control over anything

# Room 26

**Topic: How can we shift indie bookstores from a commodity offering to a "category of one" by creating one or more Grand Slam Offers?**

**Host: Jill Hendrix**

**Participants:** BradleyJones/ Morgan Hill Bookstore in CA, woman from Berrett Koehler, Carol from BookPeople, a couple of latecomers

**Notes:**

Inspired by book \$100M Offers by Alex Hormozi

Books are commodities that are easily price-shopped. With chains/online/ebooks, indie bookstores no longer have book monopolies in their communities. How do we get that back by creating bundles/packages/offers that are different and not easily compared. Classic example is author event that includes book. Once you have that monopoly offer you can charge premium pricing, make more profit.

What makes an offer grand-slam is when it becomes self-funding so you can perpetually market and grow the base.

Other examples

-Start a 12 days of Xmas family tradition (remainedered books bundled in a pillowcase with stencil, fabric paint, etc.

-Membership programs: customers, patreon, school author events

-Welcome to Greenville box targeted thru fb ads at newcomers to community. Possibly partner with realtors, chamber of commerce. If can generate x number of sales/month can sell access to box to others and it becomes self-funding.

-"Book flight": bundle of virtual events

"Exclusives"

-Big-name authors offered to smaller stores that wouldn't normally get them as a goodwill gesture to the indie community (the way we bookstores offer raffle prizes to our communities). Every ABA member to be guaranteed an in-person event of a certain level author.

# Room 27

**Topic:**

**Host:**

**Participants:**

**Notes:**

# Room 28

**Topic: How can bookstores leverage the market for independent/small-press books to be more inclusive in connecting readers and authors.**

**Host: Vanessa MacLaren-Wray**

**Participants:** Charlie Kruse, Dick (VisionWorks), Humaira Ghilzae, Christopher Miya (Heyday), Madi Mullen (libro)

**Notes:**

Our group successfully posed a lot of good questions, though not so many answers. Mainly, we learned that there's a will to connect small-press/indie-pub books with indie bookstores and a need for creativity and awareness of constraints on both sides, if we want to serve the wider book-reading community.

Humaira: the traditional publishing world is too constrained by gatekeepers, so it can be hard to trudge through years of effort to get a book to its audience.

Indie bookstores are in the forefront of thinking about books...but haven't made the shift to dealing with the indie/small press world. There are some good reasons, but it seems that traditional publishers control the bookstores. As someone with friends who self-published...there's a part of the community that's missing.

Vanessa: are there practical ways that bookstores can connect potential readers of small-press books with the books they're looking for that won't eat into margins too much? Highlighting ready availability of books they can order through the bookstore? Displaying informational "postcards" from small-press publishers providing key information that readers can pick up in the store, take to the front and say "hey, can you order this?".

Dick from VisionWorks: trying to make sideline items more easily accessible like calendars and so on, without having to go to different suppliers...make books that are less-known more available. In the old days, indie press could be the lifeblood of smaller bookstores, not so much today.

Charlie: How much do we expect from bookstores? Already expecting a lot from those. Translations, rediscovering older literature.. As a bookseller, they try to have monthly displays of POC/women authors. They've seen curated boxes, subscriptions sideline items. What could they try: direct connections with smaller presses, a reading club within the store, featuring indie press releases. This needs a multifaceted approach.

Madi Mullen, from libro.fm: We don't see so many small-press books to audio. How can we bring smaller press to audio? We often see only the most publicized ones. It's challenging on the audio side, because not so many.

Charlie: but that's one way we could have fun with it? The success of avant-garde, humorous, off-the-wall dramatic projects could be exciting in the indie bookstore environment. One example of such a project: George Saunders' *Lincoln in the Bardo*

Madi: there are books that would lend themselves to audio, but haven't made the leap yet. There are books undiscovered in that way, still.

Heyday Books (Christopher Miya): How to connect with bookstores is difficult. How do we reach you? How do we communicate? We have a book that's right for you, but we can't print a thousand galleys, so how do we get to you? Strengthening the bond between independent bookstores and independent publishers, recognizing the constraints on both sides? Good to hear that booksellers are interested in small/indie presses.

Charlie: Sometimes it's just a matter of scale. So ... how can we turn that into a strength? There's a curation element to bookstores, how do we establish that special relationship? Do we do that by connecting on Bookshop.org? Or how?

# Room 29

**Topic: Non-profit models for bookstores**

**Host: Donna Paz Kaufman**

**Participants:**

**Notes:**

Sara from Charis (Atlanta) and Ryan (Open Book in Chicago) shared their structures, how they evolved and how they work best.

Charis has several entities: a for-profit bookstore and two no-profit initiatives. What general booksellers consider author events are considered programs.

Open Book is 100% non-profit. Bookstore revenues help fulfill the mission.

Sources of funds:

Private donors: monthly, one-time, founders

Family trusts - often have fewer strings attached, can be used for overhead and staff

Local grants

Government grants - the most time-consuming and tedious

Advice:

- 1) Find Your Niche - Know what kinds of programs and outreach you want to do. Put this in place beforehand so you know where to look for funding.
- 2) Create Relationships - A year or two before you form a non-profit, meet with officers to share your work and understand the initiatives they are interested in supporting.

# Room 30

**Topic:** How can we create an on-going sense of mentorship, especially for newer booksellers to help them create sustainable careers?

**Host:** Stephanie Heinz

**Participants:** Ruth (PRH), Stephanie (Print), Donna (Kepler's), Kim (Third Place Books), Charlie (Kepler's), Nasim (Alta Journal)

## Notes:

### *What has been done?*

- Used to have Emerging Leaders and then Indies Forward
- Emerging Leaders kind of petered out as people moved into management & ownership
- DEIC was a direct result of Indies Forward's work -- Indies Forward now entering same stage of people who were running it are now taking on management/ownership
- Potential uptick of people making career changes post-Covid -- people could be joining bookselling at various stages of their lives/careers

### *What can we do to establish/support whatever the next group is?*

- Each generation of bookselling life brings new ideas without knowing how to implement them
- Groups growing organically offers a sense of ownership, but also creates gaps
- A lot of booksellers have now spent a large portion of their career in the pandemic--gaining experience where they are but cut off from other forms of mentorship and education from conferences, etc
- Publisher sponsorship for mentorship activities?

### *What do people want from mentorship?*

- A space to make connections with other booksellers, get perspectives beyond coworkers
- Receive guidance and support in developing careers
- Cross pollination of ideas
- Giving booksellers permission and tools to advocate for themselves and develop career path plans
  - Pretty consistent and constant turnover with younger staff & burnout with managers/owners
  - Bookselling is often a non-traditional business model, owners might not have in mind more formal structures like annual check-ins
- Professional development but also making personal connections, building friendships with other booksellers
- Easier access to follow through, building relationships beyond conferences
- The barrier for being a bookstore owner has shifted with the advent of more pop-ups and bookshop.org -- changes the idea of what makes you a "senior" bookseller, someone who can offer mentorship

### *What **does** exist already?*

- FB groups -- can become echo chambers/spaces where conversations aren't able to continue forward
- Regional Conferences -- energy virtually isn't the same as in person, could become a really magical opportunity in 2022.
- ABC Group Discord
- Mentor program at conferences

### *What is the framework?*

- Do we want an ABA or regional sponsored program?
- Zoom fatigue is major right now
- Discord?
  - The voice & video functions feel less pressure and formality than zoom
  - Create a space where people can make connections before conferences

### *Small Steps*

- People roll their eyes at ice breakers but also they can be *real* helpful--bonding over awkward experiences. Sharing things you might not be prompted to share otherwise
- When in-person activities are an option again, sitting next to someone new

# Room 31

**Topic:** What revenue streams are people using for increased wages?

**Host:** Amanda, Kepler's

**Participants:**

Eric - Mrs. Dalloways  
Suzanna - Oblong Books  
Roy - Rozzie Bound ("Rozzie" = Roslindale, Mass)  
Shelley - Blue Heron Books  
Kristin - Hicklebee's  
Carolee - Kepler's  
Alex - Publisher's Weekly  
Eileen - One More Page Books  
Irene & Melissa - Beacon Hill Books  
Scott - author  
Esme - Firestorm Books  
Jamilah - House of Pages  
Kristianne - Shelf Awareness  
Nick - Libro.fm  
Veronica - Word Up  
Sandra - author  
Kelly - reader  
Meghan - BookPeople  
Elaine -  
Maya - author, Zibby Books  
Pam -  
Christopher, Publisher's Weekly  
Michelle - Holiday House  
Nathan - Batch  
Sanj - Beacon Press  
Humaira -  
Dan -  
Sara - Charis  
Kate -  
Lara -  
Tanya -  
Deb -  
Nasim - Alta Journal

**Notes:**

*It's important to share our value with our community. How do we convince our customers of the value of the money spent with us?*

- Kepler's is going to try to add a surcharge of about 2% to sales during the holidays to support a living wage.
- Partnering with other small businesses
- Use ABA's "Here's what you just did..."
- The pandemic caused a massive wave of support for indies, how to sustain?
- Gently remind customers that you are a knowledgeable human being helping them in-person. Without connecting with you in-person, they may not have discovered this book!
- People WANT to be there for us.
- We are producing (often free) event content! Don't be afraid to ASK for a donation/book sale/a few bucks to help us do this. Ok to be honest with your customers if you are going to pivot to change to paid events. Now is the time.

Income-generating ideas:

- Readers of e-books can support local bookstores by buying a book to be given away.
- Book drives for teacher classroom wish lists.
- Offer the opportunity for people to buy books for schools - a book bundle for different age groups
- Customer memberships (withfriends.co is one member management suggestion) (monthly memberships = regular reliable income), have some transparency about what your funds go toward.

- Charging for events (pay what you can is ok, too!) but at least always remind people to buy the book. An invested author making the buy ask is most effective.
- Patreon (with perks)
- Don't lose money on shipping. Give customers the option to pay for shipping.
- Events - "buy one, give one" - buy an extra book or event ticket to be donated (or a "solidarity copy")
- Co-op! - free money, don't be scared to figure out how to do this (email [suzanna@oblongbooks.com](mailto:suzanna@oblongbooks.com) for help)
- Rent out your space for private events.
- Libro.fm commissions
- Offer classes & charge for them

Chat:

16:49:12 From Eileen McGervey (She/Her) to Everyone:

we offer the opportunity for people to buy books for schools - a book bundle for different age groups

17:00:16 From Sandra Janoff to Everyone:

Thank you everyone.

17:12:24 From Kristin Hall, She/Her, Bookseller, Hicklebees to Everyone:

Maybe whether or not it should be free depends on whether or not a book signing will be involved? If buying a book is expected to be part of a event, there might be more resistance to paid entry

17:20:27 From Suzanna Hermans (she/her), co-owner, Oblong Books, NY State to Everyone:

[suzanna@oblongbooks.com](mailto:suzanna@oblongbooks.com) - Co-op!

17:21:23 From Suzanna Hermans (she/her), co-owner, Oblong Books, NY State to Everyone:

The breakout rooms end at 5:30pm ET

17:24:17 From Roy Karp - bookseller to Everyone:

We are planning to offer writing workshops and other educational offerings for which we plan to charge fees

17:24:42 From Sanj Kharbanda /he/him/his to Everyone:

<https://welcometomannys.com/>

17:24:57 From Tanya Mills, Bookstore Leader of The Book Bungalow, Utah to Everyone:

We've offered writing workshops (pre-Covid), charging \$50 for each.

# Room 32

**Topic:** New books are the lifeblood of a bookstore, a room full of books. How do you keep your passion and stay on top of the season, make discoveries?

**Host:** Patricia Nelson

**Participants:** Madi Mullen, Missy from Katy Budget Books, Diana Montano, Hannah Harlow, Nasim Ghasemiyeh, Kristianne, Kelly Munn

## Notes:

- Bookstores have to do so many things - but bringing in the new books, the discipline of it, are sales rep relationships outdated? Etc. or anything related to this topic
- Patricia: Recently at an in-person trade show in my area, it was amazing to be there in person
- With a small room, one bookseller, one rep, became a talk supporting being new to book buying. Missy shared her participation in NAIBA's bookseller certification (generously available through MPIBA) on using buyer tools etc. Such a curriculum might expand to a larger industry program, maybe a requisite component in working towards establishing value in bookselling as vocational lifework (recalling working with a German coworker decades ago who had two years of professional bookseller training).
- Patricia talked a little about deep changes in how buying works, the complexity of information management, the flattening of catalog description in the topology of Edelweiss, what helps assure clear position; judgement and intuition.
- As essentially a two person talk, the session stayed personal. Missy discussed her Texas store's support of a children's author whose books were removed from school library and appearance cancelled pending review. They rallied support, sold the book, while balancing points of view in the community, bold and generous. The book restored, the author invited back.
- Other participants - as an outsider to buying process journalist Nasim Ghasemiyeh asked about Edelweiss program. Others were in and out of room, little or no comment.
- Perhaps such a discussion could be rephrased; in the context of surviving as a small business with the crushing problems of real estate, access to capital, offering competitive and fair salary and benefits – what is the heart? The sense of meaningful work and purpose is generated by books. Most meaningfully, Missy said “a bookstore needs to feel like home.”
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- Missy: New to book buying in the last year or so - just with a few publishers to start
  - Taking inventory management training, teaching me how to organize myself and a plan, so I can better manage my time to figure out book buying strategies
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