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ISBNs

978-0-8389-1384-0 (paper)

978-0-8389-1398-7 (PDF)

978-0-8389-1399-4 (ePub)

978-0-8389-1449-6 (Kindle)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hooper, Brad, author.

Title: The librarian's guide to book programs and author events / Brad Hooper.

Description: Chicago : ALA Editions, an imprint of the American Library Association, 2016. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016000487 | ISBN 9780838913840 (print : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780838913987 (pdf) | ISBN 9780838913994 (epub) | ISBN 9780838914496 (kindle)

Subjects: LCSH: Libraries--Cultural programs--Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Reading promotion--Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Libraries and community--Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Libraries--Public relations--Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Book clubs (Discussion groups)--Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Public speaking. | Authors--Interviews. | Literary prizes.

Classification: LCC Z716.4 .H66 2016 | DDC 021.2--dc23 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016000487>

Book design by Kimberly Thornton in the More Pro and Proxima Nova typefaces.

Cover illustration © Rooster Stock/Shutterstock, Inc.

Ⓢ This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

Printed in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 5 4 3 2 1

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INTRODUCTION

Behind the curtain, I await the launch of the author program. I am within a couple minutes of being announced as the program moderator by the evening's master of ceremonies. There are five of us—four authors and I—standing in a line, in the order by which we will be announced and brought out onto the stage. We wait in silence as we hear the master of ceremonies extend his welcome to the audience and express his appreciation for their attending this event, and he promises it will be an educational, even exciting, hour and a half of listening to four noted authors discussing their writing lives.

All the authors are recognizably pros at this; I notice that not one is showing signs of nervousness. These four authors, their handlers, and ALA conference officials, along with me, had assembled in the “greenroom” only a half hour before, but that proved sufficient time for enough acquaintance to be established among us to achieve a degree of comfort for all of us; in other words, we were already a team. I had indicated to the ALA conference officials the order in which I would like the authors to speak, and that, of course, indicated the order in which we now stood backstage. The order of speaking determined the seating arrangement on stage, and that of course was important for allowing the sound technicians to follow the plan from backstage: meaning, they knew when to turn on and turn off mikes for each of the speakers.

Author number one is introduced, who then, as rehearsed, slips out from the curtains that are held apart by a stagehand at the back of the stage, and amid applause she takes her seat. Five big comfortable chairs have been arranged in a shallow U-shaped formation on the stage. Author number two, number three, and number four. And then I hear myself introduced.

I step out onto the stage and blink in the bright lights; it's like a TV studio. My sight quickly recovers and I find my chair, in the center of the "U," and sit down. I look out over an audience of 700 people. I momentarily freeze. "My goodness," I say to myself, "what have I agreed to do?" My well-rehearsed script, my knowledgeable preparation, abandons me for a second or two. High anxiety! Wouldn't I prefer doing anything else but this? Didn't the old adage that most people would choose a root canal over public speaking apply to me at this point?

There are few moments of dead reckoning as those you experience when walking onto a stage to come face-to-face with rows and rows of people staring intently at you, anticipating *your* performance. Public speaking, singing, acting, playing a musical instrument: all the same when it comes to the instant assault on your nerves from having to begin *your* performance immediately, because the launch of the program depends entirely on you, and is completely in your hands; nothing else can begin until you do. There can be no hiding now, no stepping back and letting events begin on their own. You tell yourself that most people in the audience are on your side, expecting your program to be wonderful, but then there is always that little voice in your head, telling you that there are always holdouts in an audience, and they don't expect much from you.

Once I've opened my lips and the few dry words that have gathered there are expelled from my desiccated mouth, I find that the next words emerge smoothly flowing, indicating to the audience that those few initial dry words have been "spit out" and now will be followed by smoothly gliding, safe and secure words that indicate I am in control of the program.

At this point, I am on my way to successfully maintaining the audience's attention for the next hour and a half. My comfort voice, which resides in the back of my mind, congratulates me on a successful lift-off, and being perpetually in my corner, it reminds me that I am aiming my program at various levels of interest in the audience, some eager and highly expectant of great results as well as those who will remain skeptical until nearly the end. My comfort voice says, "You'll want to score a direct hit at those skeptics, who assume they have nothing to learn here today." I am determined to prove those people wrong.

The above scenario is a typical situation faced by every public speaker, faced by every librarian who speaks before an audience, whether it is an audience of six individuals or six hundred individuals. This is particularly the situation of the typical librarian who finds herself, in the course of her readers' advisory and collection development duties, placed into a public speaking situation; being typical, the librarian often approaches such a situation armed with little experience in speaking before a group, large or small. Generally, librarians are untrained in public speaking because it is not part of the typical library science or information science curriculum. Nor is public speaking a particularly essential quality in a practicing librarian. The one-on-one connection with a library patron—the classic “reference interview”—does not count here. Comfort in that situation does not necessarily translate to an “at-ease” attitude when speaking publically.

The public speaking scenario I've just described to you was real. It actually took place, and new versions of that same basic program—with different authors, of course—have continued to take place at every Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association. It is called the “Author Forum” and it occurs late Friday afternoon during Midwinter, just before the opening of exhibit hall, where it seems the entire publishing world is presenting their new wares in booths both large and small for the benefit of librarians attending the conference. The Author Forum program is more or less the official opening of the conference itself.

When I, as Adult Books Editor at *Booklist* magazine, found myself first invited to participate in an Author Forum almost twenty years ago, it represented what I had come to perceive, based on my experiences in various capacities of involvement in author programs, a low-level involvement. The folks at ALA's Conference Services invited publishers to submit names of relevant authors from their publishing pools that they would volunteer to send to the conference city. These author forum programs were of great repute and attracted huge audiences; consequently, publishers were glad to fund a trip to whatever city was the conference's location, usually as a promotional gesture for a new book that both author and publisher were eager to promote.

The Conference Services staff would then fall into step by looking over (again) the complete list of available authors, tracking a possible thematic connection between a small group of authors, and almost by magic pulling together a panel of, say mystery writers, or writers who had a book of theirs made into a movie, or a box-of-chocolates assortment of writers of genre fiction—from science fiction to thrillers to women's fiction to romance fiction. The Conference Services staff

would perform all the behind-the-scenes work in honing the four individuals into a cohesive panel, and I will break the whole thing down for you in a later chapter. Part of this behind-the-scenes work, of course, is to inform the panel participants of the time limits on their personal contributions, suggest to them any special topics they should discuss, and, importantly, lay out the format of the panel for them. They would be called alphabetically to the rostrum by the moderator to present their “speech.”

This is where I came in. My job as moderator was simple: introduce each panelist when their turn to speak came, and at the end of the whole program ask the audience for questions. My entire script, from general opening remarks to specific introductions for the individual authors, was written for me by the Conference Services staff. And more, it was printed out in large letters for easy reading, and I did not see the script—did not *need* to see the script—until I showed up in the greenroom forty-five minutes before the event and met the authors. I then read through the script during a five-minute quiet time in the corner of the room, and then—*voilà!*—I was ready to hit the stage.

In subsequent years, the event’s format and presentation was changed. It got more complicated, yes, but that was all part of the improved quality. And my role as moderator certainly morphed into something more. A heavier burden was placed on my shoulders. And I loved it.

And what was the new format exactly? First, the seating arrangement on stage was altered. It now served to suggest—encourage—a conversation among the panelists as opposed to simply provide them with a place to park themselves before speaking. Seating, now, was in big, deep, luxurious chairs, like those you would want to curl up in to read. The arrangement of these chairs was still a shallow “U,” with the moderator’s chair the keystone in the arch. The set—the big, dynamically designed backdrop, in other words—went well beyond the stark nothingness that had back-dropped the speakers in former years.

The set now evoked a television studio set up for a talk show, with all the guests and the host to be on stage simultaneously. There was the kind of nuanced lighting like you’d find in a TV studio, muted here and spotlighted there to keep the eyes of the audience busy. And seating for the studio audience increased to accommodate 700 people. Word had gotten out that this Author Forum was becoming bigger and bigger business, with major-level writers on board, and a convention-wide consciousness had recently arisen and spread that said attendance at this event

was the most special way for members to kick off the ALA Midwinter experience.

In the previous years of the Author Forum, there was a “greenroom” situated off to the side of the stage. But the greenroom was simply a smaller ballroom next to the much bigger ballroom in which the program itself was to be held. In the greenroom, the Conference Services people provided cold drinks, cookies, and fresh fruit. It was there I would meet the panelists, most of whom I’d not met before, and there too where I would be handed the script already composed for me. A cursory run-through on my own was sufficient.

Then the panelists and I unceremoniously marched to the next room, which was set up like an auditorium, and we made our way to the dais and took our assigned seats.

At the appointed time to begin, I arose, stepped over to the podium, greeted the audience in brief terms, and we were off and running. Once the last panelist had finished speaking, I bid my adieu to the panelists and went off to take care of my other Midwinter activities. “Glad I could help” pretty much summarized my attitude toward the program that had just taken place, my sense of accomplishment being at about the same level as the effort I had exerted. Not a great deal, in other words.

In the new “era” that now came upon us, which began in the mid-2000s, the greenroom was located in an actual room, which certainly went a long way to establishing the feel of a genuine greenroom—like one you undoubtedly would find in any TV studio. This room sat behind the stage, which meant one had to step around lots of technical equipment to get there. You noticed the quiet conditions immediately upon entering the room. Soundproofed? Seemed like it. In this “new era” greenroom, not only did I meet the panelists and their “handlers” but the panelists and I were also “miked”—meaning, to our lapels were affixed lavalier microphones. That represented another big difference between the old and new era formats, and one that gave me a greater role in the program, and consequently drew out my sense of purpose and pleasure more intimately to its success or failure. Further, I now decided the order in which the panelists should speak, and the sound technicians went along with me; after all, the Conference Services staff designated me the “captain” of this enterprise and the tech crew were always looking to me for direction.

But the differences between the “old” and “new” eras of the Author Forum had only begun to surface. The conference staff’s suggestion had been that the pro-

gram should be a conversation among me and the panelists, hence the new seating arrangement onstage: comfy chairs for the panel and me. I supported this new arrangement wholeheartedly. I thought that the idea of all of us—panelists, me—sitting in large chairs in a semicircle was a stroke of genius. The Conference Services staff was shaking the Author Forum up and making it less formal.

A second aspect of the revised program, which was of course designed to make the Author Forum a less rigid production, came in the form of much greater moderator participation in how the program developed before the audience. “Developed” is the key word here. Every Author Forum since the inception of the “new” era version has become a distinctly unique and individual beast. No longer did the panelists arise one by one and walk to the podium to deliver a ten-to-fifteen-minute piece that hopefully had relevance to the program’s intended theme.

I would now start with a panelist whom I already decided would be a good opener based on my familiarity with that person’s published work. I conduct a ten-to-fifteen-minute interview; my questions need at least a two-or-three sentence response, but hopefully more. I hope the author lets my questions serve as a spark to ignite deeper memories and ideas and opinions that take the author into an interior place and allow him or her to bring out ideas and opinions and autobiographical details that do more than simply scratch the surface.

The program proceeds in that fashion. The second author easily follows the first, and then the third, fourth, and fifth. An important point to stress here is that I as moderator have to be quick on my feet, paying close attention to what the author is saying, which means not looking over my notes so closely as to call attention to the fact that I am looking things over. After all, by arranging the authors in the particular order you decided, you, as moderator, intended that your interviews would build upon one another, and that theme would emerge in the process and build a fine edifice. Now, what I’m going to suggest requires moderator dexterity: you as moderator must generate panelist-to-panelist conversation. The best way to encourage this is to actually ask the panelists for it. By the time you are interviewing your second author, you can, based on your close—naturally, right?—attention to the points made by the first author, compare what the second author is saying to the views of the previous author. With no trepidation, ask for a dialogue on the points of agreement and disagreement.

Now, I don’t believe in raucous debate on any occasion, not even among family members around the Thanksgiving dinner table. And by *raucous* I mean voices

getting elevated beyond a normal conversational level. Book-and-author programs are not *The McLaughlin Group* after all, with panelists taking on each other in mini-combat and slinging near insults far and wide. Remember that heated exchanges in front of people tend to embarrass onlookers. Not a good picture.

This cross-exchange among panelists undoubtedly will prompt one or more of them to add additional relevant information and can pose an intriguing question to the other panelists. As moderator, you cannot *force* an exchange; you never want to put a panelist on the spot by asking, for example, if he or she disagrees with something another panelist has said. Let me stress, dialogue between panelists should be genial and helpful to the purpose of the panel's theme and should contribute to a sense of team effort, not create a competition among the panelists and thus a division between them.

Need I say that politics has no place in the panel discussion? This is not a soapbox on which to stand to air blue state vs. red state matters, unless, of course, the authors are political writers and this is a politically themed panel. If this be the case, the moderator will understand that a more difficult task may lie before him: keeping the presentation and discussion from descending into argument. To help avoid that from happening, remind your panelists several times beforehand that they are "performing" today as *writers* about politics and should stay focused on the book(s) they wrote; and that this author forum is not an opportunity to broadcast one's views per se but is a place to discuss how the book they've written does that for them.

If conversation between two or more panelists does not take hold, it's not the moderator's fault. As I've said, a forced pitting of one panelist against another panelist will stand out as such and thus compromises the effectiveness—the appeal—of the program itself. You never want to appear as if you are starting a dog fight. But if conversation between or among the panelists—polite, sane conversation, that is—*does* take hold, the moderator's work is not over. The conversation must not only stay on topic, it also must stay within the time limit. Authors, especially when talking about themselves—their favorite topic—have a tendency to wander, to digress, to bring up from their only-too-easily-tapped-into remembrance far too many details for a four-author panel to handle. And discussing time restrictions brings up an age-old dilemma for a moderator: how to politely, without giving offense, let speakers know when they have gone over their allotted time and need to bring their contribution to a rather quick halt. There are good

ways to do that, and we'll save the discussion about that issue for a later chapter.

So, basically what I'm saying is that creating and nurturing conversation among your panelists is like growing something in the garden: you want it to take root and thrive and make a very evocative covering of walks and open spaces but not grow so out of control that it's covering windows and climbing trees. But I can almost guarantee that whatever conversation springs up will soon die down on its own volition, and usually because the panelists never forget that the program you are presenting has had a rather strict format and is not a free-for-all. Like well-behaved children, they will draw themselves back into composure and, quietly, look again to you as the leader. Time to spark conversation again.

But remember, it takes just one such conversational flowering to create a good impression in your audience; one of their takeaways from the program will be the idea that there was an element of spontaneity in the proceedings. Too many such flowerings and the last speaker won't have time to give his or her full presentation and the audience will leave with the impression of bad planning.

Now, what exactly you as moderator should be asking your panelists, and whether to ask each one the same series of questions, will be addressed in a later chapter specifically addressing the topic of interviewing.

So, back to the program. You as moderator have completed your discussion with the final panelist. All conversation among the panelists has drawn to a close. You should have built into your time planning and management a ten-to-fifteen-minute question and answer session. The ALA Conference Services staff always accommodated that last but not least feature of the program by stationing two standing microphones out in the audience, for audience members to approach and pose a question to the panelist of their choice. The Q and A session is important for two reasons:

First, audience participation always leaves a good taste in the mouths of those who attend your program. It removes, to a degree, the barrier between audience and panelist; and that generates a "we're all just folks here" in the minds of the audience. It helps level the playing field. And the authors should be grateful they've been allowed to be there in front of the audience even more; people are more inclined to want to read the book of an author who, despite a glorious reputation, is "just like you and me."

Secondly, a Q and A session is beneficial to the moderator as a time to decompress, to sit back and let others more or less take the wheel. It's during the Q and

A session that you the moderator can bask in the glow of the great program you have wrought.

But the moderator is not quite finished. You must always thank the panelists by name for their participation and thank the audience for its attendance and participation.

There is nothing left to do now than to stand and acknowledge the applause and, in a single file, leave the stage for the greenroom, where everyone gets de-miked and congratulates one another on a very successful presentation.

May I name drop? Permit me to impart some of the celebrated authors I have “moderated” in the Author Forum and explain why I enjoyed them as panelists.

Susan Vreeland is an accomplished historical novelist who uses her love and knowledge of art history as the vehicle by which she explores the past in her fiction; in other words, her forte is the resurrection and reconstruction and imaginative “filling in” of major artists’ lives and the significant works they were responsible for. Her most famous novel is *Girl in Hyacinth Blue* (1999), which offers as its compelling premise the successful ownership over the centuries of a Vermeer painting. In person, as a panelist on a book program, she presents herself as an elegant lady, seemingly shy at first but obviously, through her self-assured answers to questions about herself and her work, she is a person who possesses great sensitivity and is extremely articulate.

Remember the cycle of works, collectively titled *Tales of the City* by Armistead Maupin, which were made into a television series that became as much a cult favorite as the books upon which they were based? The novels—and then the TV series, too, of course—were set in San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s and revolved around the friends and neighbors of one Anna Madrigal, a transgender back before transgenders were readily talked about—either in fiction or in public discourses. Maupin graced one of the Author Forum programs, and his anecdotes about his journalistic past—recalling how his editor at the newspaper where he’d worked would throw up his hands over Maupin always writing about things gay with “Gay, toujours, gay?”—and the making of the iconic TV series—remembering the loveliness and perfect casting of Olympia Dukakis as the key character Anna Madrigal—were priceless. And his enormity of spirit: at show’s end, back in the greenroom his whispering to me, “It was *you* who led this program to its successful heights.”

Ruth Ozeki is the author of high-end literary fiction, and in the wake of the big splash made by her beguiling novel *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013), she appeared

on my Author Forum panel. Ruth has, of course, a website, and in my preparation of questions for her, I visited her website, and to my great pleasure I discovered a paean she'd written about librarians. So, my first statement to her, as we sat down on stage to begin the program, was that I'd found her "I love librarians" piece on her website. "So, Ruth," I encouraged her—admonished her—"tell our audience how much you care for them." She spoke eloquently about how important libraries and librarians have been to her. What an effective way to immediately win over an audience from the word go!

An engaging movie stemmed from Julie Powell's 2005 cooking memoir, *Julie and Julia*, the movie version carrying the same title. The book and subsequently the movie presented a very catchy premise. Powell felt bored and purposeless at her temp job in Manhattan, and to inject some meaning and interest in her life, she hit on a great—and time-consuming—idea, which was to cook all 524 recipes in Julia Child's classic *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, all in one calendar year! Lots of people knew about her undertaking, because she kept a blog diary—one of the first instances of blogging. So, you do the math. Five hundred twenty-four recipes in Child's book, divided by 365 days in a year. Obviously, some days required handling more than one recipe; and the one technique of Child's that Powell dreaded and kept putting off was boning a chicken, which she ultimately did accomplish. As a participant on an Author Forum, she spoke about her Julia Child years but also about seeing her book turned into a movie, herself played by the delightful Amy Adams. From her remarks we learned that once movie rights have been sold, often—more often than not? More like usually?—the author is "relieved" of the book, as if having given it up for adoption, and the movie people turn it into the "person" they want it to be. But I did not gather from her comments that she felt any bitterness about the issue. Nor apparently toward the greatly negative press being garnered by her new book that had just been published, called *Cleaving*, about her adventures in learning the butcher's trade!

Mountain country, specifically the Two Medicines country, which, like Yoknapatawpha County in Faulkner's fiction in previous decades, serves as the customary fictional stomping grounds for the late novelist Ivan Doig, whose charm brought great buoyance to an Author's Forum a couple of years ago when he appeared on the panel to discuss what was then his most recent novel, *The Bartender's Tale* (2012), a historical novel about a bartender whose 12-year-old son came of age in his Daddy's saloon. The book is endearing in its warmth and humanity, admirable in its literary soundness. I'd not met Doig before we met in

the greenroom, and he looked like he just might turn out to be intimidating. Nothing of the sort. Bearded, he looked professional, but at the same time like he might be a safari guide. As a panelist, he was a delight, giving answers to my questions readily and thoughtfully. In fact, he got so engaged in his presentation, he said at one point that his back would feel better if he perched on the arm of his big, cozy chair with his feet on the seat. No one, as far as I could tell, batted an eye. We were as engaged in his presentation as he was.

Praise be to the panelist who is polite, amusing, considerate of time (and what to do when they are *not* conscious of time we'll discuss in a later chapter), able to keep the comments on point, and able also to not be "hoggish" about audience attention. "Don't showboat" should be the mantra of every good book-program panelist.

As you have seen, the opening up of the panelists to expose personal anecdotes and somewhat private attitudes had been on the easy side. By all means, they are not all like that, and one in particular stays in my mind. I shall not name him, but let's call him Mr. Yes-and-No, because basically one-word answers were all I could elicit from him. But to the important subject of coaxing out from the reluctant answerer I will turn at a later chapter.

Remember, I am simply, in this introduction of my book, introducing you, the reader, with what I plan to share with you as all the pages, to the very last one, of this book are turned.

Essentially, what I will cover—what you will gain not only from my words but also from the first-hand experiences that stand behind the words—are many and widespread procedures and practices involved in producing or sponsoring programs and events by public, school, and special librarians that have the purpose of bringing together libraries, authors, and books for a meaningful encounter.

Chapter 1 will present my "feelings" about public speaking. Understand, the feelings will not be negative, for I thrill over public speaking. I will disabuse you of some of the hoary old maxims that are trumpeted to help you relax before a crowd; I will be honest about how much one's personality plays into success as a public speaker.

Chapter 2, my first stop in viewing the librarian in the capacity of organizer, facilitator, and participant in various types of book-and-author programs, starts off relatively simple. I discuss the librarian in a limited capacity: providing space for a local book club meeting. The event could be onetime only or regularly scheduled (as in monthly, in most instances). For these book clubs, the librarian would

basically be only supplying a roof over the club's collective head. But we'll also talk about, within that context, the potential great public relations initiative that even such a bare-bones librarian participation can garner for your library.

The next step in our climb up the ladder of increasing librarian participation in a book and author program will be to place the librarian into a more direct host position for a book club. This would be a book club that the librarian organizes himself or herself: gathering interested book lovers in the community (and not necessarily limited to library patrons) into a regularly scheduled book club (meeting, of course, in the organizing librarian's library), or if participation interest is high, into two clubs meeting at different times (even discussing different books) so the group won't be so large as to inhibit spontaneous conversation. Yes, this situation is counterintuitive, because you might think that the larger the group, the more anonymous a participant might feel and thus not be shy about joining into the conversation. The opposite actually is true: the more people in a group, the more participants will experience performance anxiety, and the smaller the group the more relaxed and less conscious of "everyone staring at me" they will be. And, consequently, they will feel freer to add their comments and opinions about the book to the group conversation.

Whether the more-than-one grouping is fluid—meaning, people can attend this group or that group without being required to remain at all times in the Tuesday night group and not slide into the Thursday group—is up to the librarian-organizer. We'll discuss the pros and cons of such fluidity when the time comes—that is, when we reach the chapter covering this topic. And the librarian has another path open to them: serving as conversation leader himself or herself or having the group(s) elect their own. Again, there are pros and cons of each situation to be looked at later. If guest speakers are the way the book group wants to go, as an authority on the book at hand to either serve as conversation leader or as a "consultant" sitting in to add comments here and there and serve as a resource for any questions the members may have, if that's the way the club is constituted, then the librarian may help the group locate and invite the authorities, or at least aid someone in the club in their efforts to do so.

Chapter 3 will include guidelines for selecting books that would make successfully involving book-group discussions. Types will be discussed and specific titles suggested.

Upward we go on the ladder of drawing on the time and knowledge of the librarian in offering to the community a series of engaging book and author pro-

grams. Thus, in chapter 4, we arrive at a perennially popular form of such a program, one that the library can benefit from: the widespread demise of bookstores, which used to play host to these programs. I'm speaking of author readings, which I cover in chapter 4. Promotion is key here, of course, and places into which to reach to gain publicity for your program will be on our conversational plate. Book signings are always a pleasant conclusion to an author reading, and how to connect with the author's publicity handlers or a local bookstore—if there is one!—to get copies for the audience to purchase and the author to autograph will top off this chapter.

Now, in chapter 5, we move even higher in the level of library participation in books and author programming, to that which may test a librarian's moxie in public performance and will call on skills the librarian may feel are beyond his or her talents—but I will certainly disabuse the reader of such self-limiting sentiments. This category of program is centered on interviewing. Interviewing authors, that is, and the “bigger” the author the better. A local relatively unknown writer has its attraction, but people may not want to come out to hear a relative unknown be asked questions about his life and writing. On the other hand, authors whose books are always reviewed in the major review media, and authors that made the talk shows as part of their book tour, are perfect for this. (Of course, we are talking about the interview being conducted live before an audience. Variations on that—interviewing on the radio or through a webinar situation—will also be explored.) This chapter includes two important component parts that address essential interviewing practices that must be followed by the presenter. The first of these are tips for securing an author for an interview purpose, and just as essentially, pointers on how to conduct an interview. My purpose in sharing my experiences in interviewing is to guide you away from asking standard, easy, predictable questions that are bound to bore both the writer and the audience, and steer you toward posing questions that, while not “tricky” (meaning, with the intention of confusing or embarrassing the interviewee), come at the author and his or her book from an inventive perspective that will spur the author to answer in sentences and ideas they may not have expressed in previous interviews. That's the goal: make your interview fresh.)

Chapter 6 will cover panel discussions. A panel discussion is definitely a step upward in our plan of increased librarian involvement in book programming. The librarian organizer has a great resource available to him or her for putting together a panel discussion: the library staff. So, on this first level in panel presen-

tation, the program organizer has pretty-much an already made program: asking a small group of your librarians who work in selection or in readers' advisory to think of, say, ten recent books added to the library collection—fiction or non-fiction or both—and prepare a brief talk about each one.

Of course, we aren't about to leave these librarians-as-panelists in the lurch. In this chapter I will suggest what to include in a brief "chat" about a book. If you have four librarians willing to participate in public speaking—specifically, in this case, sitting on a panel before an audience of—whatever the librarian wants to be the audience. The public—yes, of course; which usually means an evening program. Other librarians in your library or in the library system? Absolutely. This is an excellent way of keeping librarians aware of what's being added to the library shelves they may not be aware of. Librarians from outside your system, representing librarians not just like you (say you're a public librarian, then do a program like this for school librarians in your area, which means, of course, a couple YA librarians would be great for your panel to discuss books pushed for adults in this age group or to present titles that are published for adults but are very suitable for a YA readership).

This kind of panel can, of course, be employed on a monthly basis when branch librarians come to a central meeting place and a large part of the reason for this monthly convocation is to inform the branches what new books will or have been added to the main library collection, now available or soon to be available for borrowing by branch patrons.

The next level of panel is also suited to interlibrary purposes for all staff (including interested tech and shelf people) as well as the general public (a lunchtime program would be the perfect setting; regularly scheduled so the program develops a consistent following). The panelists—and I should state here that to call itself a "panel," a panel needs to be comprised of at least three speakers. One or two individuals can only be referred to simply as "speakers"—are charged with giving thumbnail analysis—plot summary and critical comments, all in capsule format—to, say, five to six books that rank as favorites of theirs. These can be as loosely presented as just "favorite books," or "favorite novels" or "favorite non-fiction books," or as tightly presented as favorite mystery novels or other fiction genres; or favorite historical novels, or every other fiction genre; or favorite non-fiction adventure stories; or favorite picture books for pre-readers, or YA novels sure to interest boys. The possibilities are endless, and the decision on a theme

is up to the organizer—in consultation with other staff members, of course. And also suggested—I'd say required—is that at least half the program should be about books for youth and the panel include, as I spoke about above, librarians involved in youth work.

Author readings are one thing—one thing to get involved in, and will present itself as moderately involving—but having an author come to the library to speak is another thing, the subject of chapter 4. In the first place—for the first time in our exploration of the levels of librarian participation in book and author programs in the library—this kind of situation may involve money. How much money depends on who the author is. If you desire Hillary Clinton to come speak at your library, your pockets better be very deep; on the other hand, a local author with, say, two published novels to his or her credit but not a huge name behind him or her, can indeed present an engaging program. The difference between Hillary Clinton and a not-well-known author will mean a difference in publicity, and this chapter will explain the differences. An author program in which a single author talks about his or her writing experiences—you tell him what to talk about—has “rules” to live by, and I will discuss these in this chapter as well. And the guiding principle I suggest will also include presenting a two-author or multiauthor program.

Let me remind the reader that in all the above-cited book-and-author situations, I will also see the program through the eyes of the organizing librarian who will also be performing as the moderator of the presentation; for which, in each case, in each chapter, I will provide guidelines for the moderating process.

What could turn out to be an interesting and even quite popular program is a panel consisting of readers drawn from your pool of library patrons who are comfortable with discussing new or favorite books they have been reading. This kind of program offers peculiar challenges, but at the same time some distinctive rewards, which I will analyze in chapter 6. This kind of program, intended primarily for the public rather than library staff (who, of course, would be advised to attend, for the sake of what they could learn about the reading interests and tastes of their community: lessons, in readers' advisory, in other words), would require lots of advance preparation; thus, doing it on a regular basis may limit the time between programs. The nature of, and the necessary steps in, organizing and presenting a program of this nature will be discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 7 presents details about sponsoring writer-in-residence programs and organizing and presenting an annual book award. These two types of pro-

grams are great library attention-getters. In its full fledge, the annual book award is presented in-person to the author (which means cash and a medal of some sort), who has agreed long in advance to come to town (which is a very important point; giving the author the award is contingent upon him or her agreeing to show up) for a banquet that will celebrate the award.

Even more intense and labor-intensive program—in fact, a major undertaking—will be addressed in chapter 8. This type of program, tried in many communities and usually quite successful, is called by different names and titles, but primarily it is the one-book, one-city idea. Regardless of the label the program is given, all one-book, one-city programs have the same basic premise, which is to draw a community together by way of reading and discussing the same book; and, as an important auxiliary purpose, to promote literacy. History tells us that the idea originated with Nancy Pearl, who was at the time the Director of the Washington (State) Center for the Book; but reiterations of Nancy’s original program have proliferated across the country. And let me restate the point I broached in the first sentence of this paragraph: this is a big, big undertaking involving lots of people. In fact, it pretty much involves the whole community. Obviously, then, it is not a program to be taken lightly, to be embarked upon thinking that you as the program supervisor can do it all on your own.

Who decides what book to choose, and the criteria for selecting a community-wide read will be discussed. Promotion is paramount for the success of this kind of program, and promotional strategies will be discussed. Essentially, then, the thrust of this chapter is all the events that can lead, that can be derived from, one community involved in reading one book.

My bottom-line suggestion at this point is, jump into the world of book and author programs and have a great time doing it. Hopefully, my words to come will ensure that.

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