



The Newsletter of the Argyle Public Library Building Committee

Off the Shelf

May/June 2022

Patron's View: Robert "Bobby" Besand



Those driving through downtown Argyle are often greeted with a friendly "thumbs up" from well-known resident Robert Besand, known as "Bobby" to his many friends. A long-time resident of the area, he graduated from Argyle High School in 1968, where he excelled in athletics. Remarkably, for track he went to State twice, and holds the school record for the 880 meter race.

Bobby started visiting the Argyle Public Library as a student working on research projects, and still visits almost daily to google news events, check out books, read newspapers, or attend programs. Here he can stay up to date with news of his favorite team, the

Milwaukee Brewers. When asked what he is reading, he said he especially enjoys Western novels, and that his favorite author is Louis L'Amour. He describes Argyle's librarians as "helpful and polite."

An active community volunteer, Bobby is interested in everything happening here in Argyle. He has followed the work of the Building Committee in its efforts over the last year to find a new space for the Library. He said the Library needs more room for people and books and more parking.

When asked why he gives the thumbs up, Bobby said it is a way of expressing "a good attitude." He said his favorite thing about Argyle is the friendly people, and that it's a place where if something happens to someone, others step up and help them out. As Argyle's unofficial ambassador and one of the Library's most loyal patrons, he knows what he's talking about. 🍷

Join Friends of the Argyle Public Library

A new group has formed to support the Library. The Friends of the Argyle Public Library is led by a Board of Directors including Jean-Margret Merrell-Beech, Susan Munoz, Peg Rasch, Garry Rossing, and Vicki Tollakson. The new Friends group will raise funds for library projects as well as provide volunteers to carry out events that support the Library. It turns out that many libraries got their starts through the efforts of community groups such as this, and Argyle is no exception. In 1880, a group of

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citizens got together and sold stock, raising \$4 to start a library, and in 1923 the Argyle Women's Club led efforts to restart the library that has served residents ever since.

One of the Friends' first events is the Annual Book Sale at the Library on Friday, June 3 from 8:00 am to 3:00pm, and on Saturday, June 4 from 8:00am to 1:00pm. A wide selection of books will be available at great prices. Then starting on June 18, the Friends will host an information table at the Argyle Open Markets this summer. At all of these events membership forms can be completed quickly to become a Friends member. The Friends group can also be contacted at PO Box 293, Argyle, WI 53504. 🐣

New Library Project

- Complete a library space assessment for the community (Fall 2020)
- Site visit and community presentation by John Thompson, Director IFLS Library System of west-central Wisconsin (June 2021)
- Form a Building Committee (June 2021)
- Visit area libraries that recently were built or remodeled (July 2021)
- Carry out a community survey (Fall 2021, survey results are available at the library)
- Establish a nonprofit group, Friends of the Argyle Public Library (Jan 2022)
- Explore sites and funding options including grants, loans, private donations (ongoing)
- Retain an architect and obtain renderings
- Launch fundraising campaign
- Review design options and gather community input
- Final selection of design plan
- Select contractors and complete construction

About the Building Committee

The Committee is made up of 15 community members working to find a larger space for the Argyle Public Library. The need for a larger library was recognized as far back as 2004. A formal space assessment completed in 2020 said that a community Argyle's size should have a library with a minimum of 3000-4000 square feet of space, compared to the current library of only 900 square feet. The most critical factor is that the current library is not fully accessible to those using walkers, strollers, and wheelchairs. It also lacks sufficient space for children's story times and for chairs for people to sit. Why do this now? A new crop of programs, stimulus funds, and foundation grants has become available to help pay for a library project like this, and the Committee sees this as the right time to move forward. To stay informed, find *Off the Shelf* in the *Pecatonica Valley Leader*, at the library, or on the library's website. Subscribe by sending an email to communicationscommittee53504@gmail.com.