Dear NEIBA Friends,

Last Friday was my final day in the NEIBA offices as your executive director. Nan and I had been working for the past two weeks to make sure that Beth’s transition was as thorough and as smooth as possible. It’s quite an exercise to walk someone through a year of NEIBA activity, with its deadlines and minutiae, but Beth is a quick learner and we’re confident that events of the next months are in excellent hands.

I want to tell each of you how much of an honor it has been to serve as your regional director for these past eleven years. I am proud of the work that I have been able do on your behalf. As I told the Board, these have been the most gratifying years of my career. None of what has been accomplished would have been possible without the support over the years from the Boards of Directors, the Advisory Councils, the chairs of NECBA and the ABA. Their collective expertise and hard work has made more of a difference to the association than you may know. New England is blessed with the best sales reps in the book business. Their ideas and fresh viewpoints have been invaluable to the richness of our programming. The creative and financial support
programming. The creative and financial support that we receive from our publisher and wholesaler friends is vital to our mission. Bound up in all of this are friendships that have meant the world to me. To all of these stakeholders I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

On March 8th, NEIBA is hosting a retirement party at the Beacon Press offices from 5:30-8:00 pm. I hope many of you will be there so I can thank you in person. I know that due to store scheduling, author events, (or wanting to stay home to read!), many of you won't be able to be there. So I will thank each of you here for teaching me so much and to let you know that I will forever be in awe of your dedication and love of sharing books and ideas.

This is not a business that anyone really leaves so I'll say thank you, thank you, thank you. I'll see you in your stores.

Onward!
Steve

Notes From the NEIBA Advisory Council

It was November 9, 2016 at Porter Square Books, the day after the election of Donald Trump. We had all been anticipating the election of our first female president and then the unthinkable happened. The staff were coping with their own incapacitating disbelief when the first loyal customers crossed the threshold at 7am that day. In stunned bewilderment, they were looking for someone, anyone, to explain how this could have happened here? Throughout that day and the days that followed, it became very clear that our community needed a refuge, a space to gather in their bafflement and knew instinctively that that was something they would find at their neighborhood independent bookstore.

Now we know we live in a bubble in the 02140 zip
Now we know we live in a bubble in the 02140 zip code, but is it our bubble and after a decent period of wallowing, we started to get busy. There was a profound sense of powerlessness and loss of control as executive order followed executive order.

Activism on the local level is a well worn tradition in these parts. We just needed to give it structure and bring in the experts and the people would come. We called it Be the Change. On the last Sunday of every month, beginning in January 2017, we have organized a program/event on some topic of social and/or political justice. We invite authors and speakers from the community who will give their audience the voice and the tools with which to effect change in their neighborhood, their city, their county and their state. Of course we make books available for related reading. A percentage of sales during those afternoons is donated to a non profit working in the community.

The discussions have been wide ranging - economic justice with members of Raise Up Massachusetts; mental health awareness with the CEO of the National Empowerment Center and professor of psychiatry at UMass; daring democracy with Frances Moore Lappe educating us about her Democracy Movement; community action for transgender rights with activist Mimi Lemay reviewing legislation passed and pending before the Massachusetts legislature; and feminist resistance worldwide with author, scholar, and activist Cynthia Enloe and Robbie Adams from the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights focusing on specific ways for people to get involved in their organization. The list goes on. Beneficiaries include BINC, Tunefoolery (an organization of musicians in mental health recovery), the Democracy Initiative, Cambridge Camping, and BCRHHR mentioned above. We also facilitated a voter registration drive in August having forms on hand for people to complete or take home to friends and neighbors.

The response has been gratifying. Our belief in the power of bookstores and the communities they attract to make the best of a _________ situation remains strong.

~ Ellen Jarrett, Porter Square Books, Cambridge MA
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