In this episode of Check It Out, we are going to learn some fascinating things about a manager of our Library on Wheels service, which is the Bookmobile cart hauler service that many of us have fond memories of, and we're also going to spend some time with our co-hosts, talking about some things that we learned after the interview. All that and more up next.

Welcome to season two and episode 22 of Check It Out, the Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.

The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.

This is a special episode of Check It Out. We call it the "Hmm, I didn't know that" episode, and we do these periodically, and it gives us an opportunity to talk about things that we really didn't know. That might seem strange, because we work for a library, but there's some times, oftentimes, things about the world of libraries that is a surprise to us.

So my name's Ken Harvey. I'm one of the hosts here, and I'm joined by ...

Paul Pitkin ...

... and Cindy Tingley.

So I'm delighted to have my co-hosts here with me, and we are going to be sharing an interview that we've had with a very special person. Her name is Sherry Stevens, and Sherry is the Library on Wheels manager for Sno-Isle Libraries, which is kind of an interesting title, because not everyone may immediately understand that Library on Wheels is what we call our Bookmobile and cart hauler, cart outreach services that essentially delivers library services to those who can't come to a community library for various reasons.
Ken Harvey: 01:57 I think that the audience is going to be just as delighted in hearing the interview as I certainly was. What do you think?

Paul Pitkin: 02:06 Well, if it's a "Hmm, I didn't know that," then I found out a lot of things I did not know.

Cindy Tingley: 02:11 Same here.

Paul Pitkin: 02:13 Learned a ton, and it is really an interesting interview, because Sherry worked in the field for so long, you can tell she had so many different experiences that she could draw from, but you do ... Ken, you're so right. You think of a Bookmobile as, "Oh, there's this truck full of books, and it drives around," but there's way more to it than that.

Cindy Tingley: 02:32 Yeah. No, I was going to say, in the communities, its serves are so diverse. They really get to get out and see so much more of where we live and serve those communities that we otherwise wouldn't get to.

Ken Harvey: 02:45 So one of the things that's really interesting about doing a podcast interview is that you often learn more after the interview than you do during the interview, and after this interview was concluded, we sat around with Sherry for just a little bit longer. That's when she really relaxed and started really talking freely with us about things, and what were some of the things that she shared with us that you didn't know?

Cindy Tingley: 03:15 The Books by Mail program. I had no idea. It's just amazing to think that if you can't get out to the Bookmobile or the cart hauler because of some limitation, we are actually able to send and get books returned by mail to help those folks out. Apparently, this has been going on for a couple years. I had absolutely no idea.

Paul Pitkin: 03:39 I didn't, either. I had no idea. The other thing that I was ... She mentions all the programming they do for child development centers, and I was shocked to find out that ...

Cindy Tingley: 03:55 127. Yeah.

Paul Pitkin: 03:57 127, and that's not just ...

Ken Harvey: 03:57 127 different locations, right?

Cindy Tingley: 03:58 Yeah, yeah.
Paul Pitkin: 03:58  They were talking about ECEAPs and Head Starts, which are ... Those are big deals, and I didn't realize how much service they provide, that they go there and they bring the Bookmobiles and they bring the books to the kids, but that they also do story times ...

Cindy Tingley: 04:13  Yeah.

Paul Pitkin: 04:14  ... and other programming and other presentations. That just blew my mind, because 127 centers is a lot.

Cindy Tingley: 04:19  Absolutely.

Ken Harvey: 04:20  That's a lot of service that's going on out there, and you're right. That was something I did not know. I'm, in some ways, astounded with that number. So it just goes to show that the services that Sno-Isle Libraries provides really goes beyond what the average bear does.

Cindy Tingley: 04:43  Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 04:44  It's just really amazing.

Paul Pitkin: 04:45  Before I forget, I've got to mention the other thing I didn't know, which was the idea that a Bookmobile can go ... they've increased their Wi-Fi capability ...

Cindy Tingley: 04:55  Oh, yes.

Paul Pitkin: 04:55  ... and that they could go drive to someplace that has iffy Wi-Fi, and someone can actually go into the Bookmobile and check out books or just do stuff ...

Ken Harvey: 05:03  Yeah. On the Internet.

Paul Pitkin: 05:04  ... on the Internet, yeah.

Cindy Tingley: 05:04  Right, right.

Paul Pitkin: 05:06  That's amazing to me that this mobile Wi-Fi center, to a certain degree.

Cindy Tingley: 05:11  Yeah, and she also mentioned the Hotspots for the home-bound folks.

Paul Pitkin: 05:16  They're going to be Hotspots. They're going to be Hotspots, yeah.
Cindy Tingley: 05:16 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 05:17 Yeah, so for the audience's benefit, Sherry mentioned to us after the interview that the staff would go out when they're delivering service to, say, senior care facilities or childcare facilities or places that don't have Internet service. The phones that the library staff will bring with them can operate as Hotspots and actually provide some Wi-Fi Internet connection there on those sites, and who knew?

Cindy Tingley: 05:52 Right. So amazing.

Paul Pitkin: 05:53 Yeah, that's incredible.

Cindy Tingley: 05:54 A great service.

Ken Harvey: 05:56 Yeah, the other thing that Sherry mentioned that was really heartwarming to me in the kind of interview after the interview was that I think she shared a story about a Bookmobile ... Maybe it was a cart. They had taken a cart of books into a facility, and one of the individuals there was of Chinese ancestry.

Paul Pitkin: 06:27 Oh, yeah. Actually, that was ... I think he was on the Bookmobile itself.

Ken Harvey: 06:30 Was it the Bookmobile itself?

Cindy Tingley: 06:31 I believe so, yeah.

Ken Harvey: 06:31 Okay, yeah. On the Bookmobile, and they actually ... Evidently, the Bookmobile staff, they plan ahead for the different communities that they're going to serve, and they try and anticipate, have a sense of what the needs might be and the demographics of the community. Then they select the materials that they're going to take out with them on the Bookmobile.

Ken Harvey: 06:55 In this case, a gentleman of Chinese ancestry, he spoke and read Chinese, and they actually had some Chinese materials on the ...
Paul Pitkin: 07:10 Yeah, he was thrilled.

Cindy Tingley: 07:11 He was so happy.

Ken Harvey: 07:11 He was so surprised, and he had one that he looked at. She said, "Oh, no, there's more over here."

Cindy Tingley: 07:17 Yep.

Ken Harvey: 07:17 Sure enough, there were, and he was delighted.

Paul Pitkin: 07:20 That's great.

Ken Harvey: 07:22 Yeah, so I ... We don't want to steal all the thunder from the interview by sharing too much.

Paul Pitkin: 07:27 Actually, everything that's in the interview, we have not covered.

Cindy Tingley: 07:31 Yes. No spoilers.

Paul Pitkin: 07:33 No spoilers. This is all new material.

Ken Harvey: 07:35 Yeah, so we're going to take a little break, and when we come back, you will be hearing our conversation with Sherry Stevens, the Library on Wheels manager.

Ken Harvey: 07:45 When you give to the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation, your gift touches generations. Your donation helps turn babies and young children into readers, turn students and first-time entrepreneurs into successes, and helps maintain the lifelong learning of adults, seniors, and our home-bound neighbors.

Ken Harvey: 08:02 You can be part of the change you're looking for. Your onetime gift, monthly gift, or memorial gift can make all the difference. Please consider investing in children, seniors, and others through the Sno-Isle Libraries Foundation today.

Ken Harvey: 08:15 We just want to take the opportunity to remind our audience that if you hear a podcast episode that covers something that is really meaningful to you, take the opportunity to share it with friends or with family or with coworkers and peers in your career. There are a number of ways to do that that are just about liking it on social media and sharing it. What do you guys think?
Cindy Tingley: 08:40 Oh, yeah, absolutely. Right from your phone app, there's a share option. So that's the perfect place if you're listening on the go.

Paul Pitkin: 08:46 I get almost all of my podcast recommendations from my friends and from family members, and there's a ton of podcasts out there. So you can save yourself a lot of trouble by sifting through bad ones by forwarding the good podcasts to your friends. So the good podcasts, which means check it out. Forward it, forward it, forward it. Your friends and family will love you for it.

Ken Harvey: 09:15 So we're back from our break, and we are delighted to have with us Sherry Stevens, who is the Library on Wheels manager for Sno-Isle Libraries. Sherry, thanks for being with us.

Sherry Stevens: 09:24 Well, thank you for having me.

Ken Harvey: 09:25 So you have been at Sno-Isle Libraries for a while, and it sounds ... and you've been in your current position as the manager of Library on Wheels for, I think, four years? Is that right?

Sherry Stevens: 09:36 That's right.

Ken Harvey: 09:37 So we're going to ask you some questions about your job, because we want the audience to be more aware of the different types of careers and job positions that are available through our library service, and we know that some people are surprised by the types of jobs that we have here. So what is a Library on Wheels manager?

Sherry Stevens: 10:02 Well, I manage the department in Sno-Isle Libraries that does a different kind of service than the regular community libraries do. We have a Bookmobile, and we have ...

Ken Harvey: 10:13 I love Bookmobiles.

Sherry Stevens: 10:15 Yeah. I love our new Bookmobile. Then we have a cart. We have cart service, where we deliver books to seniors. We take books and carts into our senior centers, and then we also do childcare programming and delivery of books to childcare centers. We do books by mail. So we do a variety of services for those community members that aren't able to get into the library and provide the regular library service.
Ken Harvey: 10:41 So I'd really like to walk through those, but, before we do, tell us a little bit more about yourself. So you've been working at Sno-Isle Libraries for how long?

Sherry Stevens: 10:50 For 28 years.

Cindy Tingley: 10:51 Wow.

Ken Harvey: 10:52 28 years. My goodness.

Cindy Tingley: 10:54 Amazing.

Ken Harvey: 10:54 That's a long time, or does it feel like it's been a short time?

Sherry Stevens: 10:57 It sometimes feels like a short time, because it's the kind of work that I ... I love the work, but ... Then sometimes I look back and look at the young people that I'm working with now and realize how long I've been here, so it's a long time.

Cindy Tingley: 11:10 Did you start out in Library on Wheels?

Sherry Stevens: 11:12 I started out at the Snohomish Library, doing an entry-level position, shelving books and providing basic library service there, but I knew that someday I wanted to come to work at Library on Wheels.

Ken Harvey: 11:27 So was the Bookmobile service of Sno-Isle Libraries, was it called Library on Wheels all along, or is that just kind of a new, modern term or name for that service?

Sherry Stevens: 11:39 Well, it was mobile services, but when you get mobile services like telephones and all of those kinds of things, mobile phones, we were misunderstood. "What is mobile services?" So we changed our name to Library on Wheels probably seven or eight years ago, because of what people think of as mobile services is a little different. But that's what it was called when I started.

Paul Pitkin: 12:02 So you were saying that you wanted to work in mobile services, as it was called then.

Sherry Stevens: 12:06 Right.

Paul Pitkin: 12:06 What attracted you to it? Did you just like to drive? What was ... 

Sherry Stevens: 12:10 Part of that, but I'd never driven a large vehicle. So I drove some pretty large vehicles when I first began.
Ken Harvey: 12:16 So that means you weren't a trucker?

Sherry Stevens: 12:19 No.

Cindy Tingley: 12:19 No CDL license?

Sherry Stevens: 12:20 No.

Paul Pitkin: 12:20 Well, we're not going to hear about it now.

Sherry Stevens: 12:22 Right. But some of the things that attracted me, I think, was the Bookmobile and the rural service that they provided, but also just the ... We went to visit home-bounds. At the beginning, I did not do story times at childcare. So we went to visit people that were in their homes ...

Ken Harvey: 12:39 Okay.

Sherry Stevens: 12:39 ... and brought services.

Ken Harvey: 12:40 So that's what you mean by home-bound?

Sherry Stevens: 12:41 Yeah, people that couldn't get into the regular community library.

Ken Harvey: 12:46 So someone who can't get into the regular library, that's because of what? Are they ... Is it some physical disability, or what's happening?

Sherry Stevens: 12:56 Disability, sometimes. Most of them, they had to have some sort of ... They had to tell us why they ... not details, but they had to tell us why they couldn't get in. So we provided service to those that were stuck at home that maybe didn't have someone to take them in or that they couldn't physically get into a community library and actually bring books home and those kind of things. So we delivered to them.

Cindy Tingley: 13:20 So were they picking out what they wanted to have delivered, or were you also taking a variety of things that you knew they would like?

Sherry Stevens: 13:28 We take what they ask for, but we also ... We take like a profile of that person's interests, and then, each time you go to visit, you would talk to them more about what they liked about what you brought. Then they'd tell us what they liked, what they didn't like, and then you had to ... A lot of great readers' advisory training, because I was intimidated by that part of the
job when I first came here, like, "Am I going to be able to meet the need of this person?"

Paul Pitkin: 13:55 Like a curator for them.

Sherry Stevens: 13:57 Right, and you're choosing books. It's a very personal thing ...

Cindy Tingley: 14:01 Sure.

Sherry Stevens: 14:01 ... when you're choosing materials that they're going to read, and so your goal, it was always to make that customer happy to get that information that they needed. So ...

Ken Harvey: 14:12 With reader advisory, you're actually advising them or providing suggestions to them, in terms of what might be of interest?

Sherry Stevens: 14:19 Right. I got training on what they might like. When you have a personal reading ... I had a personal reading style that was limited. But I learned that I needed to understand different genres of reading and different interests and be able to help the customers identify different directions that they could go.

Sherry Stevens: 14:41 Then you have a reader that reads romance, and they want to read them from ... that were by a certain author. I had to learn how to direct them to other areas of interest, and that was a challenge, but it was always great when you made them happy with what they had to read.

Sherry Stevens: 14:58 I mean, some of these people, I was their only person that they might really talk to every month, so ...

Ken Harvey: 15:06 Wow.

Paul Pitkin: 15:06 That's a lot of responsibility.

Sherry Stevens: 15:07 Yeah, and then you're choosing personal things for them, but with their feedback and with their ... just trying to learn more about them, kind of, each time that you visit them.

Paul Pitkin: 15:20 Now I know that part of ... There's that element of Library on Wheels, but there's also the element of visiting communities that don't have a library.

Sherry Stevens: 15:27 Right.

Paul Pitkin: 15:28 Can you describe some of those communities within Sno-Isle that you go to?
Sherry Stevens: 15:32 Well, now we go up to Index, and we have a regular visit up to ...

Ken Harvey: 15:36 Index, Washington?

Sherry Stevens: 15:36 ... Index, Washington, yes.

Ken Harvey: 15:39 So for someone who doesn't know where Index is, describe kind of the general area.

Sherry Stevens: 15:44 Up in the beautiful Cascade Mountains, and we love the drive out there, but you take out Highway 2 up to almost the edge of Snohomish County, pretty close to the end of Snohomish County.

Paul Pitkin: 15:53 I used to do a lot of rafting over in Index.

Sherry Stevens: 15:55 Yeah.

Paul Pitkin: 15:55 It's a beautiful little town.

Sherry Stevens: 15:56 It is, and the people there are value the service. Just a great community to serve. But we've been serving them ... I don't know how many years, long before I started working at Library on Wheels.

Paul Pitkin: 16:11 How do you ... I mean, not to interrupt you, but how do you actually ... If you're going to Index ...

Sherry Stevens: 16:15 Yes.

Paul Pitkin: 16:16 ... how do you stock the Bookmobile? I mean, this is, again, a question of curation. How do you figure out ... You only have so much room.

Sherry Stevens: 16:24 Right.

Paul Pitkin: 16:25 What do you put in there?

Sherry Stevens: 16:26 Well, we know their community. The Bookmobile carries a little bit of everything. There's about 2000 ... over 2000 items on it. But we know the customers, and they select their holds. We bring holds out to them. But the staff that prepares the Bookmobile knows what kind of things, and then you watch to see if they take those things that you brought. But they work to curate it, basically ...
Paul Pitkin: 16:51 Yeah, that's great.
Sherry Stevens: 16:52 ... to make it work for them.
Paul Pitkin: 16:54 So just back to ... What are some of the other communities that you guys go to?
Sherry Stevens: 16:59 We have a stop out by Rainbow Groceries in the Maltby area ...
Cindy Tingley: 17:03 Wow.
Sherry Stevens: 17:05 ... Echo Lake, kind of, and there's some families that ... I think we've had pictures of them on our website, but families that participate in that stop. We did have stops at both Mariner and Smokey Point – Lakewood/Smokey Point area, but now we have community libraries there. But we served them for several years, and now it's great that they have a place to go on a regular basis.
Cindy Tingley: 17:29 Yeah, and I'm listening to this, going, "Odometer, click, click, click, click." How many miles, annually, would you say the Bookmobile travels?
Sherry Stevens: 17:37 Well, the Bookmobile itself, now that we don't go to Mariner and Lakewood/Smokey Point, it's a little bit less. But it was about 8000 miles last year.
Cindy Tingley: 17:48 Wow.
Sherry Stevens: 17:49 The total miles, though, I did a kind of little calculation of all the miles of all the vehicles that belong to our department, and we went about 42,500 miles ...
Cindy Tingley: 17:58 My goodness.
Sherry Stevens: 17:59 ... for all the different services.
Ken Harvey: 18:00 Yeah, that's a lot of driving.
Cindy Tingley: 18:00 It is.
Sherry Stevens: 18:03 It is, and you have to like to drive ...
Ken Harvey: 18:04 Yeah.
Sherry Stevens: 18:04 ... if you want to work at Library on Wheels, so ...
Cindy Tingley: 18:06 Yeah, because we have our fair share of traffic obstacles, weather obstacles, getting out to those remote locations, I can imagine.

Ken Harvey: 18:13 Well, so you mentioned Index and to the east and Maltby, kind of to the southeast. How about how far north?

Sherry Stevens: 18:22 Now we don't have a lot north right now, because we do have the Lakewood/Smokey Point library. We had several stops in that community. We do go to a school in Arlington, and that's as far north as we go right now.

Ken Harvey: 18:36 Then any service to the west?

Sherry Stevens: 18:44 We don't take our vehicle ... Well, we do take our cart service out to Oak Harbor and through the whole Whidbey Island with our cart service, which is the service that looks just like the Bookmobile, but it takes carts of ... We take carts of books tailored to the community that we're serving, and we bring those carts into their building. Then the community members, a lot of them are senior housing or retirement homes. They bring ... The community comes down to where we set up a little library inside.

Sherry Stevens: 19:18 So we have several stops on Whidbey Island. Well, we have several stops like that throughout the whole ...

Ken Harvey: 19:24 Wow.

Sherry Stevens: 19:25 ... Snohomish and Island counties. That's probably my favorite part of the service right now. I've gone through different phases.

Ken Harvey: 19:35 You've left certain things behind.

Sherry Stevens: 19:35 Yeah, but this one ... I mean, I just ... It's so appreciated, and it's just ... It's an amazing service to watch, the people who come to visit and how much they enjoy it.

Ken Harvey: 19:48 Well, I've always been jealous of neighborhoods or communities or places that receive Bookmobile service, because I always thought that that was the most wonderful thing in the world, to actually have the books come to you and to be able to explore the selection in a convenient place and not to have to go as far to find it and, unfortunately, have always lived in communities where that wasn't available, because there was a community library near.
Ken Harvey: 20:23 But I always thought, "Oh my gosh. That is just ... That would be so wonderful to have a Bookmobile to show up near where I live and stroll over and find myself delighted with the selection available."

Sherry Stevens: 20:38 Right. We have a really great variety. It's amazing what you can ... Sno-Isle has a great collection of materials, and so you can select a little bit of everything. The challenge when you're a staff person on those is to watch people's eyes light up when they find what they're looking for in that small space that appears to them, but it's such a well-balanced collection. So that always makes us feel good.

Sherry Stevens: 21:02 I went to a Night for Diversity thing at a school. Excuse me. I'm blanking as to ...

Ken Harvey: 21:13 Yeah, a program or ...

Sherry Stevens: 21:13 ... what I even went to. But ...

Paul Pitkin: 21:15 It happens to me many times a day.

Cindy Tingley: 21:16 Oh, all day long.

Sherry Stevens: 21:17 Yes. But it was really watching the diverse community coming here and coming to the vehicle and find something in their language, in their interest, and just be amazed. They were amazed, and it's just a rewarding work, but it's exciting to me that Sno-Isle provides these things for these people in the different communities and where they're not ... have easy access to a community library.

Cindy Tingley: 21:49 It sounds like you still get out a little bit.

Sherry Stevens: 21:52 I still do. I'm supposed to stay in more, but I ...

Paul Pitkin: 21:57 The call of the road.

Sherry Stevens: 21:58 Yeah.

Cindy Tingley: 21:59 Yes.

Sherry Stevens: 21:59 I'm always like, "I'll be the backup," and I did hang onto a couple of routes, which I have given up recently, but ...

Ken Harvey: 22:07 So what kind of ... What did you see in terms of people who would show up for the Bookmobile, and how are they different
from those who come down to ... because there's a book cart, from the cart hauler or the cart van, cart truck? I don't know which you call the vehicle, but ...

Sherry Stevens: 22:29 Yeah. We call it cart hauler.

Ken Harvey: 22:31 Okay, the cart hauler.

Sherry Stevens: 22:31 That's just our name we came up with. I don't know why.

Ken Harvey: 22:34 So how were those groups different but the same?

Sherry Stevens: 22:41 Well, the people that come to the Bookmobile could be anyone - I mean, like anyone that would come into the community library. The difference between those that are on our cart service, maybe they aren't as mobile as they used to be, or they don't have transportation. So we come to them, or they can't physically get out and come.

Sherry Stevens: 23:05 So that might be age, but it might be disabilities. We have a cart hauler stop that is at a facility where a lot of the customers are head-injured or have disabilities like that. So they wouldn't be able to get out to the community library, but they love that we come there twice a month.

Sherry Stevens: 23:23 So the differences. There isn't a lot of difference, just different ages, maybe. A lot of the seniors at our cart stops would be mostly seniors, but not all. But our community stops, just like anyone that would walk into a community library. It's just accessible to them in that they are driving by, or it's by their home.

Sherry Stevens: 23:46 In Index, the Index community's very diverse, so ...

Ken Harvey: 23:49 So do you have a sense of maybe the oldest person who's been served by the cart hauler, by your cart outreach?

Sherry Stevens: 23:59 I'm not sure what who the oldest ... I had a customer that lived to be 104.

Cindy Tingley: 24:04 Wow.

Ken Harvey: 24:05 Really?

Sherry Stevens: 24:05 I visited her until she was 104.

Cindy Tingley: 24:08 Oh my goodness.
Sherry Stevens: 24:10 She was an avid reader. She went from large-print books to books on CD, and then she would tell me ... She was a Mariners fan, and she would tell me, "If people saw me when I'm watching a Mariner game, they'd haul me off." She stayed that way until she was 104.

Ken Harvey: 24:27 Wow.

Cindy Tingley: 24:27 Wow.

Paul Pitkin: 24:27 Wow.

Cindy Tingley: 24:27 That's amazing.

Sherry Stevens: 24:29 So that was, for me ... I knew her for ... She was 92, I think, when I met her.

Ken Harvey: 24:34 Wow.

Sherry Stevens: 24:34 I mean, just a long time.

Paul Pitkin: 24:35 That's a lot of bad Mariner seasons to continue cheering through.

Ken Harvey: 24:38 Wow.

Sherry Stevens: 24:38 Yeah. Actually, the Mariners actually read her name off one year, on one of their games, because ...

Ken Harvey: 24:45 Oh, neat.

Paul Pitkin: 24:45 That's great.

Sherry Stevens: 24:47 ... she was a super fan, but she was also a super fan of the library. It was amazing to be able to help her when she read large-print, and then to help her when she could no longer read large-print and we had something to offer her.

Cindy Tingley: 25:00 I'm just curious. What was her genre, her main ...

Sherry Stevens: 25:03 She was a pretty well-read person. I mean, she would read just about anything I'd bring her.

Ken Harvey: 25:09 Wow.
Sherry Stevens: 25:09 She’d tell me if she liked it or not, and there was ... But she read ... She started out with more historical fiction, but she went into just about everything ...

Cindy Tingley: 25:18 That’s great.

Sherry Stevens: 25:19 ... because you have limited access, maybe, to books on CD, but there are so much more now than there was ... It was CDs then, so it would be downloadables and things like that now, but she would probably love it if she knew how much she could listen to now, so ...

Ken Harvey: 25:35 So let’s look at the other end of the spectrum. What’s the youngest customer or visitor that a Bookmobile maybe has had visit?

Sherry Stevens: 25:44 We’ve had people bring their new babies for us to meet. So as young as you can ... Newborns have been on that Bookmobile, and we’ve had people ... Back in the days when we had a lot more stops, earlier ...

Ken Harvey: 25:57 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 25:58 ... in my career, they would ... You’d have to meet the new babies, because you knew the family, or they’d have to bring their new puppy to the door at least, and we’ve even had a horse peek in the door.

Cindy Tingley: 26:09 Oh my.

Ken Harvey: 26:09 Really?

Sherry Stevens: 26:10 Those rural communities, everybody's family, so they would bring them along for us to meet, so ...

Ken Harvey: 26:15 That’s neat.

Sherry Stevens: 26:16 But as far ... With our service, also, we do the service to the childcare. So we meet ... Most of our programming is for kids three to five, but sometimes two, sometimes one. But we meet kids of all ages.

Paul Pitkin: 26:33 So, I mean, not to say that you’ve been doing this a long time, but you’ve been doing this a long time. You mentioned that you used to have more stops and things like that, and I’m just thinking about, with the advent of streaming and things like
that, how has Bookmobile service changed since you've been doing it?

Sherry Stevens: 26:50 Well, do you mean the streaming and the changes like that?

Paul Pitkin: 26:54 Yeah, just in general, like from when you started, has there been any sort of ...

Ken Harvey: 26:59 Technology changes or social, cultural?

Paul Pitkin: 27:02 Yeah, or maybe like what sort of communities you go to, how you're ... Has there been kind of a meta-change at all?

Sherry Stevens: 27:08 There has, because in the early years, I remember going out to all basically rural communities. I mean, we went out past Gold Bar and all those areas - out to Index, always, but we went out to the Mountain Loop Highway and all those kinds of areas, and we'd have neighborhood stops, because we'd just pull our Bookmobile over and ...

Paul Pitkin: 27:31 You're like an ice cream truck.

Sherry Stevens: 27:32 Kind of, but they regularly came.

Paul Pitkin: 27:34 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 27:35 But now, some of our changes, when we started going ... Even when we started going to the Mariner area, before the library was there, we just found communities where there wasn't library. So it's not necessarily rural.

Paul Pitkin: 27:49 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 27:49 It's just where there isn't a close, walkable or easily accessible library. So we now have a stop in the Lincoln Way Apartments, which is a community that's a little far for the young people to walk to the library. So we identify areas like that.

Paul Pitkin: 28:08 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 28:09 So that's kind of how it's changed, and it's not super rural, necessarily. It's just where ...

Paul Pitkin: 28:17 Where the demand is.

Sherry Stevens: 28:18 Where the demand is. Then when we're looking, we are identifying stops for the future. In fact, we've come up with a
couple that I'm kind of excited about, but I'll wait until I'll let you guys publicize it later ...


Sherry Stevens: 28:28 ... once we get it nailed down.

Paul Pitkin: 28:29 Well, by the time this comes out, it might already be news.

Sherry Stevens: 28:31 Yeah.

Paul Pitkin: 28:32 But I won't pressure you.

Sherry Stevens: 28:33 Okay.

Ken Harvey: 28:34 So, Sherry, as you think back over your career and the things that you've done, if you were chatting with a young person who's really trying to figure out what they want to do in life and what type of job they might want to pursue, what would you tell them about opportunities available through the library?

Sherry Stevens: 28:59 Well, now, I've worked in libraries as basically all I've done, except for raise children and that thing, but I always knew that ... Sno-Isle has a lot of opportunities in different ways. My Library on Wheels is unique in that you get to do such a variety of things, though not to say community libraries don't, but we get to meet with children and work with children up to seniors, and our focus is going to them.

Sherry Stevens: 29:31 But libraries have ... It's a service, and if you're looking for a job that is very fulfilling, just ... I don't know. I'm just kind of climbing up a little bit here. I don't know what ... I get ...

Paul Pitkin: 29:48 Well, it sounds like what you're saying is if you want to get into a career where you serve people, where you're providing a valuable public service, then the library's a great place to go.

Sherry Stevens: 29:57 Right.

Ken Harvey: 29:59 And that mobile libraries, Bookmobiles and cart service and that type of outreach, is maybe even more satisfying.

Sherry Stevens: 30:07 It can be. If you're ready for the changes, if you're flexible, adaptable to daily changes, it's very fulfilling. It's taking library services to people that can't get to the library. It's providing ... Libraries are awesome, and so being able to get all those things into the hands of people that wouldn't ordinarily get that is ...
Paul Pitkin: 30:38 Well, it's really interesting that when you're talking about the people at some of the elder care centers or people with disabilities, the Library on Wheels is like a form of inclusion. I mean, that's a way for them to be included in the society at large, and that's an incredible service.

Sherry Stevens: 30:54 Yes, and they are so thankful for it. I mean, they don't take it as it's due them. They are thankful that it's ... and it is due them, in my mind, but in their minds, it's just, "We are so thankful that you are doing this," because it enriches their lives. Watching that is so enriching to you as a staff person, to be able to be part of something like that, and it's your job, but it pays you back so much more.

Paul Pitkin: 31:24 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 31:25 So I would say ... I mean, I think everybody should love working at Library on Wheels, but it's not for everyone, and if you don't like driving and you aren't flexible to changes on the spur of the moment, if you like order, that's not for you. But library work would be great for anyone, in my mind, also. But this one's special to me.

Cindy Tingley: 31:48 Did you always know it's what you wanted to do?

Sherry Stevens: 31:50 Library?

Cindy Tingley: 31:51 In general.

Sherry Stevens: 31:52 In general, I think I did. I was one of those kids, growing up, that moved to a different home every year until I was in seventh grade. So I knew all the libraries in all of north Seattle, and I found my library first thing. That was my friend. I don't remember friends, but I remember my libraries and my librarians ...

Cindy Tingley: 32:16 Wow.

Sherry Stevens: 32:17 ... and certain librarians. But most of the librarians were very ... It was providing a safe place for me, growing up. So I always knew that there was a link there, so ... But most of my jobs ... I had a librarian that trained me when I worked in high school. I had a job at the high school library, and she influenced ... It's interesting. You don't know how much people influence you.

Cindy Tingley: 32:43 Right.
Sherry Stevens: 32:44 I don't have a way to really tell her now, but all the time she spent with me helped me through the future and identify what it is I wanted to do. So every day, when we're doing things, we don't know who we're touching, but I know the people that touched me, and most of them were librarians.

Paul Pitkin: 33:04 Wow.

Ken Harvey: 33:04 I love the way you said that.

Cindy Tingley: 33:05 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 33:06 So we only have a few more minutes, and I would love to just kind of transition to the fact that ... Two things. One, you are going to be leaving Sno-Isle Libraries very shortly, and we want to thank you for an incredible lifetime of service ...

Cindy Tingley: 33:25 Indeed.

Ken Harvey: 33:26 ... through your 28 years and four years as manager of our Bookmobile, cart-hauling service, and outreach. So, as you're retiring, your retirement will provide you time to do a number of things that you really love doing, which I understand includes sewing ...

Sherry Stevens: 33:53 Yes.

Ken Harvey: 33:53 ... gardening ...

Sherry Stevens: 33:54 Yes.

Ken Harvey: 33:55 You became a quilter?

Sherry Stevens: 33:56 Yes, I did. Yeah, through, actually, the influence of people through my work.

Paul Pitkin: 34:01 There's a ton of quilters here, I have to say.

Cindy Tingley: 34:03 There really are.

Paul Pitkin: 34:03 I was not aware of the quilting phenomenon until I started working here.

Ken Harvey: 34:07 It's a sickness, isn't it?

Sherry Stevens: 34:08 No, it's an awesome thing.
Ken Harvey: 34:08 It's a delight.

Cindy Tingley: 34:12 It's a passion.

Ken Harvey: 34:12 Oh, it's a passion.

Sherry Stevens: 34:12 It is. It's a very passionate thing. Actually, I met a customer that I served for several years that was a quilter who was disabled, and she did it all by hand. She encouraged me one day, and so she goes, "You need to do this."

Ken Harvey: 34:28 That's great.

Sherry Stevens: 34:28 So I met somebody, and that was it.

Paul Pitkin: 34:30 It sounds very meditative.

Sherry Stevens: 34:33 Yeah. It's therapy. It's awesome.

Paul Pitkin: 34:35 Yeah.

Sherry Stevens: 34:36 Plus, it's creative.

Cindy Tingley: 34:37 How many would you say you've made?

Sherry Stevens: 34:40 Well, I have about 20 that aren't finished, at least, but I've probably finished about 20.

Cindy Tingley: 34:46 My goodness.

Sherry Stevens: 34:47 I started this about ten years ago or so.

Ken Harvey: 34:49 Well, I wouldn't ... I don't want to imply that anyone's had any undue influence, but it seems like there's a lot of quilting books and resources available through Sno-Isle Libraries.

Sherry Stevens: 35:01 There certainly is, and I always ... I recommend books that Sno-Isle should purchase, on occasion, but I always check them out through ... I mean, I have a lot of them checked out, actually, right now, but I do return ...

Paul Pitkin: 35:14 You better bring those back before you retire.

Sherry Stevens: 35:16 I know. I have a Lake Stevens library to go to.

Cindy Tingley: 35:18 There you go.
Sherry Stevens: 35:19 But I do bring them back so the others can look at them. But, yeah, I always check out Sno-Isle library books in order to use it, and magazines, also. I have a continuous download of the latest magazines, quilting magazines, so ...

Paul Pitkin: 35:35 So there are ... There is a ...

Sherry Stevens: 35:36 Yeah, get in touch with that.

Paul Pitkin: 35:37 There's a genre of quilting magazines?

Cindy Tingley: 35:39 There is.

Sherry Stevens: 35:40 Yeah, there's lots of quilting, sewing, creative stuff.

Paul Pitkin: 35:44 Great. That's awesome.

Ken Harvey: 35:45 Well, I also asked your permission to just kind of bring into the conversation that you and your husband ... that you're not the only one in the family who's essentially lived this life of service, public service, but you and your husband together have a life of service behind you as well ...

Sherry Stevens: 36:05 Right.

Ken Harvey: 36:07 ... because he is a local pastor, right?

Sherry Stevens: 36:09 Yes, he is. He is until ... Well, he'll always be a pastor, but he is retiring at the same time I am.

Paul Pitkin: 36:17 Wow.

Cindy Tingley: 36:18 Oh my goodness.

Sherry Stevens: 36:18 So that's a big chance for both of us.

Ken Harvey: 36:21 Yeah, to have that gift of time together will be incredible.

Sherry Stevens: 36:26 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 36:27 So thank you both for that ...

Cindy Tingley: 36:28 Yes.

Sherry Stevens: 36:28 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 36:30 ... service that you've rendered.
It's been an amazing journey. It has. It really has. Some things you don't ever expect that you're going to do, but I'm looking forward to seeing the journey, looking forward, but just ... It's interesting how your life goes directions that you just don't necessarily plan, but there are wonderful things in that.

Isn't that the best? That's kind of like going like ... Not to be too glib, but it's like a good Bookmobile route or something.

Yeah. Well, I get that. I'm super excited about our new Bookmobile route working this way, and I think it's going to be awesome. So when you talk Bookmobile, I get excited.

Yeah. Well, that's really ... You and your husband are going to have to get used to seeing each other all the time again.

We are. He says I'm bossy, but we'll see. I just direct.

Well, you're just ... You're a good manager.

I'm a manager. Yeah.

Yeah, exactly.

So is he, though. That's where the problem is.

Oh, okay. Yeah.

So yeah.

I'll be frightened of you two on a trip.

No, we do awesome.

That's great.

Well, thank you so much for your lifetime of service. I know and I'm sure that you're going to be missed by your team, but also by customers who may remember you out on their route. It's neat to know that there are individuals like you who work at Sno-Isle Libraries who make such a difference.

Well, thank you. It has been a great blessing to me to be able to work here, so ...
Paul Pitkin:  38:04  Well, thank you, and also, congratulations on retiring.
Cindy Tingley:  38:06  Absolutely.
Paul Pitkin:  38:07  It’s been an accomplishment.
Cindy Tingley:  38:08  And many more quilts.
Sherry Stevens:  38:10  Yes.
Paul Pitkin:  38:12  I’m cold a lot, so ...
Cindy Tingley:  38:14  I knew you were angling for one of those.
Paul Pitkin:  38:16  I’m not dropping any hints or anything.
Sherry Stevens:  38:18  I’ll have to think on that one.
Ken Harvey:  38:22  Thank you, Sherry.
Sherry Stevens:  38:22  Thank you.
Cindy Tingley:  38:22  Thanks.
Paul Pitkin:  38:23  Thanks.
Ken Harvey:  38:24  That’s this week’s episode of the Check It Out podcast. Don’t forget to join us next week for another episode. Thanks for listening.