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*Kennebecasis Public Library – Book Club Program*

**Librarian:** Madaline Boutilier

**Email:** [Madaline.boutilier@gnb.ca](mailto:Madaline.boutilier@gnb.ca) **Phone:** (506) 849-5314 and ask for her.

Please let Kirstin know which book(s) are selected so she can contact Madaline to reserve the book(s) the club wants to read next.

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**Date of the next meeting:** Thursday, June 26, at 1:30PM.

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***Two Old Women, by Velma Wallis***

**About the Author:** Velma Wallis (born 1960) is a Gwich'in Athabaskan Indian and bestselling U.S. novelist. Her work has been translated into 17 languages. She was born and raised in a remote Alaskan village near Fort Yukon, approximately 200 km north-east of Fairbanks. This location could be accessed only by riverboat, airplane, snowmobile or dogsled. Velma grew up among twelve siblings. Her father died when she was thirteen years old, and she stayed out of school to help her mother with the household. (She later went on to receive her GED diploma, which is a High School equivalent.) About twelve miles away from the village, her father had once built a small cabin in the wilderness. He had been an active hunter and trapper. Some time after his death Velma surprised her family and friends by leaving home and living in the cabin for some years. She perfected her trapping, fishing and hunting skills and lived on what she could provide for herself. At one point her mother joined her during the summer to teach her more of the traditional skills needed to survive. In this area, where the Porcupine River flows into the Yukon River, Velma Wallis lived an independent lifestyle. These experiences led directly to her first book, *Two Old Women*, which astonished her publisher by selling 1.5 million copies worldwide. Velma Wallis, who has three daughters and a son, now divides her time between Fairbanks and Fort Yukon.

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**A) Here are 10 discussion questions to help kick-off discussion. Members can take turns reading the question aloud.**

- 1.** What is the most serious conflict or problem for Sa' and Ch'idzigyaak,? How do they overcome it?
- 2.** How do the memories of Athabaskan culture and tradition contribute to their survival?

3. How do the women manage to overcome their loneliness?
4. When The People finally make contact with the women, how have the women changed from when Dagoo last saw them?
5. What was the lesson Dagoo has learned since The People left the women behind?
6. What does the well-trodden path between the two camps represent?
7. Identify situations where individuals apologize or admit they are wrong. In each case, what motivates the apology?
8. How is the integrity of the present and historical lives of American Indian people represented by Wallis' novel?

**B) Book questions and discussion from Book Club Members.**

**C) Discussion and choosing of the next book to read (by popular vote).**

**July:** Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly

**August:** TBD

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### **C) Writing Prompts Exercise**

Immediately following Book Club, partake in a writing exercise called "Prompts".

How it works: A title is chosen, we write on that title for 10 minutes, then stop. The results can be surprising, satisfying and shocking! If anyone wants to read their piece to the group, they can, but there is no pressure to do so. We may try 2 or 3 prompts, depending on time and enjoyment. All Book Club members are welcome to stay for this writing exercise. All you need is pen and paper.

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