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Something About Books

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meets our needs. Next, you need an organized system to sort the books and some dedicated, trained volunteers to do the sorting into categories. Sorting books is not for the faint-hearted. It is truly addictive and looking at all those lovely books to sort can cause heart palpitations, anxiety attacks, and fits of passion. Other than raking in cash at our sales, sorting is truly the most fun part of the sale.

One reason our sale has become so lucrative is the specialized training we give our volunteer book sorters. With the volunteer help of a local bookstore owner, we have learned to separate collectibles for higher pricing. An alphabetized listing of desirable books that will sell at a premium is posted for our volunteers. The list, of course, is ever-changing based on market conditions. We currently sort books into 39 categories, from Arts and Literature, History, Psychology, Religion, Travel, Gardening, Mystery, Westerns, and so forth.

Volunteers

The sale runs smoothly because of the hundreds of volunteers from the **Friends of the Library** that help us year after year. We sort books and price the collectibles all year long. This is a huge effort, with a resulting total of over 2,700 sorted boxes to take to the sale. Then there's the set-up at a local roller-rink the day before the sale and hundreds of hours during the sale and the cleanup following the sale.. A true community effort happens in Lancaster!

Publicity

We have a mailing list that we've developed over the years of library donors, dealers and other shoppers who've attended the sale in prior years and asked to be notified about future sales, and county-wide bookstore owners. Flyers with details of the sale are mailed. In addition we are on the Internet on **BookSaleFinder.com**, a free place to advertise non-profit organizations' book sales. This Internet connection brings us customers from around the country. In talking with customers at our sale, we find that many people plan their vacations around our sale. While it would be difficult to track, we know that our book sales also bring monetary benefits to our community in the form of restaurant, hotel, tourist attraction, and store revenues.

Sale Set-up

The book sale was held at the **Lancaster Library** for the first forty years, and we did disrupt the library's normal activities a bit. But there was a great connection and a raised awareness of the library's role in the community when we sold books in the midst of the library bookshelves. Because the sale kept growing, five years ago we were forced to find a larger facility for the annual sale. We finally settled on **Overlook Roller Rink**, a local skating rink.

"If You Have A Book Sale, They Will Come!"

The doors open promptly at 7 A.M., and the shoppers keep up a steady flow all day long until our 9 P.M. closing. The first day, as you might expect, the really great collectible books get snapped up. Our prices are fair and the shoppers know these bargain books won't last long. The sheer volume of books we have ensures a great selection for all three days of the sale. During the sale, besides the truly satisfied shoppers in the collectible section who found that Civil War book they craved, or the autographed first editions, there are heart-warming scenes and stories. The Amish mother's brood of children lined up under one of the Children's books tables, engrossed in their new books. Or the mystery novel devotee searching for, and finding that **Agatha Christie** book missing from his tattered reference list. And the shopper who wonders aloud, "WHO is buying and donating all these **Danielle Steele** novels?" The sellers love to help the little boy in line with a wadded-up dollar bill clenched in his fist in payment for his two books he specially selected. And what a joy to see a family with four children delighted to get an encyclopedia set for \$15.00. Friends, who haven't seen each other since last year's book sale, catch up on family news. The sale is a great social event in Lancaster! On this third day of the sale all books are sold at half-price. Shoppers who had their eyes on books the first two days come back to get bargains. Once again, the parking lot and rink are jammed with bargain hunters, and sales are brisk. Then, about 3 P.M. we start selling the fifty-cent books for \$2.00 a grocery bagful. The specially priced books are sold at 75% off. Books continue to fly out the door until the sale ends at 6 P.M. Once the sale closes to the public, we do invite local non-profit agencies to come and select books for their organization's libraries. Finally, volunteers

pack up the leftovers with the help of a local **Boy Scout** troop and leaders. The **Scouts**, as a community project and fund raiser, help us clean up and also take the scrapped books, remove any hardback covers, and sell the paper for recycling. At the **Lancaster Book Sale** everyone's a winner. The volunteers feel great about helping the library and the community. The library benefits tremendously by getting funds so badly needed. The shoppers go home clutching their treasures and counting the days until next year's book sale, when they can touch, feel, smell, and purchase that delightful delicacy known as the used book.

To help other libraries on the road to lucrative book sales, we have written **The Book Sale Survival Kit**. This spiral-bound manual is a hands-on, systematic approach to book sale success. Two years ago, the **Lancaster Library** used their extensive book sale knowledge to help the Potsdam, New York, **Friends of the Library** start a small book sale modeled after Lancaster's huge sale. Potsdam's book sale revenue grew from several hundred dollars a year to over \$6,000 in the first year. Success with the sale in Potsdam proved the value of sharing this information with others. The **Survival Kit** contains forms, press releases, and resource information. Also included in the manual are discussions on expanding book-selling opportunities, such as Internet sales and year-round bookstores.

The **Book Sale Survival Kit** can be ordered through Treetops Press, 107 Treetops Drive, Lancaster, Pa. 17601. Cost is \$25.00 per manual, which includes book rate shipping. You can also email us at <treetopspress@aol.com> for queries or to place an order.

The Lancaster and Potsdam libraries will share in the profits from the **Book Sale Survival Kit**. Coming Next: Consignment Sales! 🐾

Something About Books

by **Jack Walsdorf** (Library Relations, Alibris)
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Perhaps it's simply the time of the year; spring is in the air, the outfield grass is green and thought turns to the great American pastime of baseball.

In my own case, spring fever started in the cold of January during a conversation at the **Alibris** booth at **ALA**. As so often happens, general talk turned to booktalk, and mention was made of **Doris Kearns Goodwin's** memoir *Wait Till Next Year* (Simon & Schuster 1997). Had I read it? My "no" turned the asker into a mild state of challenge. "You just must read it, wonderful book. I've given away at least five copies. Family,

people at work. I thrust it on them. Get it and tell me what you think of it at **ALA** summer in San Francisco."

My search on **Alibris** turned up lots of copies for sale, over 100, with a signed first in hardback at \$58.50. I got a modestly priced first for \$10. And what a truly wonderful book it is. If you grew up during the late 1940's or early 50's, and if you don't really care about baseball, but do care about growing up, family, tradition, love and values, you will like this book. Told as perhaps only a historian and lover of the game can tell it,

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Oregon Trails

by **Tom Leonhardt** (Director, Information Resources Center and University Librarian, International University Bremen, Germany) www.iu-bremen.de

This time I am trimming to the bone. No fat. Only the bare essentials. As I begin to clear out my office I marvel at how much precious junk I have accumulated in less than four years. Much of it has followed me around for many years and much of it has sentimental value but this time I need to travel light. This is to be a new beginning in several ways, so I want to simplify my life beyond anything I have done since beginning my career. That is not to say that my new life won't have complications, of course it will, but I will be parting with all of my worldly possessions except for my clothing. Even my books will stay behind, some with my children, others in storage. My trumpet, my two cornets, my guitar, my music, my CDs will be staying in Oregon. Will I miss them? I already do. Will I replace them? No, but I may find some substitutes.

Already I have thrown away several reams of papers that I have accumulated and transported but ceased referring to. As an Army brat and itinerant librarian, I have carried my history with me but now it has become possible to recognize that much of it no longer has any value to me and its connection to my past needs to be severed forever. The drawers of a large, long file cabinet have been purged. Only a couple of items escaped the recycling cartons.

I will keep the correspondence (and the speaker's badge) related to *The Fourth International Conference on Approval Plans—Collection Development*, held in the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee on October 29, 30, & 31, 1979. For the first time, I had a paper accepted. It

was a thrill and a proud moment. The conference was chaired by **Peter Spyers-Duran**, now retired, then Director of the University Library at **California State University**, Long Beach. Other members of the Conference Advisory Board were **Charles C. MacLeod**, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee; **Joseph A. Boisse**, Library Director at the University of Wisconsin—Parkside; **Hendrik Edelman**, University Librarian, Rutgers; **Max W. Gnehm**, President of **Blackwell North America**; **Doyle C. Pickett**, Director of Program Services, **The Baker & Taylor Company**; **William C. Roselle**, Library Director at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee; and **Julie Virgo**, Executive Secretary of the **Association of College and Research Libraries**. Those names will mean little or nothing to most readers but to other old-timers, they will undoubtedly trigger memories of those and other influential librarians of the day.

I am also keeping my complete run of the "From the Fringes" column written by **T. Harrison Linkwood**, B.S., M.S., M.L.S., Ph.D. for the library journal *Library Underworld*. Let me quote some introductory material from *Library Underworld* when it introduced **Linkwood** to its readers. And let me add that despite this introduction, few librarians know of this writer who may never write again unless he can overcome a desperate case of writer's block. He once thought that his steady diet of Guinness and single malt whiskey had killed essential brain cells but I visited with him during the *ALA Midwinter Meet-*

ing in Washington, D.C., this past January and he seemed as sharp as ever. Writer's block is a serious ailment but its cause and cure are more matters of psychology rather than physiology. Here is the introduction. His writings you must get from him and that may prove difficult. He is very much alive and active as a librarian but a regular **J.D. Salinger** when it comes to his private life.

"Substantial facts regarding the life and career of **T. Harrison Linkwood** are few. The editorial staff has been able to verify the awarding of two degrees in the natural sciences, a B.S. in 1963 and a M.S. in 1965. There is little dispute that a M.S.S. was earned in 1975. The degree granting institutions, all in the West, pleaded that their names not be given. There were allusions to several shameful episodes of naked lust and outrageous intemperance associated with **Linkwood's** student days that the registrars pray will never again be brought to light. Reports of the occasional bit of violence are thought to exist. Repeated attempts by the editorial staff to ascertain the date, subject and granting institution of **Linkwood's** Ph.D. have met with no success. To be honest, there is a growing concern that the doctorate may be self-awarded. Readers can rest assured that our investigations into this matter will continue with all possible vigor."

"**Dr. Linkwood's** professional life seems to have been spent in acquisitions departments in academic libraries in the West. Despite inferences to a cursed independence and an outspoken intolerance to ineptitude, his work history is without interruption, albeit also without distinction. There is some evidence to suggest that **Linkwood** took an internship in journalism with a **Dr. Hunter S. Thompson** of the University of Woody Creek. Details of this phase of **Dr. Linkwood's** life are sketchy. When queried, **Linkwood's** only response is to grin wickedly and beg for strong drink."

"Little is known of **Linkwood's** private life. Based upon limited correspondence and a few garbled phone conversations, the editorial staff has been able to piece together the following: **Dr. Linkwood** has been accused of being slow to adapt to modern librarianship. Late at night he has been heard to rail profanely against such throngs as hardware, software and systems. In contrast, he speaks fondly of books and writers. In spite of a small stature, he is known for a large appetite for single malt whiskies and ales of the strongest type, a predilection he blames on a Scottish heritage. **Dr. Linkwood's** personal credo, which oddly enough, is printed on his business cards, is: "I'm not here for a long time, I'm here for a good time."

The few columns that **Linkwood** has written to date are profoundly irreverent and funny as hell. His description of an ALA conference speaker, so long-winded and unintelligible that he is attacked and beaten by members of the

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Doris Kearns Goodwin weaves that wonderful mixture of daily life, political times and sports into an absorbing memoir.

"Although my interest in public events rarely went beyond the sport page," she did manage to worry about **Julius and Ethel Rosenberg**; the Soviet Union; the bomb; the work of **Senator Joe McCarthy** and her beloved **Brooklyn Dodgers**. She also learned, at the hands of her devoted father, the fine art of keeping a true and accurate box score, and of telling her father what happened during the day games on his return home after a long day at the office. Taking the box score in hand, she would replay the game, inning by inning, keeping the outcome to herself and keeping her father in suspense—the start of her life as a storyteller and historian.

Towards the end of her story, during the 1955 season, **Goodwin** attended a special July game celebrating **Pee Wee Reese's** thirty-seventh birthday. "Just before the celebration was to begin, I caught **Jackie**

Robinson's attention....The aging warrior remained my favorite player...I leaned over the railing, and with my most beseeching smile waved my autograph book." He signed it "Keep your smile a long, long while. **Jackie Robinson.**" She continues: "I would not let the book out of my hand.... As **Reese** approached home plate, I thought about the very special relationship which existed between **Robinson** and **Reese** — the black pioneer and the southern captain. When **Robinson** first came to the **Dodgers**, it had been **Reese** who quashed the petition against him by his teammates.... Now, as **Reese** walked forward to receive the tributes...**Robinson** reached out in a swift, barely noticeable gesture and put his hand on **Reese's** shoulder. '**Reese and Robinson,**' my father remarked, 'they're a lot more than great baseball players.'"

And **Ms. Goodwin's** work is a lot more than a baseball story, more than the simple quest for championship in the **World Series** which so often did not come to the **Dodger** fans of the late 1940's and 50's. This is the story of growing up, facing death and getting on with one's life.