

June 2007

Group Therapy -- Screening of Donations?

Christine Fischer

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, christine_fischer@uncg.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fischer, Christine (2007) "Group Therapy -- Screening of Donations?," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 19: Iss. 3, Article 37.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5394>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Papa Abel Remembers
from page 78

We sold out in about six months.

So I called a meeting to plan for the next book. No one wished to spend as much time as the first required but I wished to proceed. So, I asked the others to resign and after consultation with one of the great OP dealers of the mid-twentieth century, **David Magee**, I settled on **Lawton Kennedy**, a fine printer in San Francisco. The press brought out about fifteen books in editions of 500 to 1250. All won a variety of prizes for fine printing, etc. This venture put me in touch with a splendid group of OP dealers, collectors, first-rate bookmen, and special collections librarians. It contributed hugely to my understanding of the book and its critical role in the formation and maintenance of the culture. As some librarians will recall the **Abel Co.** Christmas keepsakes continued to reflect this relationship to limited editions and fine printing.

With the new avenue of bookselling venture initiated and various planks of infrastructure falling into place the pace of this tale soon accelerated greatly, beginning a trajectory that is still being traced. 🐼

Group Therapy — Screening of Donations?

by **Christine Fischer** (Head of Acquisitions, Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, PO Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402; Phone 336-256-1193; Fax 336-334-4731) <christine_fischer@uncg.edu>

GRIPE: Submitted by **David Ettinger** (International Affairs and Political Science Librarian, Gelman Library, and Assistant Professorial Lecturer, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University)

In an attempt to streamline and expedite our gift book processing procedures, we are considering the possibility of doing some kind of preliminary screening or filtering of prospective donations. Does anyone have any experience doing this and, if so, what are the criteria you use?

RESPONSE: Submitted by **Helen Anderson** (Head, Collection Development, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester)

An endless source of pain and pleasure, the constant stream of incoming gift books can get out of control. Like **Mickey Mouse** in the **Walt Disney** rendition of the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, we wish for a magic broom to keep things moving.

Let donors know up front what types of materials your library does not accept. Our list includes encyclopedias, magazines, and mildewed, or otherwise damaged books. At the same time, accept that no matter what you tell people, they will still donate these materials. Trust that your list will at least reduce the amount.

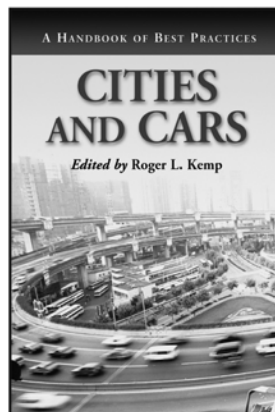
Work on just saying no if you don't think a gift will contain a substantial number of volumes that you'll add to your collections. Have a list of alternatives on hand such as donating to the **Friends of the Library** book sale. Accept that you will receive such collections anyway despite your best attempts to educate staff and

administrators on fielding inquiries. Sooner or later an influential person will clean out his or her office and the contents will appear on your doorstep, the chaff with the wheat.

Once a gift collection has arrived in the library, there are criteria that can be applied to immediately eliminate unsuitable volumes and reduce the amount that collection development specialists will have to review. This makes the entire process more manageable.

I start by focusing on the visually obvious: brittle volumes, mass market paperbacks, *Reader's Digest* condensed books, *Time-Life* series, book club editions and so on — all the things that I asked people not to donate plus more. Out they go. The next category is books in subject areas that I know we don't collect as well as those titles that we all know that appear again and again in gifts. All these go immediately to our **Friends** group for their sale, or to **Better World Books** or yes — I will say it — some even go to the trash!

My best recommendation is to assign the responsibility for reviewing incoming gifts to one person. The ability to review gifts efficiently can be learned through practice, though it helps if the person is curious and energetic to begin with. It also helps to be decisive. The trick is not to get bogged down. Train the person by having them work side by side with someone experienced and familiar with your collections and policies. The basic criteria will quickly become clear and over time he or she will learn the finer points of the process. In this way, you will develop the confidence that cannot be gotten from simply reviewing a list of criteria handed on from the last person on the job or



Cities and Cars

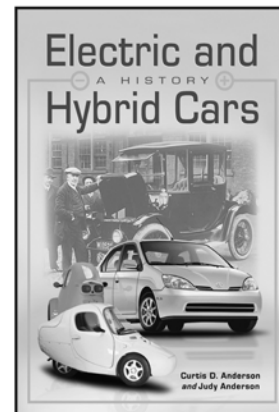
A Handbook of Best Practices

Edited by Roger L. Kemp

\$35 softcover (7 × 10) 2006

Glossary, references, appendices, index

ISBN 978-0-7864-2919-6



Electric and Hybrid Cars

A History

Curtis D. Anderson and Judy Anderson

\$45 hardcover (7 × 10) 2005

79 photos, appendix, notes, bibliography, index

ISBN 978-0-7864-1872-5



McFarland

Box 611 • Jefferson NC 28640 • Orders 800-253-2187
FAX 336-246-4403 • www.mcfarlandpub.com

from reading collections policies that may be out of date. Above all — just do it.

RESPONSE: Submitted by **Danielle Kwock** (Library Manager, **Fresh Start Women's Foundation**, Phoenix, AZ)

I work in a non-profit special library. Our 9,000 item collection is comprised of women's self-help books and audiovisual materials. About 80-90% of our collection comes from donations. Since our scope is very narrow, we must thoroughly screen each donation to ensure that it supports our library's mission.

When I first began work at the library, I was amazed at how many donations came in. While I was grateful for the donations, most did not fit into our collection, so I had to come up with very clear parameters. First, all books must fit in to at least one of our 14 categories. These include Healthy Woman, Personal Growth, Women's Studies, etc. Second, the books must be in good physical condition, with no visible tears, stains, water damage, or binding problems. Third, books that have been published must have a publication date no earlier than five years from the current year. Books that are older must be very relevant or considered classics.

When potential donors call, we ask them specifically what kinds of books/audiovisual materials they are thinking about donating. We then explain to them our parameters and that any materials we cannot add to our collection will go in the "Book Exchange" pile or

continued on page 80

Group Therapy from page 79

may be donated to other organizations. This preliminary screening has helped cut down on the number of donations we get that we cannot use.

Also, to help get the word out, our Library Committee created a "Top Ten" books wish list bookmark, which we distribute to all patrons and potential donors. It outlines what kinds of books we would like donated. This is very helpful and is also a great publicity tool.

RESPONSE:
Submitted by **Tracie Ballock** (Collection Management Librarian, Duquesne University)

Here at the **Gumberg Library** we look upon gifts as important additions to the library's collection. Over the years many significant items have been acquired through gift donations and have become valuable resources for our users. On the other hand it is still very important for us to remember that gift books do cost libraries money. Unfortunately donors do not realize that in reality gift materials are not "free" due to the cost of processing these items. Therefore we cannot afford to have large amounts of unsolicited, dated, moldy, highlighted materials left on our doorsteps. For these reasons we created our Donor Agreement Form which is summarized below.

- The library will accept gift books, journals (selectively), and non-print items if judged to be potentially significant additions to our collections. We seek gifts that can support the University's curriculum, faculty research and newly developed programs.
- Due to the library's limited resources to handle items requiring special treatment we will only accept items in good to excellent condition. Books that are brittle, written in or highlighted will not be added.
- If a list of donated material is not received from the donor, the library will not be responsible for creating a list when sending out the gift acknowledgement.
- The library will determine the classification, housing and circulation policies of all gift items. Gift collections will not be kept "intact" but will be integrated into the library's existing collections.
- The library retains the right to dispose of duplicates and unneeded materials. At the donor's request these items will be returned at the donor's expense.
- The library staff is not authorized under IRS regulations to appraise gifts or to provide a signature to any document that applies a monetary value to said gifts for income tax purposes.

We do ask all donors to read over and sign the Donor Agreement Form prior to the delivery of the donation.



RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Kristin Gerhard** (Collections Cataloger, Iowa State University)

I can't speak to our absolutely current policies, having left the collections program nine months ago, but I can tell you what we were doing (and might still be).

We have a bibliographer with many years of collections experience, a wide-ranging curiosity, and a broad understanding of the wide scope of our collection. (Let's call the person Ged). When we get large loads of gift books that are undifferentiated and did not come directly from a specific faculty member through the librarian for his/her department, we set Ged loose to do the preliminary screen. Because of Ged's background, s/he is a good

decision-maker and works through these collections pretty fast.

We have a support staff member who will search our catalog, **WorldCat** and occasionally the Web for anything Ged thinks is borderline and more information is needed in order to make a good decision. Then we sort what remains by subject and put it out for bibliographer review.

The process saves time for the bibliographers, allows us to manage donations within limited shelf and storage space, and generally keeps materials moving through appropriate work flows. Of course, this is a very specific solution — not every library will have one person with the appropriate breadth and width of knowledge and experience to do this sorting well — but it's worked well for us. 🐼

And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — 2007 ER&L Conference and more from the 2006 Charleston Conference

2007 Electronic Resources and Libraries Conference, "Think Digital,"
Atlanta, Georgia, February 21 – 24, 2007.

Report by **Cris Ferguson** (Electronic Resources / Serials Librarian, James B. Duke Library, Furman University, Greenville, SC) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>

The **Electronic Resources and Libraries Conference** is quickly becoming a must-attend conference for librarians, publishers, and vendors working with electronic resources. Held in Atlanta, February 21 - 24, 2007, the theme of this year's conference was "think digital," and, according to the conference program, presentations and events were selected "to foster a community with collaborative approaches to dealing with electronic resources and digital services."

The opening reception of the conference was held at the **Georgia Tech Library** on Wednesday evening. The remainder of the conference events were held at the **Global Learning and Conference Center** near the **Georgia Tech** campus.

The conference hosted two keynote speakers. On Thursday morning the conference was opened by keynote speaker **Rick Luce**, Vice-Provost and Director of Libraries at **Emory University**, who gave a talk comparing libraries to scientific study. **Luce** suggested that we, as librarians, investigate how technology influences user behavior and expectations, and then based upon observations subsequently re-evaluate the services we provide. **Jane Burke**, **ProQuest Information and Learning** and

General Manager of Serials Solutions, was the keynote speaker on Saturday morning, speaking on the management of virtual libraries. **Burke** observed that libraries

don't have the time or resources to focus on library management in the way they have in the past and should be offering more user-centric services.

On Friday morning, the conference opened with a plenary session, "Know Your Rights: Licensing, Copyright, Fair Use, and Technological Protection Measures in Electronic Resources," co-presented by **Nathan D.M. Robertson** from the **University of Maryland Law Library** and **Kristen Eschenfelder** from the **University of Wisconsin, Madison**. **Robertson** focused his portion of the presentation on discussing the laws governing copyright and license law and the limitations that apply to libraries. He also addressed the use of ERMs and the **ONIX Publications License** to help aid libraries in interpreting copyright law and licensing terms. For her part of the presentation, **Eschenfelder** discussed vendor and publisher use of technological protection measures (TPMs) that either disallow or discourage certain uses of electronic resources. For example, the **ARTstor** policy of encrypting content so that the only way to view it is through the **ARTstor** image viewer is an example of a TPM. **Eschenfelder** went on to define the difference between hard and soft TPMs.

The remaining conference presentations, over 40 in all, covered a broad spectrum of topics related to the acquisition, management, access, and use of electronic resources. The conference events were divided into ten programming themes, e-resource delivery & pro-

continued on page 81