



EVALUATING BOOK DONATIONS



Presented by Judy Hills

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- Taught grant writing, grant management, and other nonprofit courses
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Why does the public donate books?



- “I can’t bear to throw away a book—I’ll donate it instead.”
- “This looks new. Someone will buy it.”
- “I no longer want this book, but someone else might.”
- “I paid a lot for this_____ and someone else might be able to use it.”
- “I want to support the library so I’ll donate this to the Friends of the Library for their book sale.”

This generally results in a number of inappropriate donations which Friends are left to deal with.



What can Friends do about inappropriate book donations?

- Educate the public as to what constitutes a good donation
 - Tell the public what you do and don't want via website, social media, and signage
- Evaluate donations as they are received



Friends of the New Bern-Craven County Public Library

New Bern, North Carolina

DONATION OF BOOKS & OTHER MATERIAL

Here are a few pointers about what NOT to donate. We don't like to think that we have limits, but some items are simply not appealing to the Friends' Book Sale clientele for a variety of reasons, and all donations require volunteer time to sort and box as well as space to store - all of which are precious resources, always in short supply. You can help! Use these guidelines to sort, weed and discard inappropriate materials before donating to the Friends (or any other nonprofit).

Condition matters! Please DO NOT donate books in the following condition(s):

- Dirty, Shabby, Soiled, Smelly
- Moldy, Mildewed
- Water Damaged or Insect Damaged
- Damaged Binding or Pages
- Missing or Torn Covers or Pages
- Excessive Writing, Markings, or Highlighting
- Softcover books with crooked or twisted spines



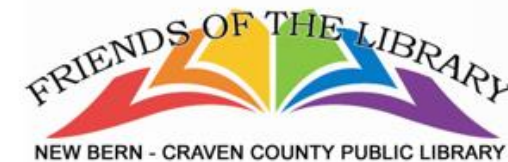
How do Friends evaluate book donations?

- Develop a written guide for those who receive and evaluate the donations
- Review Sorting Guide with new volunteers
- Pair an experienced sorter with a new sorter



SORTING GUIDE DONATED BOOKS

September 2021



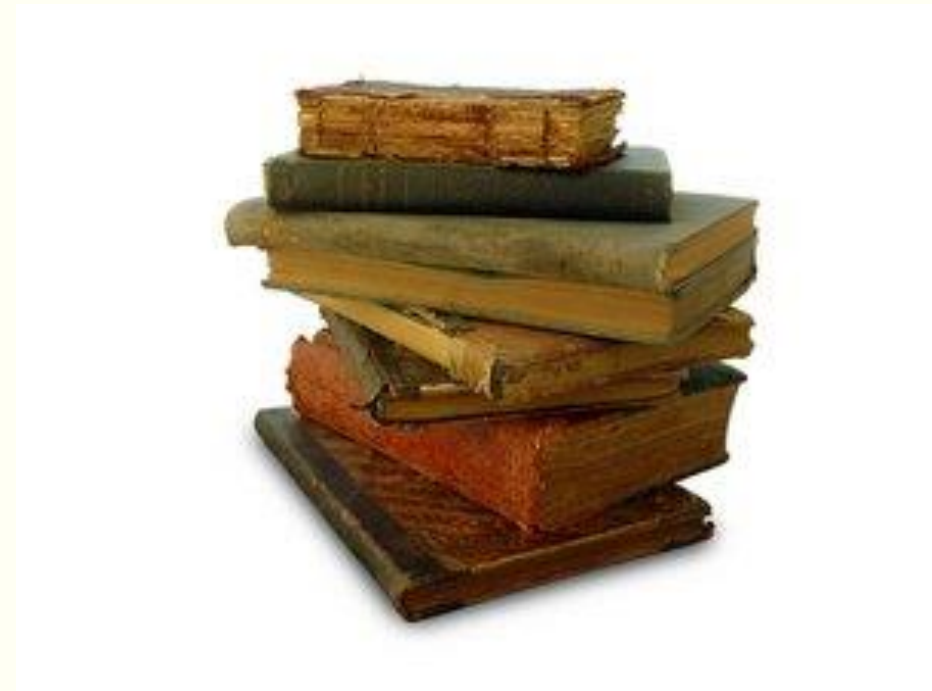
Why is a guide and sorter training needed?

- To ensure consistency in evaluating donated books
- To ensure that only the best quality sellable books go to the book sale
- To ensure that good, clean books are available for Friends' projects/programs:
 - Little Free Libraries
 - Book folding craft workshops
 - Libraries at Assisted Living Facilities
 - Other
- To decrease the time, energy, and the cost of both storing and ultimately disposing of a large number of questionable books

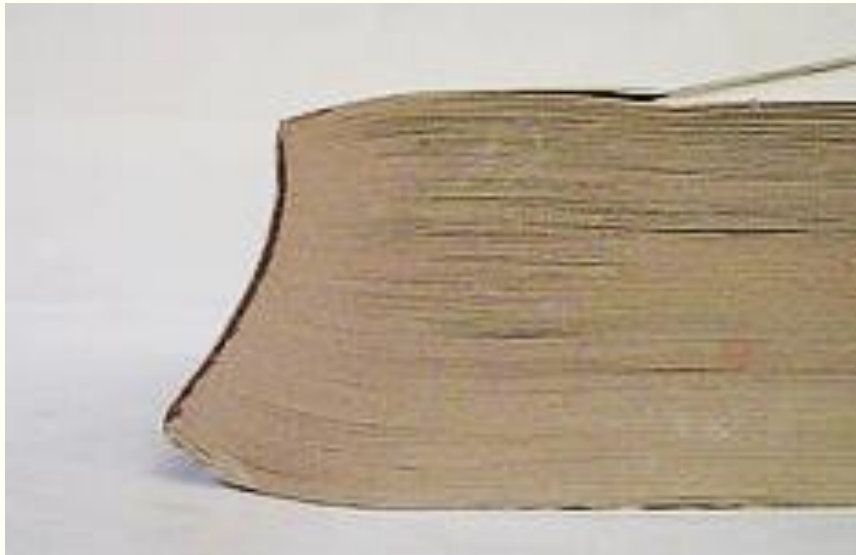
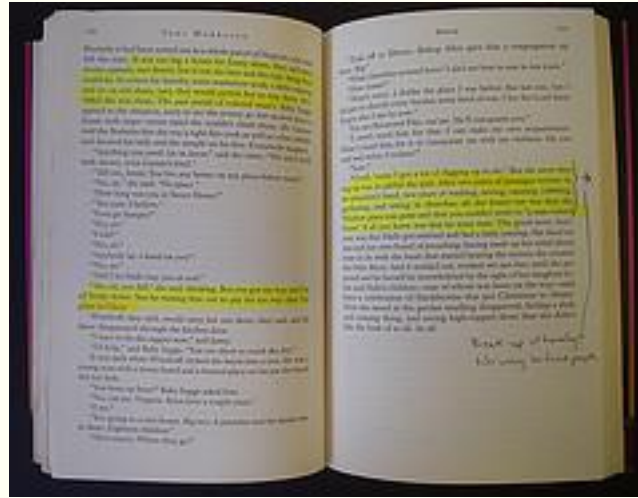
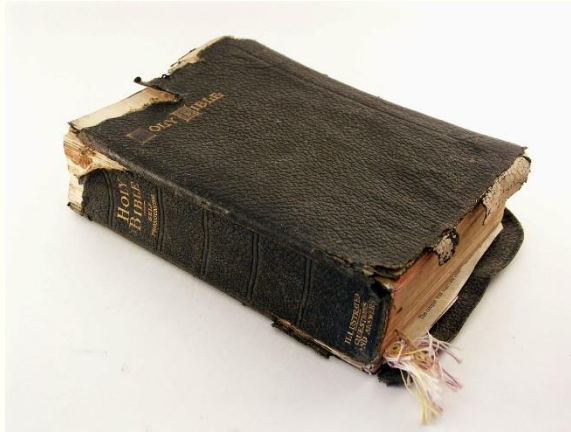


What is the first level of evaluation? Condition

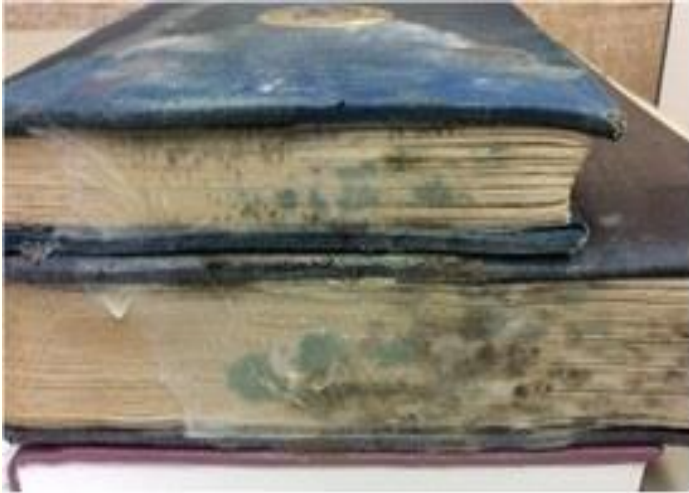
- Books in the following conditions should automatically be discarded without further consideration:
 - Dirty, shabby, soiled, smelly
 - Moldy, mildewed
 - Water damaged
 - Insect damaged
 - Damaged binding or pages
 - Missing, torn covers or pages
 - Missing dust covers on hard back fiction
 - Excessive writing, markings, or highlighting
 - Soft cover books with crooked or twisted spines
 - DVD or CD that does not match the case label



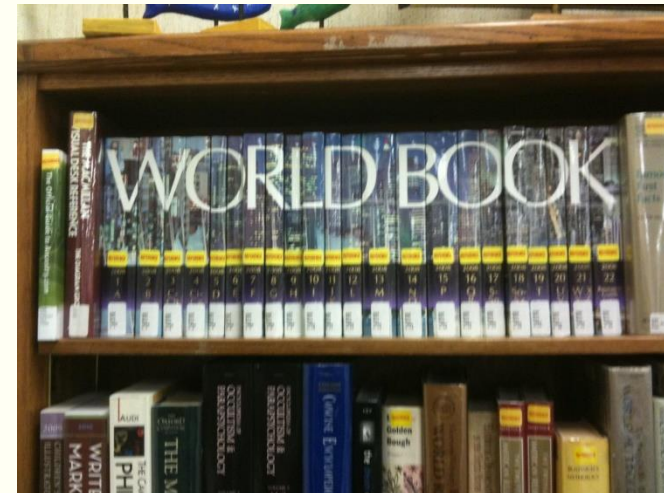
Examples



Examples



- [illegible]

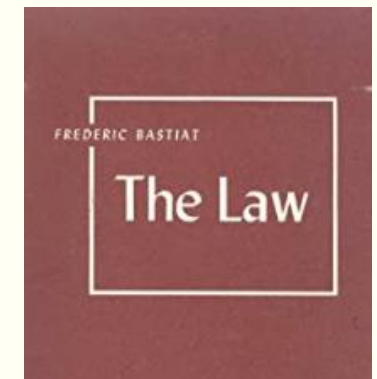
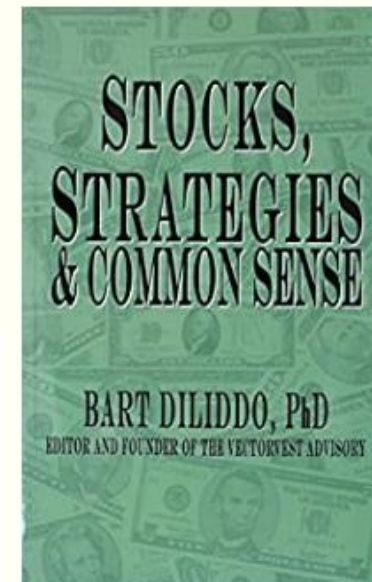
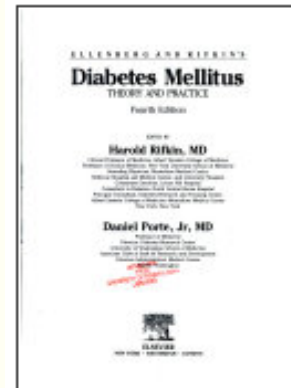
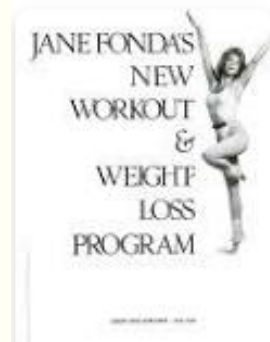
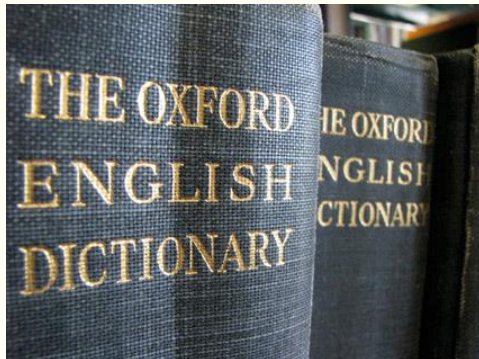
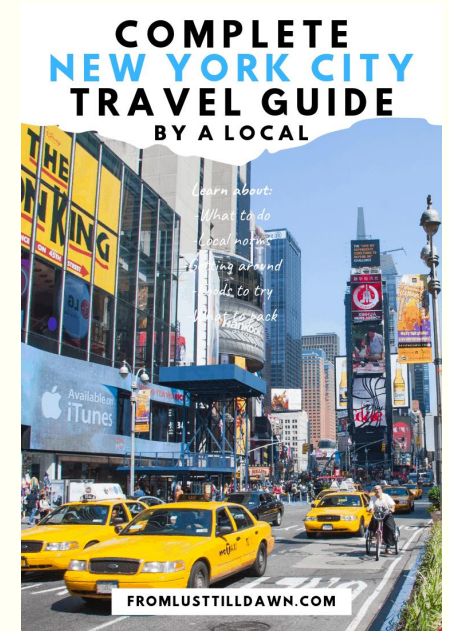
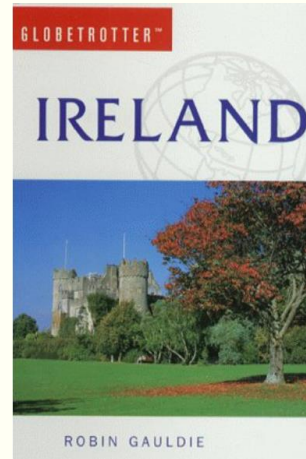


What is the second level of assessment? Type and/or age

- Examples to discard based on age:

- Reference—5 years
- Law—5 years
- Medical—5 years
- Health—5 years
- Financial—3 years
- Travel guides—2 years
- Computer, IT—3 years

- List in the guide will be more extensive



What is the third level of evaluation? Judgment

- Examples requiring personal judgment:
 - Children's material that is dated (e.g., unappealing covers, old subject matter)
 - Books containing older information that is no longer relevant (e.g., world atlas)
 - Large number of the same genre of books donated by a single individual (e.g., romance, cowboy, sci-fi)
 - Large number of copies of the same book (e.g., 15 copies of a 3rd grade math workbook)
 - Older fiction not considered classics
 - Older sports books
 - Books specific to another state or region not your own (e.g., Wildflowers of Vermont)
- List in the guide may be more extensive
- Judgment will still be required



Why might sorter keep a book that should be discarded?

- Need to be aware of voices in our head—reasons to keep when other criteria might dictate it be discarded:
 - Somebody might want this..
 - This was a really good book...
 - This book looks too good to discard...
 - I can't bear to throw this out...
 - Recipes are timeless...
 - This is a really nice set...
 - This has historical value...
 - I can't throw this Bible out...
- What others might you add?



Why might sorter discard a book that perhaps should be kept?

- Need to be aware of voices in our head—reasons to discard when other criteria might dictate it be kept:
 - Subject matter—People shouldn't be reading such things (e.g., sexually explicit)
 - Author—s/he writes trashy novels (e.g., Jackie Collins)
 - This series is old news (e.g., Left Behind)
 - Subject matter—I don't believe in such things (e.g., using crystals for healing)
 - This goes against my beliefs (e.g., The Koran)
- Lack of knowledge about value of book (especially an old one)
- What others might you add?
- What is censorship? Suppression based on bias.
- The ALA champions the right to read without censorship.



What to do with discards?

- No one wants to see books discarded, but everything has its season—even books
- If you sort as books are donated—it is easier to throw out a few boxes at a time
- You will have many more discards at the end of a sale if you don't scrupulously sort and discard as you receive the donations



What to do with books at end of the sale?

Do one or more of the following:

- Have a bag sale the last day (or hours) of the sale
- Allow nonprofit and other community groups to select books for free
- Contact assisted living facilities and ask if they would like books for their library. Pick out a selection and deliver them to the facility.
- Keep a small number of genres or types:
 - Might be able to sell in future
 - Might be able to use for a Friends project or program
- Sell remainder to a book seller (harder to do now days)
- Discard whatever is left at the very end. Might be less stressful to pay to have the books disposed of.



Final thoughts...

- Consider selling books online
- Use websites to determine whether or not an older book might be valuable
- Identify one or more sorters with special expertise and set questionable books aside for them to evaluate. For example the 1953 book in slide 12 “Home Baking Made Easy...” sells for \$13 on Amazon.
- Additional resources: Google these websites
 - [Getting the Most From Donations](#)
 - [Smithsonian Libraries’ Information on Old Books](#)
 - [Manuscripts and Artifacts Guide](#)
 - [Picture guide on assessing condition of books](#)
- For a copy of this PPT, the Sorter Guide or the Sorter Training PPT email jahnbnc@gmail.com



CELEBRATE YOUR SORTERS

