



**Paperback
Collection Project
At the Puyallup
Public Library**



Introductions



Project Lead: Grace Adler

Library Associate at Seattle Public Library (SPL)

This is a solo project! I served as Project Lead, Signage Designer, Reshelter, Index Editor, Donation Selector, and Collection Maintenance Specialist. I also be prepared weeded materials for disposal or donation as needed.

They/Them/Theirs

Capstone Sponsor: Aleya Stone

Adult/Teen Services Librarian until a promotion in March 2024, currently Library Services Manager of the Puyallup Public Library (PPL).

Aleya Stone reached out to the iSchool to suggest this Paperback collection project for the Puyallup Public Library (PPL).

She/Her/Hers





The Problem

The uncataloged paperback collection had become overgrown and was long overdue for maintenance. The capstone sponsor also wanted to reduce the collection to just the shelves attached to the fireplace.

Patrons were confused by signage, and found it hard to find titles.

Due to the collection being uncataloged, there was no index to help library admin get a general sense of the collection.

The newly freed shelves could be used for crafting and other passive program ideas.





Overview of Project Steps

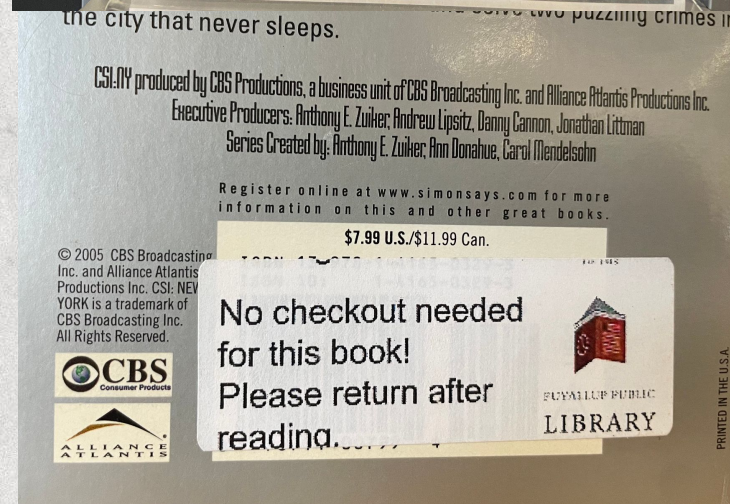
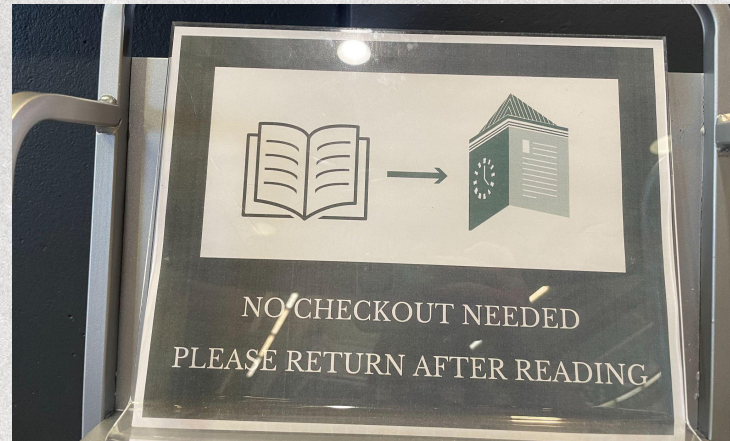
- Assessing current collection
- Calculating the amount of weeding needed for proposed shelf reduction
- Weeding from around 800 books to around 430 books
- Preparing weeded books for disposal or book sale
- Adding approximately 60 new books from patron donations
- Shifting collection onto reduced shelves
- Developing and implementing new signage
- Reorganizing collection to rough alphabetical order (last name of author/contributor) including marking letter on the top of books
- Developing and implementing collection index
- Continuous project feedback and brainstorming with project sponsor

What do we mean by “uncataloged?”



Uncataloged books are simply books not recorded in the library's integrated library system (ILS). Patrons do not need to check them out as they have no due dates and no formal tracking system. In the case of the Puyallup system (pictured right), they are acquired exclusively through patron donations.

The logic is that the cost of processing a typical library acquisition (adding protective coverings, cataloging, labeling, maintain a circulation record, and so on) is greater than the cost of the book itself. It takes considerably less man hours to simply sticker and shelve them. Reshelving and weeding the book are also considerably faster.



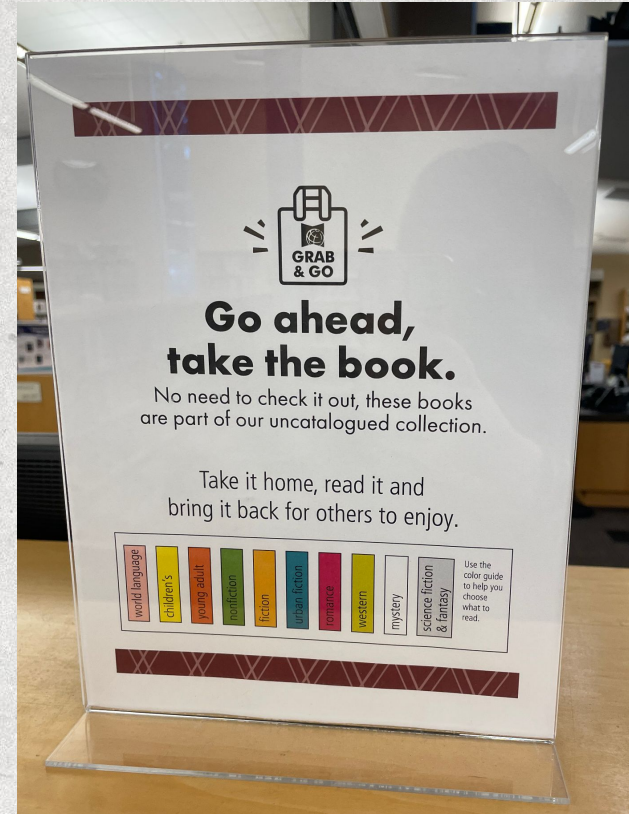
What do we mean by “uncataloged?”



This means there is no record if/when they are taken, how often they are circulated, if they are lost, weeded due to poor physical condition, and so on.

For patrons, a huge benefit of these books is that they can be taken without an active account. In my own work at SPL (picture right), patrons often tell me that the lack of due dates or formal checkout process makes borrowing more accessible.

Patrons do often find this concept confusing—it is one of the most common circulation questions I get (sometimes after they attempted to checkout the uncataloged book). For this reason, clear, accessible signage is essential.



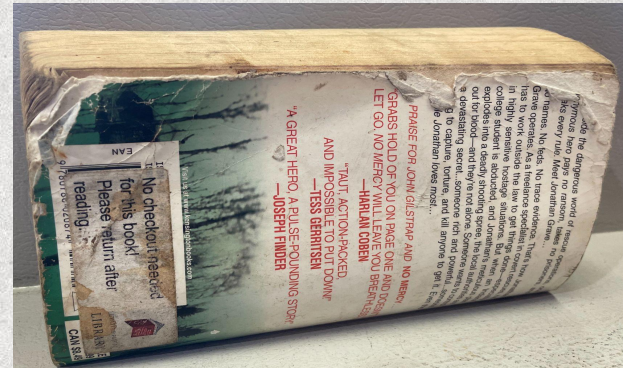
Challenges of Uncataloged Collections

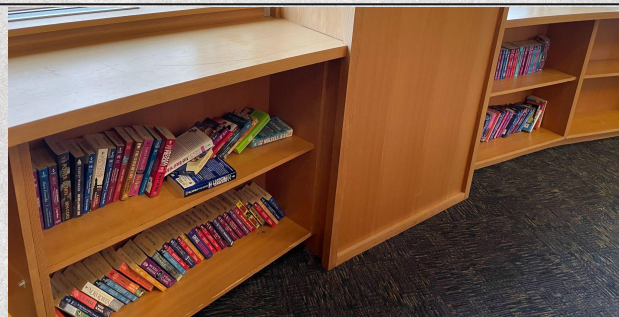


For this project, it brings up important questions about how to adjust your weeding and collection maintenance without any circulation records.

For instance, the book pictured below was obviously weeded due to poor physical condition. As the collection is entirely donation driven, it cannot be directly replaced. Its damage might be concentrated to only one or two uses, or it might be due to high patron interest and frequent circulation. If the damage was drastically milder, you might risk a false assumption and keep the book due to signs of it actually being read. You want to avoid a uncataloged collection of pristine books that are only pristine due to the public's complete lack of interest.

You have to get comfortable making collection maintenance decisions without key information.





What the collection looked like on Day 1 of Project Implementation, January 2024.

The Math



To calculate how much weeding had to happen, I:

- Used ruler measurements to estimate how many books fit on a shelf
- Individually counted each book as I got to know the collection scope

Number of shelves being used at project start: **22**

Desired amount of shelves at project completion: **10**

Number of books, excluding currently circulating items, at project start: approximately **880**

Number of books, excluding currently circulating items, at project finish: **427**



What is MUSTIE Weeding (ALA, 2017)?

Misleading

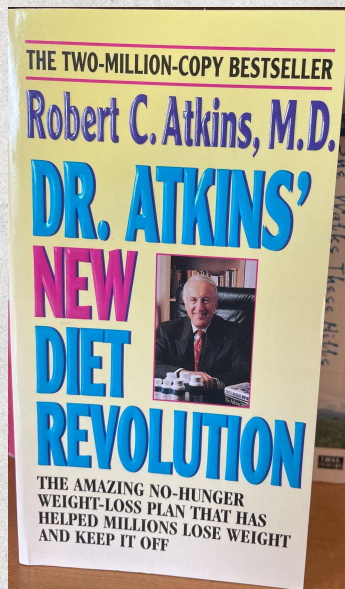
Ugly

Superseded

Trivial

Irrelevant

or obtained Elsewhere



An obvious weed would be a nonfiction book older than 10 years, especially if it contains health information like the diet book pictured above.

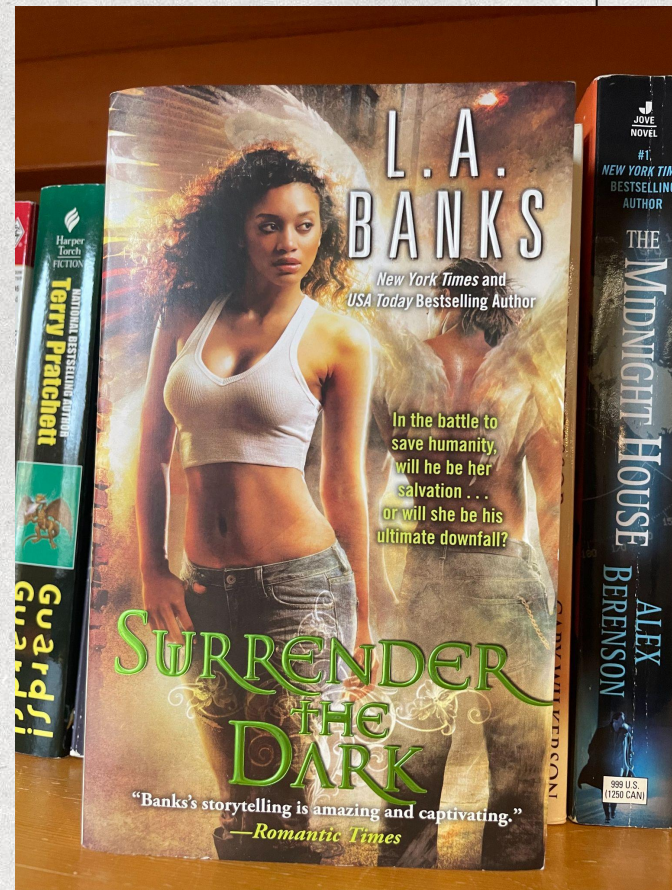
Diversity Considerations for Weeding and Acquisition



One prioritized outcome is to increase the diversity of the paperback collection. Because the collection is donation driven and has no acquisitions budget, the library has minimal control over both the quantity and quality of diverse characters and narratives in its paperback collection.

For this reason, I allowed myself to be more forgiving of small defects in physical condition if it meant acquiring more titles by an author of color.

Keep in mind that in the traditional collection maintenance project you are trying not to spend more than a few minutes assessing the quality and relevance of each book. There are sometimes obvious red flags like a racial stereotype, but covers and book blurbs can be exceptionally misleading.



Diversity Considerations for Weeding and Acquisition



What does it mean to have quality and variety for diverse books?

Books with diverse protagonists written by white authors might contain underlying and overt bias, and the library industry standard is to seek out works by authors with lived experiences who can help diverse patrons see themselves in fiction (Flores & Osorio, 2021).

For this collection, I noticed in the Romance genre that protagonists of color were much less likely to be on books self-described as “Heartwarming,” “Western,” or “Historical,” but were overrepresented for the self-described “Medical Romance” and “Desire” books. The history of such a trend is beyond the scope of this project. Rather than eliminate overrepresented tropes, selectors can prioritize the acquisition of books that increase the variety of tropes, settings, and paths for characters of color (Flores & Osorio, 2021).

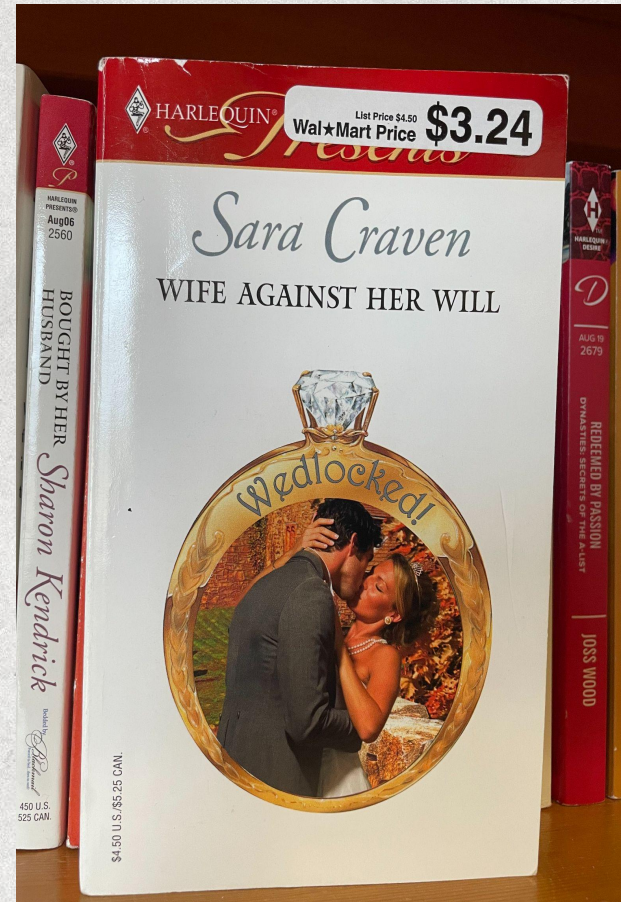


Considerations for Romance Novels



The Sara Craven book (and the Sharon Kendrick book pictured behind it) is an example of a book that romanticizes a lack of consent and/or unethical power imbalance. It is not a library worker's job to choose if romance readers can enjoy such a trope in a library book, as that is protected under professional principles like of ALA's Freedom to Read (ALA, 2006).

However, a collection maintenance professional might consider that newer versions of this trope often include content warnings, clearer sub-tropes (such as marriage of convenience), and self-awareness brought on heightened public scrutiny from the #MeToo movement.

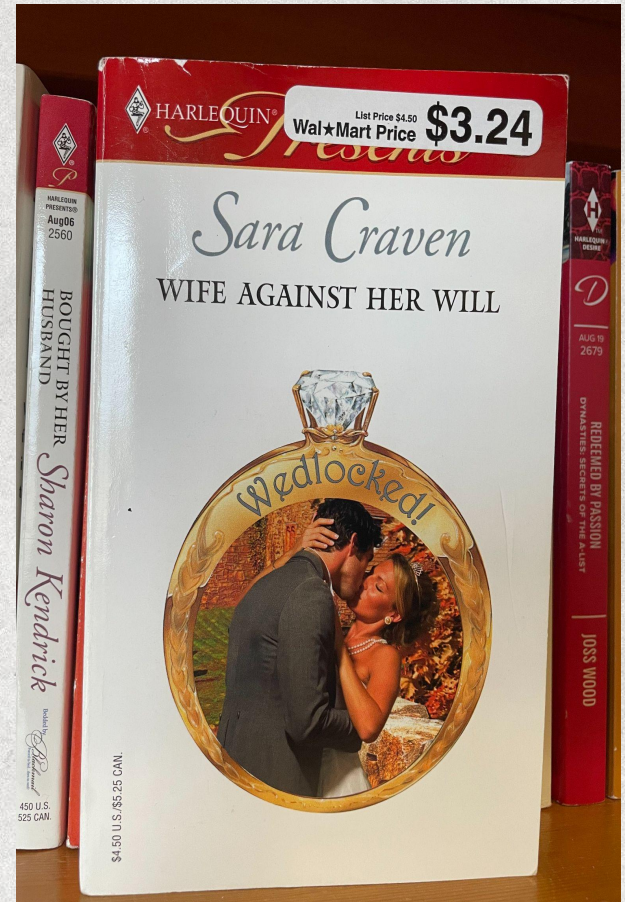


Considerations for Romance Novels



In the case of this collection, there were about a dozen books containing this trope. This means readers who love these tropes can get a less outdated version of it elsewhere in the collection. So despite my personal aversion to such books, I focused on identifying which book had the best combination of physical condition and adherence to contemporary trope standards.

As DeMarco (2021) wrote, there is a big difference between the darker romance novels of the 2020s and what Hillary Clinton described as “women being grabbed and thrown on a horse and ridden off into the distance.”



Where did the weeded books go?

- Friends of the Library bookstore
- Recycling/Disposal

How do you prepare an uncataloged book for donation or disposal?

- Remove or cover indicators that the book should be returned to the library.
- Assess if book has water, mold, or other damage that prevents recycling.

From the official Friends of the Library [membership brochure](#).



BOOK STORE

Open 6 days
a week during
library hours.



Our shelves are filled with donated adult and children's books, paperbacks, romance, vintage books, book sets, videos, CDs, magazines, maps, posters, puzzles and more.

SPECIAL SALES:

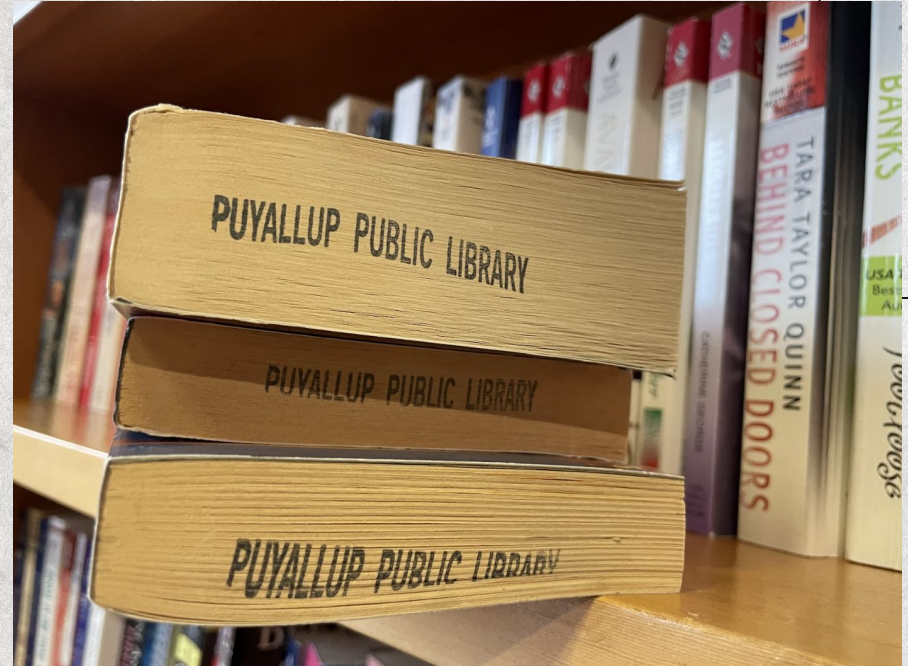
November—Christmas books
March—Gardening books

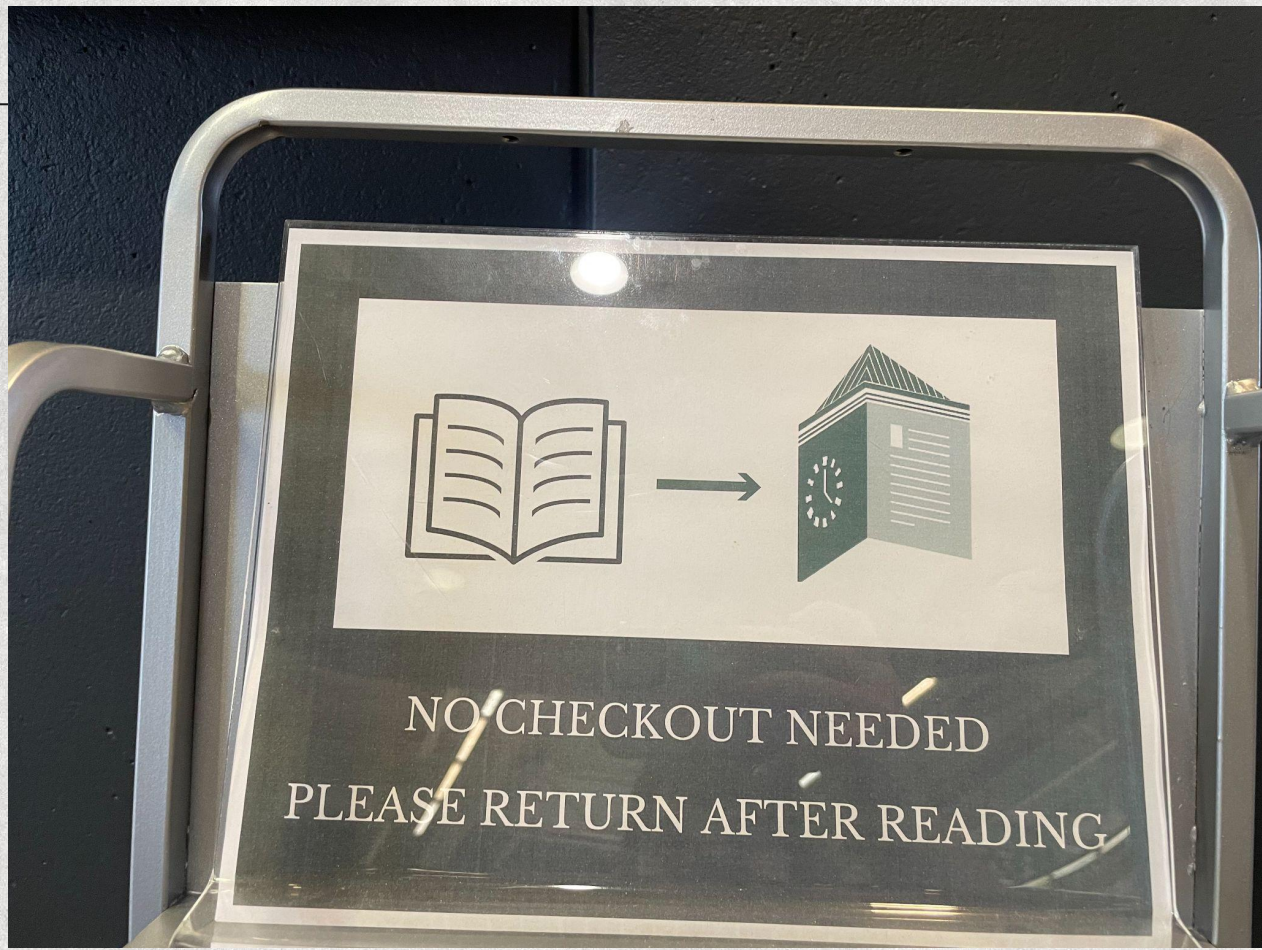
Selecting Acquisitions from Patron Donations



For an uncataloged collection, acquisitions are significantly faster. After assessing the book and selecting it for acquisition, all that is left to do is put a sticker on it marking it as part of the uncataloged collection, and shelve.

For selection criteria, I used the Austin Public Library's collection development policy (Materials Selection Policy, n.d.). Some sections (such as the cost of the material, budgetary restraints, and availability from the manufacturer) were not relevant. Some books were outside the scope of the paperback collection: a hardcover book, a book that wouldn't physically fit on the shelves, and so on.





*Collection Signage: **Before** and After*

NO CHECKOUT NEEDED.
PLEASE RETURN AFTER READING.



**GRAB
& GO**



NO CHECKOUT NEEDED
PLEASE RETURN AFTER READING

**GRAB
AND
GO**



**THAT'S RIGHT -
NO CHECKOUT
NEEDED**

PLEASE RETURN AFTER READING SO
OTHERS CAN ENJOY.



PUYALLUP Public LIBRARY
Est. 1913

Please Return After Reading.

**GRAB & GO
PAPERBACKS**


No Checkout Needed.



PUYALLUP Public LIBRARY
Est. 1913

**GRAB AND GO
PAPERBACKS**


No checkout needed.
Please return after reading.



PUYALLUP Public LIBRARY
Est. 1913

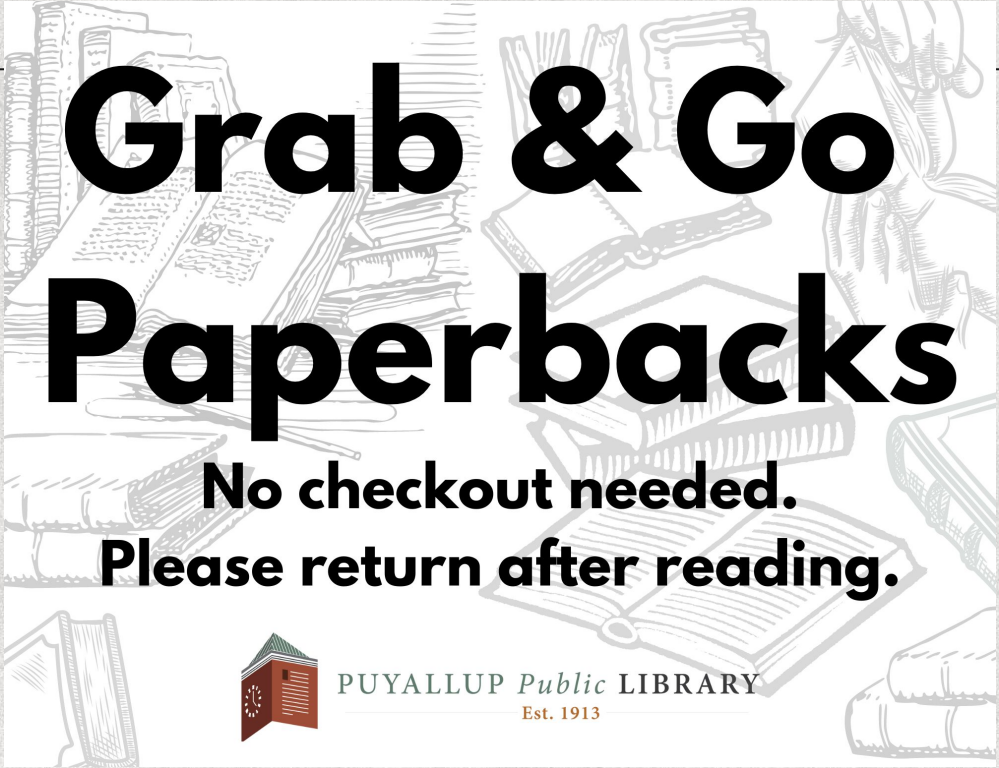
**Grab & Go
Paperbacks**

No checkout needed.
Please return after reading.



PUYALLUP Public LIBRARY
Est. 1913

Drafting WIPs in Canva for Sponsor Feedback



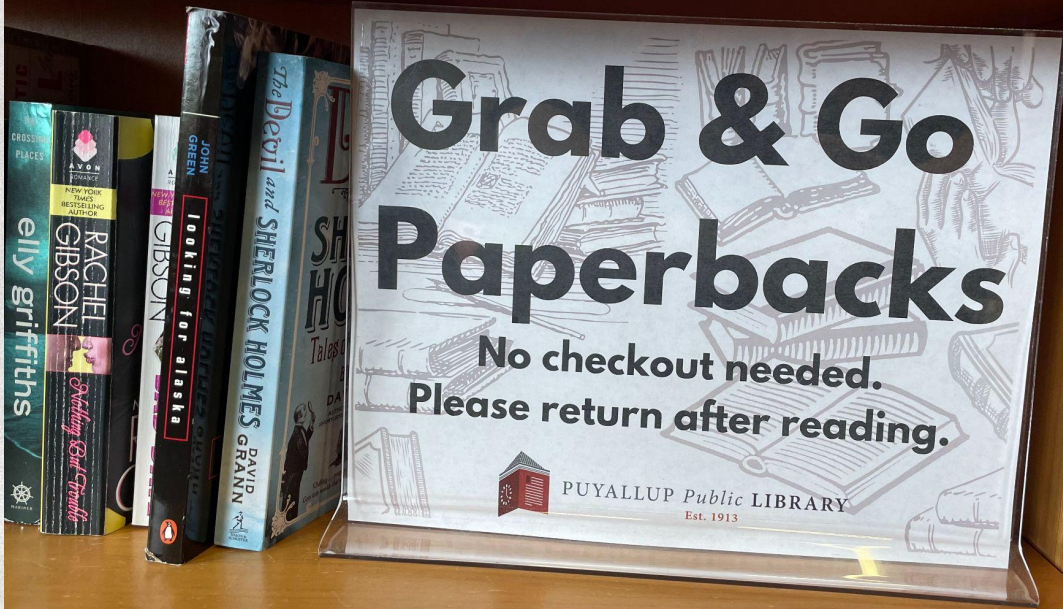
Grab & Go Paperbacks

**No checkout needed.
Please return after reading.**



PUYALLUP *Public* LIBRARY
Est. 1913

The sponsor and I agreed that this design had the best balance of bold, attention-grabbing imagery, required informational elements, and accessibility choices like the font and text size.



Collection Signage: Before and After



The sponsor and I agreed to reorganize the books by author's last name, with the first letter of their last name written on the top of the book, due to prior work experience. We both had experience being shelvers, so we knew this system is fast for employees to shelve. This is an ideal outcome for a collection that is meant to be maintained with minimal staff hours and occasional volunteer work.

Collection Index



The capstone sponsor stated that I should do whatever I thought made sense for the collection index, so I had a lot of logistical freedom.

One consideration is that as a volunteer, I could not have access to their ILS (Horizon) due to patron confidentiality and other professional restrictions.

I decided to borrow find a pre-existing MARC record for each book by using tools like the Library of Congress catalog and the many library Bibliocommons. I knew formal MARC records would defeat the purpose of uncataloged books, and would make it harder for volunteers to update the index in the future.

My logic was that using MARC records to copy information for a spreadsheet would prevent me from tracking down, for example, genre and publishing information that had already been established.

F	G	H	I	
ISBN	LC Subjects	Genre	Series (if applicable)	Summary
9780708943502	Cele Peterson Arizona Collection	Suspense fiction.		Still at large after When an exquisi Out of her leagu
9780060511135	Fathers and daughters — Fiction.	Thrillers (Fiction)		Elizabeth Lowell
9780451407207	Detective and mystery stories, American. Humorous stories, American.	Short stories. Humorous fiction. Detective and mystery fiction.		A collection of fif
0727844911	Detective and mystery stories, American. Humorous stories, American.	Fiction Mystery		When Jacquelin
9781420135480	Amish--Fiction.	Christian fiction. Romance fiction.	Ice Mountain Series	Younga healer Sa

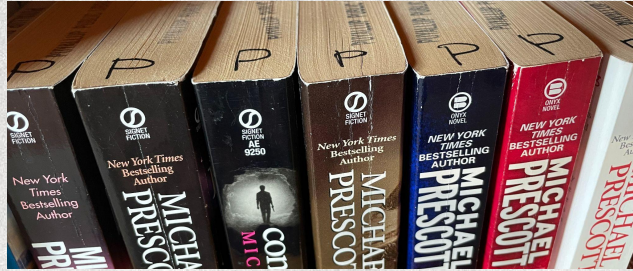
Link to Collection Index (View-Only)



After showing the capstone sponsor what I came up, it was agreed that this format made a lot of sense and helped library admin better understand the collection scope.

The goal for this document was not to try and capture every book in circulation, as that defeats the purpose of an uncataloged collection. Its goal is to provide a snapshot into what the collection has in spring 2024.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1	Title	Author(s)/Editor(s)	Publisher	Year	Physical Description	ISBN	LC Subjects	Genre	Series (if applicable)	Summary
2	Becoming the Tabbot Sisters	Linden, Rachel, author	Nashville, Tennessee : Thomas Nelson, [2018]		2018 355 p. : 22 cm	9780718095765	Self-realization in women--Fiction. Sisters--Fiction. Authorship -- Fiction. Book editors -- Fiction. Man-woman relationships -- Fiction. Novels. Publishers and publishing -- Fiction. Romance fiction.	Domestic fiction.		"Sisters Waverly Ross and Charlie Tabbot have spent all of their "Author Rachel Linden returns with a new contemporary women
3	Meet me in the margins : a novel	Ferguson, Melissa, 1965- author	Nashville, Tennessee : Thomas Nelson, [2022]		2022 309 p. : 22 cm	9780785231073		Romance fiction. Novels.		"You've Got Mail meets Attachments in Melissa Ferguson's latest
4	The last song	Sparks, Nicholas	New York : Grand Central Pub., 2009		2009 viii, 390 p. : 22 cm	9780446547567	Teenage girls--Fiction.	Bildungsromans. Love stories.		Seventeen-year-old Veronica "Romie" Miller's life was turned up Dance Sleeka has always found her greatest passion in books. Bu High on a hill overlooking the town of Pleasant Valley, Pennsylvania With the promise of a million dollars each changed before them. And now, as Dana finds herself on the threshold of some major
5	Key of knowledge	Roberts, Nora, author	New York : Berkley Book, [2003]		2003 338 p. : 21 cm.	9780425279451	Women -- Fiction. Locks and keys -- Fiction.	Fantasy fiction. Occult fiction. Love stories.	Key trilogy : 2	
6	The perfect poison	Quick, Amanda	New York : G. P. Putnam's Sons, c2009		2009 340 p. : 24 cm.	9780399155802	Women botanists--England--Fiction. Secret societies--England--Fiction. Psychic ability--Fiction. Murder--Investigation--Fiction.	Mystery fiction. Romantic suspense fiction.		Victorian London holds many secrets. But none are so closely gr
7	Cowboy homecoming	Miller, Linda Lee Daniels, B. J.	Toronto, Ontario, Canada : HQN, [2019]		2019 768 p.	9781480034954	Romance fiction, American.	Romance fiction.		In "Big Sky Summer" rancher Walker Parrish is confronted with
8	Nothing but trouble	Gibson, Rachel	New York : Avon Books, 2010.		2010 354, [23] p. : 17 cm.	9780061579097	Actresses--Fiction. Hockey players--Fiction.	Love stories. Sports stories.	Avon Avon Romance	Angry at the world when a near-fatal car crash takes him off the
9	Beyond seduction : a bastion club novel	Laurens, Stephanie	New York : Avon Books, 2007.		2007 483 p. : 18 cm.	9780066839253	Cornwall (England : County)--Fiction.	Regency fiction. Love stories. Historical fiction.	Avon historical romance A Bastion Club novel.	In a moment of recklessness Gervase Treggath, 6th Earl of Cro Years of secret service to the Crown have taught Gervase the v From their very first kiss, Gervase discovers that the headbun
10	Unexpected	Foster, Lori, 1953-	New York : Brava, c2003.		2003 282 p. : 21 cm.	0758205481	Pregnancy--Fiction.	Love stories.		Ray Vreker, a sexy female mercenary armed with quick reflexe
11	The princess diaries	Cabot, Meg, author	New York : Harper, 2020. ©2009		2000 304 p. : 20 cm.	9780062998453	Princesses--Juvenile fiction. Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction. Identity (Philosophical concept)--Juvenile fiction. Diaries--Juvenile fiction. New York (N. Y.)--Juvenile fiction.	Novels. Fiction. Juvenile works.	Princess diaries : 1	Fourteen-year-old Mia, who is trying to lead a normal life as a te
12	The brazen bride	Laurens, Stephanie	New York : Avon Books, 2010.		2010 425 p. : 18 cm.	9780061795176	Man-woman relationships--Fiction. Amish--Fiction. Quilting--Fiction. Lancaster County (Pa.)--Fiction.	Historical fiction. Regency fiction. Romantic suspense fiction. Love stories.	Avon Black Cobra quartet Avon historical romance Laurens, Stephanie, Black Cobra quartet Avon romance.	After he is shipwrecked and wounded, Major Logan Monteth, ar
13	Katie's way	Perry, Marta	New York : Berkley Books, 2011.		2011 343 p. : 21 cm.	9780425243220	Christian fiction. Love stories.	Christian fiction. Love stories.	Pleasant Valley : bk. 5 London Celebrities ; book 3	After a thwarted romance, Katie Miller starts over by moving to F
14	Making up	Parker, Lucy	Toronto : Carina Press, 2018.		2010 254 p.	9781335007056	Man-woman relationships -- Fiction	Romance fiction. Electronic books.		Once upon a time, circus artist Tris Lane was the best around. H
15	Surrender the dark	Banks, L. A.	New York : Pocket Books, 2011.		2011 373, [12] p. : 18 cm.	9781451607739	Substance abuse--Fiction. Jingles--Fiction. Cynster family (Fictional characters) -- Fiction. Twins -- Fiction. Man-woman relationships -- Fiction	Occult fiction. Love stories.	Pocket Books Fiction	"Celeste Jackson has fought all her life against a fog of hallucin Where are all the excellent men in London? After spending years in the glittering ballrooms of the ton, Aman But brilliant excitement quickly turns to panic when Amanda dis
16								Romance fiction		



What the collection looked like on final day of Project Implementation, April 2024.

Project Surprises



Having a direct Covid exposure mid-project

- Can you project adapt to being work from home for a few weeks, without a collapse of your project timeline?

Job promotion of sponsor mid-project

- After celebrating on their behalf, have you communicated about how, if at all, this might affect their schedule and time commitments? Does the successor to their prior position have access to the necessary files and information for further collection maintenance?

Books outside of collection scope

- Some potential acquisitions were literally too big fit on the shelves
- Learning the differences between paperback types, with mass market paperbacks being the primary collection goal.



Project Benefits



- New crafting and passive programming (set up by librarians) due to freed shelf space (pictured below).
- Easier navigation and searching due to collection index.
- Assessment of current collection scope is easier due to index.
- Borrower confidence that there are less books that are outdated, damaged, or irrelevant to their interests.
- Updated signage to increase visibility of the collection and reduce patron confusion.



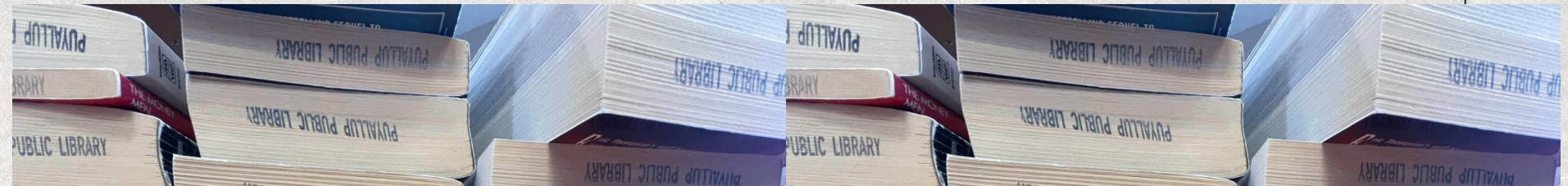
Beyond 2024: Collection Maintenance



There are three major work tasks that continue indefinitely: weeding, adding new books to the index, and selecting new books from existing donations. This has historically been done by either the adult librarian or volunteers, so there is precedent of the paperback collection being maintained by the Puyallup Public Library.

If the collection were to grow past the physical bookshelf space now allotted for it, there would be a greater time pressure to weed the collection. Most library staff can identify a book in poor physical condition, so a lot of this work would be done through normal library workflows like book drop.

Assessing new books for acquisition is usually done by a specific volunteer group, The Friends of the Library. They sort patron donations for discard, for their book sales, and for adding to the paperback collection. The adult services librarian might have to communicate to new and returning volunteers to keep an eye out for donations of diverse books, and to not select past the limits of the newly decreased collection space.



Beyond 2024: Collection Index



For the index, it does require some knowledge of how to find a MARC record for the book, though it does not require the user to know how to create a MARC record.

The index could be updated by the adult services librarian, or alternatively, the library could decide to only index the books every few years to get a general sense of the collection. Grab-and-Go paperbacks are meant to take minimal effort from salaried staff like librarians, so an index update every year or two would be an acceptable plan if volunteers and staff were unavailable.





**Thank you for
reading!**

Grace Adler
They/Them
MLIS Online 2021-2024
grace_adler@alumni.brown.edu



All photos are mine unless otherwise stated.

Works Cited

ALA. (2006, July 26). The freedom to read statement. Advocacy, Legislation & Issues; American Library Association.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

ALA. (2017, December 25). Collection maintenance and weeding. Tools, Publications & Resources; American Library Association.

<https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/weeding>

DeMarco, N. (2021, November 8). What does consent look like in romance novels today?

Book Riot. <https://bookriot.com/consent-in-romance-novels/>

Flores, T., & Osorio, S. (2021, February 17). Why diverse books matter: Mirrors and windows. Colorín Colorado.

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/why-diverse-books-matter-mirrors-and-windows>

Materials selection policy. (n.d.). Austin Public Library; City of Austin. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from

<https://library.austintexas.gov/node/1734580#:~:text=The%20Austin%20Public%20Library%20Materials>