

Book Sleuthing

by Mary Wright, Master Book Sleuth

Monday morning is always full of surprises when the Book Sleuths arrive to check out the book donations made during the previous week. It's true that one "cannot tell a book by its cover". The carts are full of colorful, dust-jacketed books as well as some which are just dust-covered. And there always seems to be a broad selection of paperbacks.

The morning crew of Fran Alexander, Marcia Davis, Pat Evans, Millie Mondahl and Mary Wright eagerly approach the task of inspecting each book to determine if it can be priced onsite and boxed for the Bargain Room or if it should be individually priced. Some books are placed in boxes especially for the Holiday Sale in December and some are held out for the Children's Book Sale in June.

Any book in terrible or musty condition is set aside to be recycled. After many hours spent doing this over the last several years, we can rather accurately price current fiction and certain other categories. Any book that needs more careful evaluation by checking on the internet is boxed and taken to our work room. All of the Sleuths are qualified to sort, evaluate and price books using an internet website.

An afternoon team consisting of Amanda Baker, Shirley Copeland, Kathryn Crunkleton, Beth Neel and new trainees Louise Mahaffey and Ruth Sinor, handles the processing of these books. A visual evaluation is made to determine if it has a dust-jacket, assess its general appearance and the condition of the cover and interior. Further research on the internet helps determine a fair and reasonable price.

Through the years we have had some thrilling discoveries. An estate donation provided us with a first edition of L. Frank Baum's *WIZARD OF OZ*. Although intact, it seemed best to have this book cleaned, restored and appraised by a professional. It is still available and priced at \$3250. on abebooks.com.

This spring we were given *FORMULAS AND THEOREMS IN PURE MATHEMATICS* by George S. Carr. This was a reprint of the book used in the 19th century as a "training handbook for the difficult math test of the time in England". Recently we made it available on the internet after offering it in the Spring Sale. It sold within six hours at the price of \$300., which was many times over its original cost when purchased in 1970 and offered as a best buy.

These are just two examples of some of the exciting books we find that have been donated by our local patrons. It is the quality books donated by you that continue to make our sales so popular and that provide a means for the Friends of the Library to support OUR library. And this is why the Sleuths find this volunteer activity a challenge and not a chore.

Friends of the Library and RSVP

Sandra Hillier, Program Director of RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) of Boone & Marion Counties, supplied the following statistics for the months of July through December of 2007:

FOL members enrolled in RSVP: 9

FOL/RSVP Member hours reading to children: 7

FOL/RSVP Member hours delivering books to homebound: 18 (13 persons/trips)

FOL/RSVP Member hours spent Fundraising/Misc. books: 369.25

Total FOL/RSVP Member hours served for the period: 394.25

Miles Reimbursed: 952 (5 volunteers)

Keep up the good work, team!