

The Future of the InULA Book Sale: New Challenges and Opportunities

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As with practically all aspects of daily life in the Wells Library, InULA's annual book sale has been impacted by the various construction projects taking place in and around the library. Due to the loss of parking and the loss of some storage space for book donations, the Book Sale Committee has been compelled to rethink InULA's traditional book sale, mindful of the need to balance the novel factors affecting the sale with the long-standing goals and objectives of the sale.

The committee has approached the practical challenges we are currently facing as an opportunity that could reap benefits. At the same time, because the book sale is the principal source of revenue for InULA, we are experimenting with a variety of approaches for monetizing book donations in order to minimize the risks of relying on any one approach.

The committee recognized during last spring's book sale that it was going to have to address the practical issues presented by the loss of parking at Wells Library, as well as the reduction of space allotted to InULA on the 11th floor. Those material constraints suggested that the book sale would need to be on a smaller scale. Reducing the size of the annual book sale is not necessarily a bad thing. The space used for the sale – room E174 in Wells – has consistently proven to be too small, making it difficult if not impossible to unpack and effectively display all of the donated books and other materials and allowing too little room for large groups of browsers. With the loss of adjacent parking, we are concerned that fewer people will attend the sale, and almost all purchases of any significant quantity will have to be moved to the loading dock to be collected, creating more work and logistical issues for the book sale volunteers.

The challenge has been to find new ways to sort and commercially exploit book donations beyond the book sale. We are trying two new approaches with early signs of success.

A New Partnership

The first effort is a trial run with BookSprint, a small company in Louisville, KY, that partners with public and private organizations to sell used books online through various sources, such as Amazon, while donating or responsibly recycling materials with no commercial value. They split their proceeds 50/50 with partnering organizations, providing account statements and checks on a quarterly basis. BookSprint previously bought and removed all of the unsold books from the annual book sale at one dollar per box. Starting in August, they have started to pick up and partner with us to sell some of InULA's books. Thus far we have received \$589 from BookSprint for the items they sold during the month of September, with most of the books we gave to them still in their inventory. The committee will continue to work with BookSprint and evaluate the partnership with them during the coming year.

InULA's New Amazon Book Seller Account

The book sale committee has also instituted its own Amazon account. This venture has been very successful thus far, especially during the textbook buying season in September. Because of uncertainty about how much effort would be required to successfully maintain an Amazon book seller account, we have initially limited the inventory to premium priced books selling for more than \$50. Given our sources for materials, a lot of the inventory on InULA's Amazon account is very expensive and esoteric scholarly books. The account has nevertheless raised \$890 from the sale of nine items, including one three-volume set. The InULA Amazon account clearly presents a means for generating significantly more revenue than that realized by the book sale for certain kinds of materials. It requires little extra expense besides postage, some if not all of which is covered by the buyer. It simply requires volunteer time to maintain the account and pack and mail the sold items. InULA's inventory can be viewed at:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/aag/main/ref=olp_merch_name_1?ie=UTF8&asin=3037190914&isAmazonFulfilled=0&seller=A34LQ8UR64T9SU.

Silent Auction

One final new fundraising initiative from the book sale committee will include a silent auction at this year's book sale. If you have any donations for the silent auction, please contact Lori Dekydtspotter. For donations of books or other materials, contact Naz Pantaloni.

Annual Book Sale

The annual book sale will take place April 5-6, 2014. Please mark your calendars, consider volunteering, or at least plan to visit the sale.

After this year's sale, the committee will meet to evaluate the results of our new and established ventures and make a recommendation to the InULA Board regarding how to proceed in the future. We welcome your input and help.