

# Merchandising the Collection: Trading Spaces Demonstration Project



July 2003  
Staff Update 1

## What is the project?

- The Mount Laurel Library has been selected as a statewide demonstration site to show how to use visual merchandising techniques in a library setting.
- Among the things we'll use this funding for is consulting, training, slat wall with shelves and accessories, book magazine, and multimedia shelves or display fixtures, comfortable seating, lighting and signage.
- This is a joint project of the New Jersey State Library, the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative and Mount Laurel Library.

## When does it start?

- The project will start July 1, 2003 and finish by June 2004.

## Why do we need to do this?

- Displaying items increases the use and value of our collection.  
*Look at these popular titles. One copy is in the stacks, the other on the "Have You Missed These" display shelves.*

	<i>In the stacks circ</i>		<i>Mc Naughton circ</i>		<i>Genre</i>
<i>Locked in the Cabinet – Reich</i>	4	<i>(since '97)</i>	55	<i>(since '97)</i>	<i>Biography</i>
<i>Floater – Wambaugh</i>	6	<i>(since '00)</i>	101	<i>(since '97)</i>	<i>Fiction</i>
<i>The Juror – Green</i>	1	<i>(since '97)</i>	74	<i>(since '97)</i>	<i>Fiction</i>
<i>Come to Grief – Francis</i>	10	<i>(since '01)</i>	79	<i>(since '97)</i>	<i>Mystery</i>
<i>Nathaniel's Nutmeg – Milton</i>	3	<i>(since '99)</i>	37	<i>(since '99)</i>	<i>Non-fiction</i>

- Our Strategic Plan calls for an increased emphasis on merchandising and displaying the collection more effectively.

## "This is a library. Won't we start looking like a bookstore?"

- **Yes...** We want to take the best of visual merchandising ideas from retail and adapt it to our needs, so people can come into the library and easily find wonderful things to read/view/listen/study.
- **...and no.** New shelves and displays won't change our fundamental mission as a Library. Our objective is increased access and use of our materials by our public.

## How can we make this project happen successfully?

- Create opportunities to explain the Merchandising Project and get feedback from all staff.
- Select a Merchandising Project Team representing all departments in the library
  - Joan, Kathy SG, Lisa, Becky, Angel, C.L., Eileen, Kathy K.
- Give regular updates with the same message in multiple formats (email, flyer, verbally, updates at meetings)
- Phase in different collections/locations
- Create a project website
- Plan now for future presentations
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

## What information do people need to make this happen?

- How does this affect me?
- What am I expected to do differently?
- How the heck can I find stuff in the library now?

## What new skills/behaviors are needed?

- Look at how we lay out the collection
- Display skills
- Look at displaying materials normally not displayed (reference, community information)
- Match location in catalog with location in library

**What reinforcement will be available to retain the change once it has been made?**

- Allow staff time to maintain/update displays
- Schedule staff for public assistance
- Provide feedback opportunities for staff (meetings, feedback forms, formal and informal walk-thoughts)
- Ongoing training

**What's next?**

- Staff meetings/walk-through to explain project, start developing a merchandising sense and to generate ideas for the consultant
- First visit from our project consultant Dave Genesy from the San Jose Public Library
- Tentative dates are Monday, July 21 & Tuesday, July 22

**Five Laws of Library Science (1931)**

S.R. Ranganathan (Indian Librarian and Scholar)

1. Books are for use.
2. Every person his or her book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. A library is a growing organism.

**Five New Laws of Librarianship (1995)**

Michael Gorman (Contemporary Librarian and Scholar)

1. Libraries serve humanity.
2. Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated.
3. Use technology intelligently to enhance service.
4. Protect free access to information.
5. Honor the past and create the future.

**From Mount Laurel Library's Strategic Plan**

**Our Vision:**

*The Mount Laurel Library will be the community's "Main Street."*

**Our Mission:**

*The Mount Laurel Library provides a real and virtual center  
where residents gather as a community  
for learning, for leisure, for life.*

**Our Values:**

*We believe that learning and leisure are central to a meaningful life.  
We always go the extra mile to provide superb service to our customers.  
We make sure that every visit to the library is enjoyable.*