



## REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: MARCH 24, 2011

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|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Session:           | Public Session                                                       |
| Subject:           | Collections Management Policy: Challenged Materials 2010             |
| Prepared By:       | Margaret Wilkinson, Beth Whitney                                     |
| Presented By:      | Margaret Wilkinson                                                   |
| Purpose of Report: | For Receipt and Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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### Recommendation:

**It is recommended that this report be received.**

### Issue / Opportunity

This report is made in accordance with the London Public Library Collections Management Policy and identifies challenges made to the collections and the results of these challenges during 2010.

### Background & Review

London Public Library Staff enjoy active - and interactive - relationships with library patrons regarding materials in the collection. Patrons let us know in a variety of ways what they like, what they want more of, and occasionally what they are dissatisfied or unhappy with. Patrons communicate their views about the library through Branch and Central staff, through letters and emails, via the "how did we do today form" and by means of telephone calls and voice messages.

While the Collections Services Department receives many positive comments about the library collection, we do also receive challenges to the collection, usually in the form of a communication about a book, DVD or other resource that a patron feels is inappropriate for the library collection. These are considered in the context of the Collections Management Policy. The Policy, as approved by the Board on April 22, 2010, articulates the fundamental philosophy found in the *Statement of Intellectual Freedom of the Canadian Library Association* which reads in part:

"It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials."

While this broad statement covers challenges to the collection, LPL feels that individual concerns should be directly addressed so the patron understands why a particular title was purchased and the specifics of the decision to keep or to remove the title from the collection.

The Collections Management Policy spells out the "Materials Reconsideration" protocol:

17. Persons from the community wishing to recommend the removal of a particular item in the library collection may submit a written Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials, which will be reviewed by the Coordinator, Collections Management.

18. The person(s) requesting the reconsideration may request that the review be referred to the office of the CEO & Chief Librarian. The final decision concerning Library materials rests with the CEO & Chief Librarian.

19. Decisions made about challenged materials will be communicated to the originators of the request for reconsideration following completion of the staff review.

20. An annual report on challenges to Library materials is provided to the Board.

In all cases where a return communication is requested, the patron is contacted and apprised of the process for reconsideration, as follows:

- The complaint and the title are sent to the relevant selection librarian to review the original reasons for its selection.
- The selector locates reviews, looks at the item itself, reviews usage figures, media coverage, collections from other public libraries, and any other information relevant to the reconsideration request.
- The Coordinator reviews the supporting material and discusses a recommended course of action with the selector.
- The Coordinator contacts the patron directly and explains the decision and the rationale for removal or retention of the material.

In 2010, no challenges to the collection were referred to the office of the CEO and Chief Librarian. All reconsideration requests were handled at the level of the Collections Management Coordinator's office.

In 2010, 5 titles were reconsidered in response to patron concerns (see Appendix A).

## Appendix A: 2010 Specific Challenges to London Public Library Collection

| Date         | Titles/Format                                                                                                                              | Patron Concern                                                                                                                                         | Reasons for selecting; reconsideration information                                                                                                                                                                  | Decision  |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| March, 2010  | Martha Alexander, <i>When the New Baby Comes, I'm Moving Out</i><br><br>children's picturebook                                             | Child in book was rude to parent; not suitable for parent to read to a small child                                                                     | Positive reviews. Entry in <i>Something About the Author</i> . 1979 book reissued in 2006. Children's Bookwatch endorsement.                                                                                        | Retention |
| July, 2010   | Borat, <i>Touristic Guiding to Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan</i><br><br>adult fiction book                                                 | Patron feels book is pornographic and should not be on library shelves                                                                                 | Title appeared on a vendor bestseller list. Book was purchased when <i>Borat</i> the movie was popular. Book no longer circulating.                                                                                 | Removal   |
| August, 2010 | 2 titles by author, Sisten Souljah, <i>The Coldest Winter Ever</i> , and <i>Midnight: A Gangster Love Story</i><br><br>adult fiction books | Patron feels titles "glorify misogynistic, violent and drug-driven 'gangstah' lifestyle"; shouldn't be purchased or featured in a fiction e-newsletter | Urban Lit is a popular genre which often features hip-hop inner city culture.<br><br>Fiction e-newsletters promote a range of titles appealing to a wide spectrum of reading interests and tastes.                  | Retention |
| August, 2010 | <i>Latter Days</i><br><br>film                                                                                                             | Patron offended by opening scenes of gay sex and stopped watching; concerned that children might see it                                                | Positive reviews. In context of the love story, opening scenes establish personality and lifestyle of main character. No recent rating available from Canadian rating agency. Film borrowed 114 times in past year. | Retention |