

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Introduction

The purpose in building a collection is to make available to all people who enter the library as comprehensive an assemblage of recorded knowledge as possible within the limits of funds available and the needs of the community. A diverse collection is important. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own excellence and the audience for whom it is intended. No single standard can be applied in all cases. Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship, or value to humanity; others are selected to satisfy the informational, recreational, or educational interests of the community.

The Galesburg Public Library endeavors to build a collection representing varying points of view. The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. Responsibility for the reading materials of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. While a person may reject materials for himself or herself and for his or her children, he or she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others. Selection for the adult collection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently fall into the hands of children. An open shelf policy will be followed at all times. The library supports intellectual freedom and has adopted the following statements as policy: ALA Freedom to Read Statement, ALA Library Bill of Rights, and the "Freedom to View" statement of the American Film and Video Association.

I. Statement of Purpose

This selection policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for materials selection for the Galesburg Public Library. Within these guidelines, the librarians use their professional judgment to determine the materials that best meet the objectives of the Library and the needs of its patrons.

II. Objectives in Materials Selections

The general objectives in materials selection are to carry out the Library's goals of providing the community with a variety of significant media to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.

III. Responsibility for Selection

Overall responsibility for collection development rests with the Library Director who operates within this framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff. However, suggestions for materials to be purchased are always welcome from any Board member or library staff member, and patrons are encouraged to make suggestions by filling out a "Materials Request Form" card at the reference desk.

All requests are given serious consideration, and the patron will be informed of the Library's decision. An attempt will be made to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item that is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY (CONTINUED)

IV. Criteria for Selection

The general criteria considered in selecting materials include: 1) significance and permanent value to the existing collection, 2) qualifications of author or producer, 3) suitability of subject and style for intended audience, 4) quality of format, 5) currency or timeliness, if applicable, 6) demand by patrons, 7) price, 8) attention given to the item by reviewers and general news media, 9) availability of materials in other libraries, and 10) technical quality of non-book materials. In selection, consideration will be given to the work as a whole. No work shall be excluded because of specific passages or pieces taken out of context.

V. Selection Tools

Because it is impossible for librarians to examine all items being considered for purchase, they depend on reliable selection aids. The librarians regularly depend on the reviews found in standard sources. Other selection aids, such as "Notable Book" lists chosen by the American Library Association, National Book Awards lists, Pulitzer Prize lists, and published lists of bestsellers may also be used as required.

VI. Scope of Collection

Through careful selection, the Library strives to maintain a diverse collection of quality materials, including items of contemporary significance and permanent value, as well as a selection of materials concerning social issues and ephemeral items. Circulating materials are supplemented by a variety of reference materials for in-house use. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skills, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity.

VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

Materials for Children and Youth

The Galesburg Public Library subscribes to the following policy: "Free Access to Libraries for Minors," an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (as adopted by the ALA Council, 1981). At the Galesburg Public Library, children and young people have access to all parts of the Library; however, collections in the Children's Department serve children and young people from first through eighth grades, as well as preschool and kindergarten children and their parents and caregivers.

Materials appropriate for the interests and needs of the ages served are chosen for these collections.

Collections in the Children's Room include beginning readers, junior non-fiction, junior fiction, periodicals, and non-book materials. The young adult fiction collection is adjacent to the children's collection and is selected especially for the needs and interests of 7th through 10th graders. It contains some duplication of classic titles found in both the adult and junior fiction collections, but is also strongly stocked with those titles that deal with the contemporary scene as it concerns 12- to 15- year-olds. Young people in the 7th through 10th grades are expected to use non-fiction materials throughout the Library in preparing school assignments or for any other reason.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY (CONTINUED)

VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

Materials for Children and Youth

Books and materials in the Children's Room include a wide range of non-book materials, the traditional picture book collection, and a collection on parenting. This last collection contains some duplication of materials on parenting found in the adult collection. A sampling of children's books in Spanish is selected for the Children's Room.

Materials for Adults

The materials in Adult Services are selected primarily to serve the needs of adults and high school students; consideration is also given to the non-fiction needs of the middle school students. The collection includes reference and circulating non-fiction books, fiction books, and non-book materials.

A. Fiction

The fiction collection provides books for a wide range of interests of the general reading public, including classics, titles representing periods and styles of writing, current titles of a lasting nature, and those titles meeting popular demand for recreational reading.

B. Business Section

The Library purchases standard business directories and reference materials as well as popular circulating items that are of interest to the general public.

C. Genealogy

The Library maintains a small circulating collection of books on the basics of genealogical searching which are of value to the general public. The non-circulating collection is more extensive and consists primarily of indexes, bibliographies, and verification tools, and listings of sources for vital records in particular states and foreign countries. Histories of individual families are purchased only if they are of unusual national or local significance. This collection is provided by the Knox County Genealogical Society in cooperation with the Galesburg Public Library. Microfilm of the U.S. Census records as well as books and other special materials for this immediate geographical area are purchased by the Knox County Genealogical Society and the Galesburg Public Library, as they become available.

D. Blind and Physically Handicapped

Any juvenile or adult who cannot read or handle conventional printed matter because of a physical disability is eligible for Homebound Delivery Service, specially selected library resources such as large print or audio cassettes, support services of Interlibrary Loan through the Library System, Talking Books, or special materials supported by the Library of Congress.

E. Foreign Language Materials

Materials in foreign languages are considered, as community needs dictate. Individual needs for foreign languages not purchased by the library may be served by requests through interlibrary loan.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY (CONTINUED)

VII. Statement of Specific Policies in Selected Areas

Materials for Adults

F. Literacy

Materials in the Adult New Reader Collection are selected to serve the needs of new adult readers and people whose second language is English. There is heavy emphasis on materials teaching the basics of the English language and grammar, materials on coping with everyday life situations, and other high-interest, low reading-level fiction and nonfiction.

G. Textbooks

Although the Library tries to serve students' needs as much as possible, textbooks are not purchased unless they are the best source of information on a given subject. The library policy is to purchase materials that will also supplement and complement the curriculum offerings of the public and private schools within the library.

H. Religion

The library purchases materials that are written on a general non-doctrinal level for the layman.

I. Law and Medicine

The library purchases medical and legal materials intended for the general reader. The library does not normally purchase materials intended specifically for the professional in these fields.

J. Local History

The library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history and in the works of local authors. Information on the western Illinois region, especially the city of Galesburg and Knox County, will be acquired as space and budget permit. Included will be books, pamphlets, magazine articles, clippings, directories, reports, manuscripts, periodicals, and other appropriate print and non-print materials.

Non-Book Materials

The criteria for and the methods of selection of non-book materials are listed in Section IV.

Non-book items purchased by the library for in-house use or for circulation may include pamphlets, computer software, microfilm, compact discs and cassettes, recordings of books on cassette, videos, digital videodiscs, cassette/filmstrip and cassette/book kits, games, toys, puzzles, and puppets.

The acquisition of a variety of non-book materials is under constant evaluation and is subject to change. Cost of items, budget, use, and availability of new items are the determining factors in selection.

VIII. Complaints

Strong objection to any library materials must be made in writing according to "Procedures for Handling Complaints about Library Materials" provided at the end of this section. Examination and reconsideration of materials, if necessary, will be handled as outlined in these procedures. A copy of these procedures as well as forms for registering complaints may be obtained in the children's room or from the adult circulation department.

The Galesburg Public Library subscribes to the provisions of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement as adopted by the American Library Association. These documents are considered a part of this policy. All individuals have the right to choose which library materials they will use. However, no one has the right to restrict the freedom of others to read whatever they wish. No book or other material in question is automatically removed from the collection because of an objection to it.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY (CONTINUED)

IX. Collection Maintenance

A. Duplicate Copies

The number of copies purchased varies with the expected use of any item. As extensive use for individual titles is demonstrated, duplication to meet the demand is implemented.

B. Weeding

In order to maintain the best possible collection of materials, a continual weeding process takes place. Items are discarded if they are outdated, if they no longer circulate, if there are more duplicate copies than needed, if they are of little historical significance, or if they are in poor physical condition.

A complete weeding of the entire collection is accomplished every five years. Materials that are removed from the library collection may or may not be made available for public purchase at book sales.

X. Revision of Selection Policy

Because the needs of the community change, this materials selection policy is revised as needed and/or is reviewed at least every five years.

Revised and Adopted: April 4, 2002
Galesburg Public Library
Board of Trustees

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIALS

1. If patrons wish to file a complaint about library materials, Form I, Complaint about Library Materials, should be completed. This form stays on file with the Department Head. The Department Head will examine the material, as well as critical reviews of the material. Repeated complaints about specific works or materials in general will generate a reconsideration of a specific work and/or selection policy.
2. If patrons wish to have materials reconsidered (as opposed to filing a complaint without definite action), they may fill out Form II, Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials.
3. When Form II is completely filled out and returned to the library, the Director and Department Head will review the complaint and the material to determine whether the item should remain or be removed from the collection.
4. The Director will write a letter to the patron who initiated the complaint, outlining the above procedures and announcing the disposition of the material in question. The letter may also include a statement inviting the patron to the library to discuss the matter with the Department Head and Library Director.
5. After an interview with the Department Head and Library Director, a patron desiring further action can make a request in writing for a hearing before the Board of Library Trustees, who has final authority.

FORM I

COMPLAINT ABOUT LIBRARY MATERIAL

Material: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Complaint Represents: _____ Individual _____ Organization

Reason for
Complaint: _____

Signature: _____

Took Form II: _____ Yes _____ No

Date Form II

Returned: _____

FORM II

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Author: _____

Title: _____

Publisher
or
Distributor: _____

Request Initiated
by: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

City: _____ Zip code: _____

Request represents: _____ Individual
_____ Organization, list name _____
_____ Other, list name _____

1. Have you read or viewed the entire work? _____
If not, what parts? _____
2. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages or sections)

3. What good or valuable features do you find in the material? _____

4. What do you believe is the theme of this work? _____

What do you feel might be the result of reading or viewing this material? _____

Have you read any reviews of this material? _____

FORM II

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS - PAGE 2

If yes, specify: _____

Do you think this material would be more appropriate for a different age group? Please explain:

What would you like the library to do about this material? _____

Can you recommend other material that would convey as valuable a picture and/or perspective of the subject treated? _____ If yes, please specify: _____

Date: _____

Signature _____