

## 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. The library recognizes that the needs of the community are of primary importance in selection, and because the community is a conglomeration of individuals, each individual's needs will be considered in conjunction with the majority of the present and potential patronage. An effort is made to include information representing all sides of controversial issues as such material becomes available. The criteria for the selection of controversial materials are the same as for any other materials. Controversial materials have no distinguishing labels and are shelved in the general collection. Responsibility for the reading choices of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. 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.

### I. Statement of Purpose

This selection policy defines the standards and outlines the responsibility for materials selection for the Sycamore Public Library. Within these guidelines, the librarians use their professional judgment to determine the materials which 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, all members of the staff and patrons may recommend titles for consideration, and recommendations for materials from citizens of the community should be encouraged.

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 any of the service desks.

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 which is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

### 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 needed.

## 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 Young Adults**

The Sycamore 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 Sycamore Public Library, children have access to all parts of the Library.

The materials in Youth Services are selected primarily to serve the needs of children from birth through seventh of eighth grades. The collection includes reference and circulating non-fiction books, fiction books, and non-book materials.

Collections in Youth Services include board books, picture books, beginning readers, juvenile reference and circulating non-fiction, juvenile fiction, periodicals, and non-book materials.

#### 1. Young Adult

The young adult fiction and non-fiction collection is selected especially for the needs and interests of 7th through 10th graders. These materials are housed on the second floor in a separate area.

#### 2. Encyclopedias

There are two sets of non-circulating encyclopedias available in the Youth Services reference section. The *World Book Encyclopedia* and *The New Book of Knowledge* are replaced every four years in alternation with the encyclopedias in Adult Services. The replaced set of Encyclopedias is then moved to the circulating collection and the old circulating set is withdrawn and made available for sale.

#### 3. Reference

Youth Services reference materials are selected to provide general reference support and class assignment support.

#### 4. States and Countries

Books on each of the states in North America and on countries around the world are collected to meet the needs of students working on school projects.

5. Native American

Books on Native American cultures are collected to help meet the needs of students working on school projects.

6. Parenting Collection

A small collection of materials intended to help parents with the basic needs and development of children birth to age eight. Other books on parenting topics are collected by the Adult Services Department and housed in the Adult non-fiction collection.

7. Foreign Language Materials

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

### Materials for Adults

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

1. 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.

2. Large Print

The large print collection provides materials in 14-point or larger font. The large print materials are purchased in a variety of fiction and nonfiction subject areas. The collection duplicates and supplements the regular collection.

3. Medical Books

While we add to the circulating and non-circulating medical books on a regular basis, these books become out-of-date more quickly than other areas of non-fiction. The medical books are heavily weeded every three years and in that same year the collection is heavily fed with new up-to-date books.

4. Business Books

The business collection includes circulating and non-circulating books regarding all areas of business including but not limited to job preparation, job searching, starting a business, owning a business, managing a business, employee rights and responsibilities, and finance. While we add circulating and non-circulating business books on a regular basis, these materials can quickly become out-of-date and are therefore heavily weeded every three years and in that year a strong emphasis on rebuilding the collection is made.

5. Computer Books

While we add circulating and non-circulating computer books on a regular basis, these materials quickly become out-of-date and are therefore heavily weeded every three years and in that year a strong emphasis on rebuilding the collection are made.

6. Reference

Reference books are non-circulating with the goal that any person who comes to the library will be able to find books on a topic no matter how popular the topic.

### 7. General Encyclopedias

There are two sets of non-circulating encyclopedias available in the reference section. A slightly older set of encyclopedias may be borrowed. The *World Book Encyclopedia* and *Encyclopedia Americana* are replaced at least every four years in alteration with the encyclopedia sets in Youth Services. *Encyclopedia Britannica* is replaced whenever a newly revised edition is available. The old set of *World Book Encyclopedias* is then moved to the circulating collection and the replaced set is withdrawn and made available for sale.

### 8. Dictionaries

General English language dictionaries are available in the reference collection and the circulating collection. They are updated every five years. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary is also available on the Internet through the library's website. A user name and password are required to access the online dictionary.

### 9. Genealogy

The Library maintains within the Reference and Circulating collections a small collection of materials on the basics of genealogical searching and some local history books which are of value to the general public. The Joiner History Room, a component of DeKalb County, is housed in the Sycamore Public Library. They offer a large non-circulating collection that is more extensive and consists of indexes, bibliographies, verification tools, and listings of sources for vital records in DeKalb County. The Joiner History collection also offers histories of individual families businesses and homes throughout DeKalb County.

### 10. Blind and Physically Handicapped

Any juvenile or adult who cannot read or handle conventional printed matter because of a physical disability is eligible for services of the 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.

### 11. Foreign Language Materials

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

### 12. Textbooks

Although the Library tries to serve students' needs as much as possible, textbooks are not purchased. A collection of several Junior High and High School textbooks have been donated to the library by the School District for in-library use. The library policy is to purchase materials which will supplement and complement the curriculum offerings of the public and private schools within the library.

## 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 magazines, newspapers, microfilm, DVDs, recordings of books on cassette and compact disc, and cassette/book kits, puzzles, games, and puppets.

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Revised: April 10, 2006  
Board Approved May 9, 2006

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.

1. Newspapers  
A selection of daily and weekly newspapers of local, regional, and national interest will be collected and made available for in-house use.
2. Magazines  
Magazines will be selected based on high-demand and popularity in the community. The library will maintain at least one subscription based database that includes magazines and their complete articles.
3. Microfilms  
Microfilms of the major local newspapers are purchased as they become available. These microfilms go back to the beginnings of each newspaper and are available for use in the library.
4. DVDs  
The DVD collection rental fees collected are used for the purchase of new DVDs and maintenance of the DVD collection.

DVDs held in the Youth Services Department will be collected with the intent that in general parents will feel comfortable allowing their children free range when selecting DVDs from the collection. The Youth Services DVDs will be entertaining and/or educational in nature. No DVD in the collection will have a Motion Picture of America rating over G.

All other DVDs will be added to the Adult Services Department collection. At this time, full length feature films are the only type of DVDs that will be purchased with library funds. The collection will be focused on popular movies, films that are not available for rent from other sources, and award winning films. Motion Picture of America rated versions of films will generally be purchased to provide patrons with a common resource for selection purposes. All DVD donations in excellent condition will be considered for addition to the collection.

5. Audio books  
The Book-on-tape collection will be maintained but no additional library funds will be used to add to the collection. The same criteria for fiction and non-fiction books will be used in collecting Book-on-CD.
6. E-books  
A collection of E-books and E-Audio Books are purchased through a system consortia program. New books are added through the purchase program.
7. Puzzles  
A collection of puzzles for young children will be maintained. New puzzles will be added if an older puzzle is discarded.
8. Games  
A small variety of board games are available for use in the Youth Services Department. Games will be discarded for condition and if money allows can be replaced with other board games. The game computers in Youth Services link to parent approved websites for children's games.

## VIII. Complaints

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Revised: April 10, 2006  
Board Approved May 9, 2006

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 department where the material in question is housed, or at the circulation desk.

The Sycamore 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.

### IX. Collection Maintenance

#### 1. 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.

#### 2. 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, or if they are in poor physical condition.

A complete weeding of the entire collection is accomplished every five years. Items discarded are plainly marked and may be donated to the Friends of the Library for sale.

### 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.

## 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 policies.
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 appropriate Department Head will review the complaint and the material to determine whether the item should remain or be removed from the collection. The Director should be informed of the complaint and of the decision.

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4. The Department Head 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.

## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Sycamore Public Library subscribes to the *American Library Association Bill of Rights* which says:

### **American Library Association Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services:

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit space and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affirmations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The Sycamore Public Library subscribes to the *American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement* which follows:

### **American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement**

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.
3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.
4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or the author as subversive or dangerous.
6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

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7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

## AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The Sycamore Public Library subscribes to the *American Library Association Freedom to View Statement* which follows.

### **American Library Association Freedom to View Statement**

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place of censorship in any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

## FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS

### ***An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS***

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users. Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis.

Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation.

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Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information in the library. Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.<sup>1</sup> Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether material is not constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents. As “Libraries: An American Value” states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.” Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

<sup>1</sup>*See* *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975)—“Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable [422 U.S. 205, 214] for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors. *See* *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, *supra*. *Cf.* *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).”

Adopted June 30, 1972; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council.  
[ISBN 8389-7549-6]