

City of Bellingham Library Policy

Section: Section V

Subsection: Materials Selection Policies

Date Developed: 08/20/97

Date Revised: 10/07/97

Developed by:

Approved By:

Cancels:

See Also:

Selection Policies

LIBRARY BOARD POLICY RELATING TO SELECTION OF BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS

Librarians who are assigned to the selection of books or other library materials are qualified by their training to make such selection. They are aided by advance reviews written for the specific guidance of librarians and by numerous bibliographic aids both in the juvenile and adult fields. They welcome suggestions from members of the Library Board, the staff, and the general public.

In adopting the general principles applying to selection of materials for the library, the Library Board endorses the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" which is reprinted below:

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.
2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public 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. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, national

origins or social or political views.

6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public."

Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees, April 13, 1971.

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Bellingham Public Library is to select, organize, preserve, and to make freely and easily available to the people of the community both print and non-print materials, within the limitations of space and budget, which will aid them in the pursuit of education, information, research, recreation, and in the creative use of leisure time. The goal of the Library is the maximum use of its collection by the greatest number of persons.

The Library seeks to promote endeavors which will stimulate and expand the reading interests of both children and adults and to coordinate this work with that of other educational, social, and cultural groups in the community in cooperative effort.

It is the responsibility of the Library to satisfy the diverse reading needs and interests of the residents of the community through the selection, acquisition, and organization of library materials and to provide skilled guidance in their use. This can be done by making known the resources of the Library through various activities and media within and outside of the Library, and through utilization of the collection of the State Library and other library collections by means of interlibrary loan.

In its selection of books and other materials, the Bellingham Public Library and its Board subscribes fully to the principles originally adopted in 1948 (and as subsequently revised) by the American Library Association in its "Library Bill of Rights" and endorses its stand that the freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The library and its board also adheres to and supports:

ALA's Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix A) (Document link: Database 'Bellingham Policies & Procedures', View '2. Departmental View\Library')

Free Access to Libraries for Minors, ALA's interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix B) (Document link: Database 'Bellingham Policies & Procedures', View '2. Departmental View\Library')

WLA's Statement of Freedom to Read (Appendix C) (Document link: Database 'Bellingham Policies & Procedures', View '2. Departmental View\Library')

ALA's Freedom to view (Appendix D) (Document link: Database 'Bellingham Policies & Procedures', View '2. Departmental View\Library')

Each of these documents are a part of this Library's policy. It is the function and duty of the public library to provide the means, whenever possible, through which all persons may have free access to the thinking on all sides of all ideas.

Censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion, or by organizations which would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the printed word.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

Final responsibility for selection rests with the City Librarian, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees. However, the responsibility for initial selection of books and other materials is shared by every professional member of the staff, since no one person is omniscient nor fully qualified to determine the needs of all persons in all sections of the community. Suggestions from library users are always welcomed and given serious consideration.

CRITERIA FOR BOOKS SELECTION

ADULT NONFICTION: Chief points considered are readability of material, authenticity of factual matter presented, quality of writing, cost, format, existing Library holdings, and local interest in the subject.

Nonfiction may be excluded for inaccurate information, lack of integrity, sensationalism, intent to incite hatred and intolerance, and text material of too limited or specialized nature.

Titles are selected on the basis of the content as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author. Important books of all persuasions should be carried.

In no case, is any book included or excluded merely because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious view, of the writer.

In the case of controversial questions, variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever available.

ADULT FICTION: Selection of adult fiction is made with reference to one or more of these criteria:

1. It should contribute positively to the individual's awareness of self, community, and social heritage.
2. It should contribute to the value of the library's collection as a whole by representing all types and styles of literature.
3. It should provide pleasure reading for recreation and the creative use of leisure time.

Serious works which present an honest aspect of life are not necessarily excluded for frankness of expression.

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS: The first objective in selecting children's materials is to encourage the child's joy in reading. Books are selected which offer adventures of mind and spirit to the growing child, cultivating an appreciation of literature both oral and written and encouraging the creative use of leisure time by inquiring minds. Special attention is given books of use and value to parents, teachers, and other adults working with children.

The public library does not provide basic texts or materials needed in quantity for school work. It accepts as its responsibility the providing of supplementary materials of varied kinds to enrich the resources available to the individual student and teacher.

Each book, old or new, is judged on its own merits and in its relation to the collection as a whole. To these ends, books selected are read, reviewed, and discussed by the Children's Librarian with other librarians prior to purchase.

REFERENCE MATERIALS: Factors considered in the selection of reference materials are authority, reliability, scope, treatment, arrangement, format, cost, existing holdings and local interest.

DOCUMENTS: The Library collects and preserves documents primarily of local importance, with emphasis upon those published by the municipal government of Bellingham, the cities and counties of Northwest Washington, the State of Washington, and quasi-governmental agencies of local interest. U.S. documents of general interest are evaluated by the general criteria for adult nonfiction.

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS: Basic popular, general information, and scholarly magazines are selected to supplement the book collection, bring book information up to date, and to fill in those areas where book resources are weak, inferior or nonexistent. The existence of indexing for a magazine would be a positive factor in its selection.

Newspapers are selected to meet reference and research needs of patrons,

to provide current information, and to satisfy casual interest in current events. Local, national, and foreign newspapers are supplied upon sufficient demand and within budget and space limitations.

LOCAL HISTORY MATERIALS: The Library maintains a comprehensive collection of all material pertaining to Bellingham and Whatcom County that is of a substantive nature or of long-term interest. Bellingham Municipal Code 1.24.010 provides that the Library receive all publications of the City that may be of interest to its citizens.

Furthermore, all books written by authors residing in Whatcom County or who have lived a substantial part of their lives in Whatcom County will be purchased for the Local History Collection and will be designated as such with a subject heading in the Library's catalog. Acknowledging that Bellingham is a college community, the exception to this policy includes textbooks and scholarly works produced for an academic audience.

Single copies will be processed for the Local History Reference only collection, whereas any additional copy will be processed for the Local History circulating collection. If the publication is not on a local subject, however, duplicates will be cataloged in the regular circulating collection.

Weeding will be limited to duplicate copies of items no longer of significant public interest, or it will consist of the process of transferring items to the Closed Stacks Local History Reference Collection when there is an issue of limited space.

NON-BOOK MATERIALS: The library recognizes the importance of non-book materials as sources of information, education, recreation and the creative use of leisure time.

Compact Disks and Cassette Tapes representing classical, semi-classical, jazz, rock and related fields of music, as well as such non-musical recordings as poetry, plays, current books, and speeches, are provided. Since a complete collection can not be attempted, emphasis is placed on standard works, popular demand items, and on those giving evidence of lasting interest and appeal. Technical quality and general availability of an item are also considered. No attempt is made to provide various performances of a single work. Additional non-book materials may be supplied upon demand and within budget and space limitations.

Gifts are accepted if the recordings offered are suitable for the collection. (Last two paragraphs adopted by the Board of Library Trustees - January 10, 1969)

(Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees - December 5, 1967)

VIDEO TAPES: The library will collect educational, informational, cultural and documentary material on VHS video tape and will focus the collection on those topics which are well suited to a visual presentation and which are in demand by library users.

1. Topics which lend themselves to visual presentation include:

Sports
Travel
Dance
Cooking
Drama
Speeches
and
Arts and Crafts
Opera
Performances
Exercise
Instructional
Adaptations of Children's Literature
Folktales

2. No feature films or cartoons will be purchased by the Adult Department. The Children's Department will purchase feature films and animated films as they fit within the above guidelines.

(Adopted January 19, 1988)

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BOOK SELECTION

From time to time interested library users ask questions about the purchase and handling of particular kinds of materials. The following are guidelines which the professional staff use in carrying out the official policy of the library in their selection of materials for adult use. The general objectives of the Bellingham Public Library and specific criteria for book selection may be found in the Library's Book Selection Policy.

1. As far as practicable, all major points of view concerning the problems of our times should be represented in the collection.
2. Many books are controversial and any given item may offend some patrons. Selection will be made not on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but rather to build the collection and to serve the needs and interests of the readers.
3. Staff members selecting books will not be expected to mark them to show approval or disapproval of their content. The Librarian may decide that irreplaceable or very valuable items may be sequestered to provide a closer degree of supervision of use to protect from theft or injury. All items will be available for use by all library patrons.
4. Selection will not be controlled by the fear that books will come into the possession of children. The Library Board feels that responsibility for the reading of children rests with the parent or legal guardian.
5. The amount of material acquired on any one subject will be governed by consideration of the duplication of content in materials already held and by the need to use available money and space to best serve the very wide range of users.

6. The purposes and resources of academic and special libraries in the Bellingham area will be recognized and the library will not needlessly duplicate functions and materials.
7. In general, textbooks and certain other curriculum-related materials will be acquired only when such materials are also of value to the general public.
8. Legal and medical works will be acquired only to the extent that they will be useful to the layman.
9. Since the public served covers a wide range of ages, education and reading skill, materials of varying difficulty will be provided.
10. A concerted effort will be made to serve the special, commercial, industrial, cultural and civic needs and enterprises of the community.
11. Special attention will be given to the work of local authors and to local and state history within the context of the Library's selection policy.
12. Library materials will be purchased only after citation in an authoritative review or reviews in sources generally accepted in the library profession, or upon examination by library professional staff.

Adopted February 4, 1969, as a supplement to Book Selection Policy

WITHDRAWALS AND REPLACEMENTS

Library materials will be considered for withdrawal because of poor physical condition, dated contents, duplication in the collection or lack of use. Librarians responsible for selection in an area of the collection are also responsible for weeding within that area, both at the Main Library and at the Fairhaven Branch Library.

Items selected for withdrawal are given a "withdrawal slip" and are transferred to the Catalog Department for deprocessing. Withdrawn library materials in good physical condition and of resale value are then transferred to the Friends of the Library office for eventual sale at a Friends of the Library book sale. Library materials are never donated or sold to individuals, but must be sold at a public sale or auction. All proceeds from the sale of library materials are used to benefit the library.

Library materials which are lost by borrowers or are missing in inventory are withdrawn from the collection by the Catalog Department.

All last-copy-withdrawals are considered for replacement by the librarian responsible for selection in that collection area. The criteria used for determining the replacement of a withdrawn item are the same as those

used for the selection of new material.

Statistics on the number of items withdrawn from the collection are kept by the Catalog Department and are reported to the Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting.

In general, last copies are kept at the Main Library. Branches may discard more freely and transfer to Main last copies of permanent value but no longer in active use.