LIVERMORE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

I. Authority

Final authority for the determination of policy in the selection and acquisition of materials is vested in the City Council as advised by the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Board adopts as part of this policy the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and its numerous interpretations, the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers Freedom to Read Statement and the American Film and Video Association Freedom to View Statement.

II. Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director of Library Services who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Director of Library Services may delegate, to such library staff as are qualified, responsibility to interpret and guide the application of this policy in making day to day selections.

III. Purpose

The Livermore Public Library provides materials and services of popular interest to the community, emphasizing and encouraging reading by children, supplementing the educational needs of the community and furnishing timely, accurate information. Materials selection at the Livermore Public Library seeks to provide balanced collections of library materials reflecting community demand and use in a variety of formats. The purpose of the materials selection policy of the Livermore Public Library is to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. The Library shall assemble, organize for use and preserve such books and other media as will be useful to the citizens of Livermore. The Library selects, makes available and promotes the use of library materials, whatever the format, which reflect a variety of opinions (minority and majority) on any subject, support business, cultural, recreational and civic activities in the community, stimulate self-understanding and growth, enhance job-related knowledge and skills and increase knowledge of and participation in the affairs of the community, the country and the world.

IV. Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by the flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens of Livermore. Involved in the choice of materials are the experience and knowledge of those selecting books and audio-visual materials, their knowledge of the community (its needs, demands and other library resources), the existing collection and the library budget. The overall value of the material is the chief criterion of selection. Material is judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not by a part taken out of context. A work will not be excluded from the library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

Each acquisition, whether purchased or donated, is considered in the light of the prioritization set by the overall program of service of the library. It is neither practical nor possible to select for all possible patron needs. The Library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given book equivalent to endorsement of the view point of the author expressed therein.

A. General Criteria

1. Contemporary significance
2. Popular demand
3. Permanent or timely value
4. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
5. Insight into human and social conditions
6. Accuracy and authoritativeness
7. Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
8. Relation to existing collection
9. Availability of material elsewhere in the community and through interlibrary loan
10. Clarity and logic; comprehensiveness and depth of presentation
11. Price, format, suitability of physical form for library use

An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable. When judging the desirability of materials, any combination of standards may be used.

Books on any subject, if published by reputable publishers and sold without restriction in bookstores, are properly admitted to the public library.

B. Specific Criteria

1. Book Selection

(a) Adult

Points considered in adult book selection are informational, recreational, literary and educational value; authority and effectiveness of presentation; qualities conducive to critical thought and understanding; and available funds and space. Contemporary and popular authors are included as well as those who have demonstrated enduring worth. Titles are selected on the basis of the content as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author. Materials will be chosen according to the various interests, backgrounds, abilities and levels of education identifiable in the community. The young adult is considered as part of this primary used population and materials produced for this group will be considered proportionately in the overall selection process.

(1) Nonfiction

The most useful and basic materials in all subjects of established or realistically anticipated demand shall be provided. Emphasis in all cases will be on current and popular treatment of subjects, with a view to maintaining a lively and active collection. The collection should include materials which reflect the fullest spectrum on controversial issues. General treatment will be preferred unless there is an identified need for specific treatment of a topic. Heavy, permanent subject concentrations will not be built, but particular subjects may be emphasized as programs adapt to changing community interests.

(2) Fiction

The fiction will include historical and regional novels, character studies, biographical novels, psychological novels, satire, fantasy humor, romances, science fiction, mysteries, adventures stories, westerns and short stories. A basic collection of classics and semi-classics of world literature will be maintained. Each novel will be judged on its own merits. Characterization and language will be evaluated in relation to the work as a whole and will not be judged out of context. Preferred fiction will be competently written, have constructive and plausible characterizations and give an honest portrayal of the human experience with which it deals.

Experimental novels, while often controversial, may be considered as they reflect new trends and styles of expression. Novels in foreign language will be acquired according to demand.

(b) Youth

The basic policy of book selection for young people is to choose the best new books and replace and duplicate the older titles which have proved their worth. The selection includes books for recreational reading, books of lasting value, and books of information covering a wide range of knowledge that will satisfy the young person's natural curiosity and widen his interests.

Each book is judged on its own merits; it is considered also in relation to the collection as a whole and in relation to the youth for whom it is intended. Titles are selected on the basis of the content of the book without regard to the personal history of the author. Criteria for book selection include literacy and artistic worth, suitability of content and vocabulary to the age of the readers. Fiction books should portray life in a believable manner and emphasize positive attitudes. Books which fill an emotional need or which serve as a stepping stone to better reading may be selected even though they may not be of the highest literary quality. Illustrations should be clear, imaginative and artistic and should compliment the text.

Responsibility for the reading of children and adolescents rest with their parents or legal guardians.

(c) Textbooks

The Library does not purchase textbooks per se. The Library purchases textbooks only if the book is of value because of its content, its need in the book collection and the permanent demand by the general public. The Library is not responsible for buying a volume purely because it is a textbook for a class offered in the community.

(d) School Services

The public library's books are selected to provide education and information services to the total community. The Library cannot accept the responsibility of duplicating the same book in sufficient quantity to serve a total class. Rather, the Library will try to fill these requests through the use of resources on hand. Likewise, the Library assumes no responsibility to provide the same information in different forms-books, periodicals, newspapers (clippings), encyclopedias.

2. Other Media Selection

(a) Newspapers

The Library purchases the following types of newspapers within the limits of budget and space:

(1) major local newspapers in the Valley; complete holdings will be maintained

(2) several significant representative Bay Area and national newspapers; these will be selected based upon their reference value, their reflection of regional opinion in local and national issues, and their stature in the national scene

A list of holdings is maintained.

(b) Periodicals and Continuations

Periodicals are of ever-increasing importance by those who need to be informed of current thought before such material is available in book form. Periodicals are acquired by subscription and gift and those with future reference value are stored in a variety of formats, such as microforms.

In general, the selection policies for periodicals parallel those for books. The purpose of the selection process is to obtain periodicals which are important to the accomplishment of reference and research work in various subject areas, as well as to provide general and popular reading.

Criteria for periodical selection are accuracy and objectivity, availability of content through indexes, usefulness in reference work to supplement book collection and subject matter of local interest. Other factors include the periodical's reputation, adequacy of coverage in its subject area, public demand, format and price. Various groups and their interests are considered and a balance of viewpoints on controversial issues is sought.

A list of holdings is maintained.

(c) Non-Book Materials

In general, the selection policies for non-book materials parallel those for books.

(1) Sound Recordings

A balanced selection of quality recordings in a variety of formats including but not limited to compact disc and cassette tapes will be provided. Orchestral, choral, vocal, operatic, chamber and instrumental music as well as folk music and jazz, musical comedy, current popular music, prose, poetry, drama, recorded books both fiction and non-fiction and documentary recordings will be available. The selection of all recordings will be based on the opinions of those knowledgeable in each field and the evaluations given by recognized reviewing services and by popular demand. Spoken recordings are selected by the same criteria applied to printed materials.

(2) Visual Recordings

Videotape and videodisc is an increasingly important tool for information delivery. The visual recording collection will consist of a representative sampling of quality visual recordings including but not limited to education, travel, entertainment, children's drama and literary visual recordings as well as visual recordings representing exceptional state of the art film and sound techniques. Visual recordings are selected by the same general criteria as outlined in this policy.

(3) Electronic Media

Electronic resources are an increasingly essential format of information delivery. These include but are not limited to electronic indexes, electronic encyclopedias and other electronic databases. In addition to criteria used for book selection, such factors as ease of patron use, currency of information, cost and physical requirements of necessary equipment will be considered. Personal computer software acquired to support library operations and the personal endeavors of patrons in such areas as literacy training, resume preparation, etc. will be considered for ease of patron use and economical multi-purpose functioning.

(d) Paperbacks and Non-Bound Materials

In general, the selection policies for paperbacks and non-bound materials parallel those for books. Paperbacks are bought and catalogued if there is no hardback edition available, if it is an original title appearing only in this form, or if it is a title that has only occasional or temporary interest. Paperbacks may also be used to create multiple copies of titles to meet demand for best sellers and classic titles.

3. Other Considerations

(a) Labeling

The Library will not indicate, through the use of labels or other devices, particular philosophies outlined in a book. To do so is to establish in a reader's mind a judgement before the reader has had the opportunity to examine the book personally.

(b) Rentals

The Library strives to make available currently popular adult fiction and non-fiction as rapidly a possible. This is sometimes done by the rental of books from companies specializing in this service. These collections are supplemented monthly with newly published materials. As demand for the title decreases, the books are returned to the company.

(c) Other Sources of Information

As new forms of information delivery are developed, they will be apprised by the Library for possible use, and if their value appears appropriate and useful to the purposes of the Library, the new forms will be incorporated in the selection of library materials.

(d) Patron Recommendation

Patrons are encouraged to recommend library materials for inclusion in the Library's collection. All requests from patrons for specific titles or subjects will be considered by the criteria set forth in this policy.

4. Withdrawing Materials

(a) Definition

Weeding is the systematic removal from the collection of materials no longer useful.

(b) Purpose

Weeding is necessary to maintain the purpose and quality of the resources and to properly utilize the limited space available. This process is an integral part of collection development and maintenance. Unnecessary items remaining in a collection can weaken a library; outdated materials, discredited materials and items no longer of interest should be considered for withdrawal from circulation.

Most libraries have limited space. Every book on library shelves has a storage cost; and unless the budget is unlimited or the library is striving to maintain a definitive collection, the cost of retaining an item must not exceed its usefulness.

(c) Criteria for Weeding (the following is by no means exhaustive)

In general, the same criteria apply to weeding as are used in the selection of new materials.

(1) Last Date of Circulation

If materials have not been used for three years, and have no other redeeming qualities, they should be weeded.

(2) Physical Condition

If the materials cannot be economically mended or rebound or pages of books have begun to deteriorate, the item should be weeded.

(3) Timeliness

---out-of-date materials
---materials no longer in demand
---older editions no longer used

(4) Reliability

Materials with viewpoints that have changed or are no longer reliable and there is no historical significance in retention.

(5) Duplicates

Multiple copies should be kept to a minimum but materials should be in sufficient supply to make the Library a dependable source for most of the people most of the time.

(6) Space

Diminishing shelf space may dictate the necessity to limit the numbers of books on any given subject. Withdrawals of duplicated information may be necessary.

(7) Authority

Interpretation and implementation of the criteria for weeding shall be at the judgement of the Director of Library Services and/or whomever the Director designates.

(8) All weeded materials, rather than being discarded, shall be given to the Friends of the Livermore Library for recycling in the Friends' Corner, the book sale or any other means, in keeping with their organizational goals.

5. Reconsideration of Materials

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for him/herself and for his/her children, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

All requests for reconsideration of materials will be handled in the following manner:

(a) The staff member receiving the request will ask the patron to fill out a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. Such requests involving adult materials will be directed to the Coordinator of Information Services and requests concerning children's materials will be directed to the Youth Services Librarian.

(b) If published reviews of the materials in question are available, these will be sent along with the request to the Director of Library Services.

(c) The Director will ask three staff members to evaluate the material in light of the patron's request, using published reviews and the foregoing policy and criteria. Evaluators will submit their recommendation to the Director, who will make a decision concerning the material.

(d) The Director will notify the patron originating the Reconsideration Request in writing of the decision. If an individual is not satisfied with the action taken, he/she may appeal to the Library Board by contacting the Library Director and asking for the item to be placed on an upcoming Library Board meeting agenda.

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