

## Materials Selection Policy



The Troy Public Library is an association library which directly serves the residents of the city of Troy and Rensselaer County. The selection of library material must take into account the diversity of the populations served. The Troy Public Library has a long and honored tradition of opening its doors to people from all walks of life and serving with equal enthusiasm the professional as well as the reluctant reader. At the same time, the selection of material should not be undertaken as if the Troy Public Library were an isolated unit. We are located in an area with four large public libraries, several excellent academic libraries, and the New York State Library. Selection of materials will be done with an awareness of the resources of these area libraries in order to avoid the needless duplication of collections.

The overriding goal of the library is to provide and maintain a significant collection of print and non-print materials for the continuing educational growth and recreational needs of the people of our service area.

The ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the director of the library, who operates within the framework of the policies set by the Board of Trustees. Because of this direct responsibility to the board, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff. The director shall be responsible for distributing available funds at the beginning of the fiscal year so that all areas and divisions of the collection receive a proportion of the total materials budget.

The day to day responsibility for material selection is coordinated by the collection management librarian who shares selection duties with department heads. Individual staff members with special competence are given responsibility for selection in particular subject fields. Advice of specialists in the local area may be requested in fields where staff members lack expertise. Suggestions from readers are welcome and are given serious consideration. All requests for purchase forms will be routed through the collection management librarian who will process all requests and generate purchase orders for all library materials.

Responsibility for the reading of children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents. No book or other item is sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the Troy Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of this policy.

### **Gifts**

Gift materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be added to the collection, sold, exchanged, given to other libraries or discarded. Gift items will be acknowledged and may be designated by a bookplate. The library does not provide appraisals for books and other materials donated for its collections, but can provide a receipt stating the number of books donated and a brief description of their condition.

### **Discarding**

The discarding of library material is selection in reverse and is an integral part of collection maintenance. Library material is discarded when the subject matter is out of date, when demand has significantly decreased or when the material is physically worn out. The collection management librarian will coordinate all deaccession activity.

### **Reconsideration**

The Troy Public Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial and that some members of the community

may be offended by some of the material selected for the collection. The following procedure will be used by individuals or groups wishing to lodge a complaint concerning material held in the library collection.

The individual or group wishing to protest the presence of an item in the collection will first fill out a request for reconsideration form and return it to a librarian on duty. After checking for completeness, the form will be forwarded to the Executive Director. The Director will then take the form to a book selection committee for reconsideration. The recommendations of the book selection committee will be sent in writing to the party who initiated the complaint. If the individual or group wishes to pursue their complaint further they must contact the Executive Director in writing of their dissatisfaction with the decision of the book selection committee. The Director will then present the complaint, along with the recommendation of the book selection committee, professional reviews of material in question, and the original request for scheduled meeting. The complainant may appear before the board if desired. No items shall be removed from the library collection without a court order if the Director and Board of Trustees deem it appropriate for the collection.

### **Criteria of Evaluation**

The librarian utilizes professional judgment and expertise, based on an understanding of community needs and the knowledge of authors and publishers, in the process of selecting materials, and is aided by reviews found in professional, literary, specialized and general periodicals in addition to standard lists of basic works. The following are generally recognized professional guides to selection for fiction and non-fiction but selection will not be limited to these: *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, *Horn Book Magazine*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, *Public Library Catalog*, *Fiction Catalog*, and *Children's Catalog*. Materials are judged on total effect rather than specific words, passages or scenes which in themselves may be offensive to some people.

### **Adult – Fiction**

The Troy Public Library has an established position as a primary source for "literature" and through careful selection and weeding, it should continue to cultivate this reputation. The adult fiction collection is a definite strength of the library and is a major source of established American and European authors for the out-of-school adult reader. We will buy more comprehensively among prize winners, locally related books, important American authors, standard classics of other countries, fiction by notable New York authors, and works on standard "best" lists. In addition, we will collect representative samples of most types of literary innovations as well as samples of fiction in translation and regional or ethnic authors. *Fiction Catalog*, *Short Story Index*, and specific bibliographies are used for selecting initial core collections and replacements.

Beyond the basic core collection, the fiction collection should also reflect local reading interest. We do purchase "light" fiction including romances, westerns, science fiction and fantasy and we do at times purchase multiple copies of "best sellers". Request for purchase slips and reserve cards will be used to gauge popular demand for individual titles along with reviews and advance notices from publishers.

The library will attempt to acquire that which is well written and to exclude that which is incompetent, solely sensational, morbid or erotic.

### **Adult – Non Fiction**

The goal of adult non-fiction material selection is to provide introductory material to all fields of knowledge at many levels and in many formats and to provide more in-depth material in non-academic fields where information would not be readily available in area college libraries. Examples of the latter include: gardening, child raising, secretarial skills, photography, CPR, self-improvement, automotive repair, and career development. Staff members will be assigned specific areas of the collection and will be responsible for both selecting new material and for weeding dated material from their subject area. Additional areas of strength in the circulating non-fiction collection include biography, U.S. History, Travel and geography, sports and recreation, and literature.

Non-fiction materials are selected on the basis of accuracy of information presented, quality of writing, cost, format, extent to which the subject matter is already represented in the library collection, readability and literary style, suitability of material to the community, timeliness and/or permanent value.

## **Young People's Collections**

### **Picture Books**

In acknowledgement of the fact that children who are exposed to books at an early age are better readers than those who are not, the Troy Public Library collects picture books, easy readers and sturdy board books for our youngest patrons. We collect many newly published titles as well as duplicates of classics, putting emphasis on materials appropriate for group sharing and on seasonal stories. We select titles in heavy demand such as those recommended on school reading lists and well-received books made popular through media tie-ins. All Caldecott Medal winning titles are purchased. We exclude most books whose format ensures a short shelf life like pop-ups, spiral bound books and other fragile hardcovers.

### **Juvenile Fiction**

This collection includes materials for second to third grade reading level through junior high. Emphasis is placed on works by critically acclaimed and popular authors along with books whose special qualities make them valuable to children with special needs, talents, problems, or interests. Newberry Medal winning titles are purchased as are frequently requested titles.

### **Young People**

Young people (grades 7 through 12, approximately) will be served from the general collection but will also have access to materials specially selected to meet the informational and emotional concerns of this age group. The Young Adult collection will be fluid, flexible, current and attractive, containing materials which are in demand and of special quality which will help young adults understand themselves and others, broaden their viewpoints and knowledge of the world, stimulate their curiosity, and expand both their reading ability and reading enjoyment. Emphasis will be on popular browsing materials, primarily paperbacks and periodicals, rather than on school related materials.

## **Non-Print Materials**

### **Audio-Recordings**

The Troy Public Library's collection of audio cassette tapes/CD's includes books on tape, mostly in abbreviated form, classical music, rock music, folk music, opera and popular music of the twentieth century. The library will continue to collect material in this format using professional review sources to evaluate new material. The Young People's Department has a collection of recordings appealing to children which includes fairy tales, folk tales, picture books, children's poetry, folk songs, read-along sets, etc.

### **Video-Recordings**

The library maintains a collection of video-recordings in VHS/DVD format for general circulation. Emphasis is placed on subjects of user interest. The collection includes feature length films, documentaries, nature films, travelogues, instructional films, films of live performances, films of local interest, and children's subjects. The library will continue to collect material in this format using professional review sources to evaluate new material. Video tapes/DVDs are selected for recreational value, artistic and technical qualities, quality of content, and representation of current trends and technique.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

Newspapers will be purchased to provide current local, national, and international news, to satisfy reference and recreational needs, and to provide a unique source for local history information. Periodicals will be purchased to supplement the book collection, recreational reading, and to serve as book selection aids and professional reading.

**Pamphlets/Pictures**

Pamphlet and picture material consists of inexpensive, ephemeral and timely publications. These are used to supplement the book collection. Selection is based on the need for subject matter, the authority of the author or publisher, and the timeliness of material.

**Maps**

The library maintains a collection of maps to supplement information found in atlas form. Particular attention is given to local, regional and New York State maps with secondary consideration given to national and international flat maps.

**Microforms**

For economy of storage and for durability, microforms will be purchased for back files of heavily used periodicals and newspapers. When purchasing retrospective microforms, oldest backdated periodicals will be purchased first.

**Paperbacks**

Paperback books are ordered and processed for the collection in the same manner as hard cover books. When fully processed and bar-coded, paperbacks are considered part of the permanent library collection.

**Reference Collection**

The reference collection is a non-circulating collection of materials designed to satisfy the research and reference needs of adults, young adults, and children with a wide variety of interests and educational backgrounds. The main collection of reference material is housed at the main library. Primary responsibility for selection of reference material rests with the head of the reference department who will in turn assign specific areas for development to department members. Department members will be responsible for evaluating weakness and development of assigned areas using professional review sources to evaluate new material. Order forms will be returned to the head of the reference department who will review all requests before submitting the orders to the head of collection management. Periodically, the head of reference will evaluate the development of the areas and the entire collection. Area assignments and the emphasis may be changed as needed.

**Government Documents**

The library has been a government depository since 1869 and receives selected depository items automatically. A portion of the collection is housed in the reference department of the main library and a portion is housed at the R.P.I. Library. The Troy Public Library remains the depository of record. The library is also a limited state depository and receives some state documents automatically. All government documents are available to the public regardless of their location. The selections of government documents are reviewed periodically and additions and deletions are made as necessary.

**Troy Room**

The Troy Room, the library's local history/genealogy collection, has been rated as superior to any other collection of its kind in the Capital District. The purpose of this rich resource is to provide the community and scholars with a comprehensive collection of materials which document the history, people and culture of Troy, Rensselaer County and the Riverspark region. The library will acquire, through donation and purchase, such materials as books, manuscripts, ephemera, maps and photographs which meet the aims of the collection.

**Review**

This materials selection policy should be reviewed regularly to ensure that changes in goals and objectives, needs of patrons and potential patrons, priorities, and budgetary conditions are adequately reflected in it.