

MATERIALS SELECTION and USAGE POLICY

1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COLLECTION:

Final authority for the approval of the policies in this document is vested in the Library's Board of Trustees. They have delegated the responsibility for implementing this policy to the Library Director. The Library Director may delegate to specific staff members the responsibility for selection of materials in special areas, but recommendations of these staff members are always subject to review by the Director.

It is the function of librarians to select and to withdraw library materials, and to advise on their use. The collection is developed within limitations of space and budget. Recognizing that sensitivity to the needs and interests of the community is essential to the development of library collections, the Woods Memorial Library welcomes advice and suggestions from patrons, trustees and authorities in various fields. Librarians, however, are responsible for judging the needs of their collection and their community, and they will make the final choices.

2. THE SCOPE OF THE COLLECTION:

The Woods Memorial Library is an online affiliate member of the Central and Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/W MARS), a network of over one hundred public, academic and special libraries in central and western Massachusetts. Barre's participation in these networks provides our residents access to the collections of other participating libraries on a reciprocating basis, as long as state certification is met. Every effort is made to locate and borrow from other libraries through *C/W MARS* or the regional interlibrary loan network those specialized materials that are beyond the scope of the Woods Memorial Library's collections.

The Woods Memorial Library seeks to provide a broad range of materials to meet the varied needs of its patrons. Library materials and services will routinely support more than one library goal. To meet the informational needs of users, the library continually updates materials in the areas of business, law, government, history, medicine, health, technology, science and current events. To fill the need for information about popular culture and social trends the library buys popular non-fiction, general mass circulation periodicals, fiction, musical recordings on compact disc, DVDs, and a variety of museum passes.

Local history and genealogical materials relating to Barre and the surrounding area are particularly sought for the Local History Collection. Histories, local newspapers, vital records, town reports, books by local authors, and books about this area are all collected. *The Barre Gazette* and *The Barre Patriot* are bound and held at the expense of the Barre Library Association for permanent preservation and research. Some bound editions may not be available to the public due to the deterioration of the edition; the viewing of any historical material is under the discretion of the Library Director. Photocopies of the newspapers are not allowed.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION:

The non-fiction collections at the Woods Memorial Library are organized by the Dewey Decimal System. The fiction and biography collections are arranged alphabetically by author and subject respectively. Audio-visual collections are arranged alphabetically by title or a specified order adapted from the Dewey Decimal System.

4. SELECTION CRITERIA:

The Library shall attempt to recognize patron demand (direct requests and proven popularity of similar material types and genres) in the selection of materials and will seek out materials that are pertinent and timely. A high priority shall be given to materials that have current significance, and special effort shall be made to obtain materials representing all sides of controversial issues. Because of limited resources, the relevance of the material to our collection is especially considered. Material that receives positive reviews may not be purchased if it duplicates material already owned. Materials that are too technical or so limited in scope so as to appeal to only a few of our patrons shall be passed over.

Librarians will choose between media formats taking into account such considerations as anticipated shelf life or long-term appeal, anticipated public demand, timeliness of the content, and the necessity of multiple copies.

The acquisition of library materials is generally made by library staff based on the following but not limited to:

- Library's mission statement and its accepted goals and priorities. Staff judgment and expertise.
- Published reviews from general mass-audience periodicals and from specialized library review sources.
- Recommendations from library users and general public.
- Local relevance.
- Use analysis of specific titles, authors and subject areas.
- Availability at other libraries, most notably those in C/W MARS.
- Availability in alternative formats, including on- line access, CD ROM or other electronic storage, cassette and compact disc recordings, video cassette and DVD recordings.
- Availability of similar material already in the collection.
- Cost/benefit analysis.

5. COLLECTION TYPES:

5.1. Adult Non-Fiction: its principle role is to ensure the availability of information and materials for independent and self directed learning. Library staff shall consider appropriateness to the level of user, and potential usefulness to the library's collection in the selection of non- fiction materials. Staff members will look to see that authors present material accurately, fairly, clearly, and in a readable manner, however special consideration is given to those books which deal with topics about which very little else is available.

5.2. Adult Fiction: The Library attempts to purchase a wide variety of fiction to satisfy the needs of all our borrowers. As some of the language and incidents in contemporary novels will offend some tastes, individual borrowers will need to be selective when choosing materials. Library staff choose titles on the basis of reviews that consider, among other things, the appeal of a book for a specific audience, the artistic skill evident in its rendering, and the literary reputation of the author.

5.4. Large Print Collection: Supporting the library's role of providing popular materials for the community, the Woods Memorial Library maintains a collection of large print books targeted to senior citizens and in general those with visual problems. The large print consists of a variety of popular, best-seller, mystery/espionage, and romance fiction, and some general non-fiction.

5.5. Mass Market Paperbacks: Paperbacks selected serve three main purposes. They must meet the demand for popular, easily portable, inexpensive reading materials. They may duplicate copies of popular hardcover titles to meet heavy demand, and may also duplicate copies of titles on school reading lists purchased to make them readily available as they are needed. Specific titles are not always sought, and books are frequently weeded. These considerations result in a paperback collection that is constantly changing and useful mainly for browsing.

5.6. Young Adult Materials: The Young Adult Department, a subsidiary of the Children's Library, has a collection targeted to the informational and recreational reading needs of young people between the ages of twelve to eighteen, typically students from grade six through twelve. The main purpose of this collection is to serve the educational, developmental and recreational needs of this population while serving as a stepping stone from the Children's Library to the adult collections. The bulk of the collection consists of hardcover and paperback fiction and non-fiction that have been chosen based on the above selection criteria. A large percentage of the material for school-related demands and other informational needs may be found in the regular adult and children's collections.

Some items may be included that are not considered appropriate by all adults for all young adults. While some materials may be too mature for one, other individuals may be ready for them. Only the individual and his or her parents can decide what materials shall be used, and neither the Library staff nor other Library users shall make these decisions for other people.

5.7. Children's Materials: The Children's collection is targeted to pre-schoolers through sixth grade and meets similar criteria as stated in section four. Special effort is made to continually update the collection and to weed worn and outdated materials. Duplicates of popular juvenile fiction, easy readers, and picture books are planned as part of our collection development. Selections are also based on literary quality, good design and format, and illustrations as are accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness for the intended audience. Books should exhibit non-stereotypical attitudes, although new editions of classics and some titles which reflect the beliefs of other times or other cultures may be acceptable. Classroom textbooks are not considered appropriate for the collection and are not generally purchased. The Library does attempt to provide supplementary materials to enrich the resources available to students and teachers.

The Children's collection strives to provide children with the library materials necessary to aid their personal and educational development. Some items may be included that are not considered appropriate by all adults for all children. While some materials may be too mature for one child, other children may be ready for them. Only the child and his or her parents can decide what materials shall be used by that child, and neither the Library staff nor other Library users shall make these decisions for other people's children.

5.8. Periodicals: Recognizing the need to provide timely information on a wide variety of subject areas requires the library to offer an extensive collection of magazines for the Adult, Young Adult and Children's areas.

The library subscribes to several daily and weekly newspapers. Current copies are browse able by the public, and back issues are kept on file for a short time until content is available to view online. Two copies of the Barre Gazette are bought and one copy is permanently kept on file to be bound for the historical collection. Newspaper subscriptions are chosen in accordance with relevant criteria outlined in the selection criteria section above.

5.9. Audio-Visual Materials: The Library purchases audio-visual materials targeted to all age groups as part of its collection development. The circulating collections contain general interest VHS and DVD titles of both a recreational and informational nature. Selections of adult feature length DVD's concentrate on classic films, foreign films, documentaries and some current popular materials. In addition to widely promoted mass market productions, selections of children's DVD's concentrate on productions of children's books made into video and titles which also focus on lesser known works that stimulate the imagination and enhance learning. At this point the library holds VHS collections but rarely buys any new tapes due to the decline. When circulation statistics dramatically decrease the VHS collections will be eliminated.

5.10. Music CDs: The Library purchases music CDs targeted to all age groups as part of its collection development. In addition to popular artists in the adult collection the library maintains a diverse selection of music including classical, jazz, folk, ethnic and emerging artists. Children's CDs are largely chosen based on educational concepts and popular groups.

5.11. Computer Software: computers are available at the library for public use in both the first floor and the Children's Library. Non-circulating software provided for all focuses on standard office applications of word processing, spreadsheet, database management and desktop publishing. The Children's Library computer focuses on software of an educational nature. The library does not acquire software for use in the library whose primary purpose is recreation.

5.12. Local History Department: Because of the very specialized nature of this collection, it is dealt with separately in the LOCAL HISTORY DEPARTMENT: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT.

6. REQUESTS FOR PURCHASE:

The Library welcomes requests for purchase of materials, however, it is to be understood that such requests will be subject to the same criteria for selection as other considered materials.

7. WITHDRAWAL OF MATERIALS:

Selection of materials for the Library collection is an ongoing process which includes the removal of materials no longer appropriate, and the replacement of lost or worn materials that are still of value for informational or recreational needs. Materials are regularly discarded from the library collections because they are out of date, so badly worn or damaged they cannot be rebound or mended, because it is cheaper to replace them, or because they are once-popular

materials that are no longer used. Space, the cost of replacement, and the appearance of the collection are also factors in these decisions.

8. GIFTS:

Gifts of books and other materials in good condition are welcomed by the library, however, material is accepted with the understanding that they may be used or disposed of as the library sees fit. Donated material will be checked to see if it meets the Library's criteria for selection and if it helps maintain the Library's need for balance on matters of opinion. The Library can utilize only a small proportion of such material. The Library cannot make cash assessments of donations, nor does it assume the responsibility of returning any items to donors not added to the Library collection. Acknowledgement receipts are available for the donor to fill out himself for tax purposes. Items may be placed in the book sale.

9. FREEDOM TO READ, SEE AND HEAR:

9.1. Overview: The Woods Memorial Library subscribes to the principles of intellectual freedom as stated in Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, and the Library Bill of Rights (appended) and their interpretations issued by the American Library Association. Included in these statements is the commitment to honor the rights of an individual to use the Library regardless of age, race, religion, national origin, or social or political views. Accordingly, library staff provides equal service to all library users. Children and adults are equally free to use the entire Library and to borrow all materials in the circulating collections. Limitations to be placed upon the reading and viewing materials of young people are left to the discretion of the parents.

Well intentioned persons or groups occasionally question the inclusion of items in library collections. Although we understand and appreciate their fears and doubts about the effects of materials on impressionable persons, the Board takes the position that the risk of not providing access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it. Sometimes suggestions are made regarding the restriction or removal of certain library materials, and the Board, therefore, wishes to establish the following principles:

9.2. Controversial Materials: In an effort to provide Library patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas and viewpoints, the Library will acquire some controversial materials. Some of these materials may be offensive to individuals or groups because of perceived profanity, social, economic and political ideas, religious viewpoints, the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, illustrations, or other reasons. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents. Indeed, it cannot, since such a variety of ideas is collected. The Board believes it is essential to provide such materials if the American ideal of freedom is to be retained.

9.3. Age: Judges, legislators, educators, and others are giving increased recognition to the fact that young people need access to all the information and ideas that are essential to their growth. Therefore, anyone, of any age, who is eligible for a Library card may use any materials in the Library, and is not to have that privilege limited by any staff member. If parents wish to deny their children access to certain materials they must take the responsibility themselves.

9.4. Labeling: It is sometimes suggested that a descriptive label be affixed to library materials indicating a political or social point of view or indicating that such an item is questionable or controversial. Such labeling suggests that Americans are incapable of making up their own minds about controversial subjects, and this practice is contrary to the American idea of the free marketplace of ideas. The Woods Memorial Library does not subscribe to this practice, which is not to be confused with the routine genre labeling (i.e. mystery, romance western, etc.) of library materials which makes no attempt to prejudice the attitude of potential readers about the work in question.

9.5. Special Collections: The use of rare, scholarly, and/or fragile items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further action shall be taken to restrict the public's access to the Library's collections.

9.6. Reconsideration: The Library is willing to re-examine its position on any item in the Library's collections. A patron must first complete the Request for the Reconsideration of Library Materials form, which will then be presented to all members of the Board of Library Trustees. The Board will consider the request and vote on the issue at the following meeting. No item is to be removed or restricted because of a complaint except in accordance with this procedure.