

## **Policy for MATERIALS SELECTION**

The Board of Trustees believes that it is essential that the Milton Public Library have an extensive, comprehensive and cosmopolitan book collection which both reflects and fulfills the library needs of the citizens of Milton. Furthermore, the Trustees endorse the fundamental rights protected by the first amendment of the U. S. Constitution and the American Library Association's statement on labeling and the Freedom to Read as well as the Library Bill of Rights.

The Library Director is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the supervision of the professional staff in the selection of books and the development of the collection. In committing this expression of policy to paper, it is not our intention to restrict the director and staff in the selection of books either because of their subject matter or the personal, political or philosophical opinions of their authors. Rather we urge and recommend that the director use his/her best judgment as a professional librarian in making selections.

An ongoing effort shall be made to build and maintain a collection which meets the recreational, informational and educational needs of the townspeople. Objectivity in selection shall be sought, so that the collection reflects the interests of the entire community rather than of only the library staff or single segment of the community. Whenever possible and appropriate, materials on both sides of a controversial or partisan issue shall be included. The Trustees strongly urge the staff to actively seek to identify the special characteristics of the citizens of Milton in order to better serve them with materials that will meet their needs and interests.

In addition to the standard reviewing media that are used in making a selection of materials changing community interests and patron's demands for particular titles and types of materials shall be given substantial weight in the process of material selection. Light fiction and best sellers shall be bought as long as funds allow and shall be kept as long as demand for the title exists.

We realize that because we wish our book selection policy to reflect the diverse interests and points of view of our community that there is the possibility that a book or books in the library collection may be regarded by some as personally unpleasant, offensive or politically repugnant. However, we regard both our and the library's foremost obligation to be the providing of books to the community as a whole, and to do this our collection must represent many different perspectives, even those which may be regarded by some as controversial due to individual political expression or moral implication.

We do not intend this policy statement to be a specific checklist of all selection criteria, but we do believe it would be helpful to explain the broad considerations used in assessing books.

First is the identifiable need for specific titles. This means that certain books upon publication will have an assured popularity with our users or will fill an obvious intellectual, informational or academic need of our patrons such as to warrant immediate selection. The professional librarians of the Milton Public Library by their continued analysis of the circulation records of the material actually borrowed from the library allows them to make such judgments and to make them accurately.

Identifiable need is measured and known not only by study of past library use, but also from constant and current interaction with patrons seeking books for many different purposes including school assignments and entertainment reading.

Second is the individual assessment of a book. Each book is assessed on its own individual merits. Is this book worth the expenditure of limited library funds? Quality, or lack of it, is the primary focus of an individual title assessment.

Quality is defined not merely as literary or scholarly merit but also as high entertainment value. Books that can be expected to be in high demand, to meet the identifiable need, should

be selected even if the individual assessment is low. A poorly written best seller that is heavily borrowed is definitely justifying its purchase.

Both identifiable need and individual assessment are used in responding to a patron request for a title. It is assumed that most titles requested by patrons will have been foreseen as identifiable needs and will already have been ordered by the library. Request titles not purchased by the library are generally those that are requested by a single individual.

The foremost consideration when examining patron requests is if the book has potential interest to more people than the one making the request. No book should be ordered simply because it is requested by one patron. Patron requests should have a potential appeal to the broad community and should be able to meet the criteria of an individual assessment.

Books that have been poorly reviewed and have not been ordered by the librarian should not be purchased until there is a demand for them. A "demand" will be interpreted as meaning that more than four (4) requests are made by individuals not connected by kinship or group affiliation.

All efforts, within general library need and budget restrictions, will be made to provide a useful collection of materials to assist Milton students. But this collection is to be considered complementary to the school collection, not a duplicate of it. Overly specialized studies with narrow appeal should not be considered as necessary to supplement student needs.

The remarks about books in this policy statement will apply equally to any and all other library materials included in the collections of the Milton Public Library.

#### STATEMENT OF WEEDING

Materials which no longer meet the stated objectives of the library will be discarded according to accepted professional standards that would include the consideration of the materials physical condition, relevancy of the information therein contained and to the collection. Furthermore, the non-circulation of an item in the previous three years of a single circulation within the last ten years will be considered the criterion for making weeding decision. The library will be weeded on a continuous basis. Any materials discarded from the collection may be sold by the Friends of the Milton Public Library in their book sales. Or, they may be discarded in a manner similar to gifts to the Library.

#### DONATIONS OF MATERIALS TO THE LIBRARY

Acceptance of gifts (of books and other library materials) will be determined by the librarian on the basis of their suitability to the library's purpose and needs in accordance with the library's materials selection policy. Use or disposal of gift material will be at the discretion of the librarian. These materials may be put up for sale by the Friends of the Milton Public Library, donated to non-profit institutions or discarded in any other manner deemed suitable by the Library.

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