

Collection Development Policy April 2006

Introduction:

The Fond du Lac Public Library serves the community by promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and diversity through customer friendly access to services that inform, entertain, and inspire. The *Strategic Plan* for the library elaborates four service responses adopted to carry out this mission:

- Community Information Center
- Center for Recreation and Culture
- Center for Literacy and Learning
- Local History Center

The library mission and service responses provide a framework for collection development. All decisions made by staff regarding acquisition, marketing, or withdrawal of a particular item or collection are measured according to how that item or collection relates to this framework. Budget and space limitations prevent us from acquiring everything in the universe of published information.

Information comes in a variety of formats. The decision to acquire or keep any particular format will always be weighed against considerations of user preference, ease of access, longevity, and storage. Many items may be acquired in multiple formats in order to reach different target audiences. A particular magazine or newspaper may be simultaneously made available in print, microfilm or online. Books may be acquired in print, audio, and/or electronic versions depending on their popularity and content. How long each is maintained will again relate to user preference and information and/or format longevity.

There are many times when some may consider a book or other item in the library controversial, lacking in fact, unsuitable for a particular audience, or somehow biased. The Fond du Lac Library Board adheres to the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read Statement*, and *Freedom to View Statement*. There may be times that the library acquires or retains books widely believed to be biased or lacking in fact for historical purposes or to allow the public to educate themselves on how others may be thinking. *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler is an example of such a work.

Priorities and Selection Criteria:

The library exists in both the real and virtual worlds. FDLPL will attempt to provide as much information as possible in electronic or digitized versions in order to enable as many users as possible to utilize information from the library at the time and place most convenient to their needs. The importance of maintaining our electronic branch will be reflected in annual budget priorities.

Other priorities include:

- Encouraging family literacy
- Marketing reading as an enjoyable activity
- Encouraging and facilitating literacy and lifelong learning
- Preserving local history

The library does not acquire material for the sole purpose of supporting a particular educational curriculum. The acquisition of research materials are weighed against demand and availability in school libraries and/or one of three post secondary educational libraries in Fond du Lac. The availability of a particular item from another library listed in the shared catalog of the Winnefox Automated Library System (WALS) will effect a decision to acquire or retain many items. FDLPL is connected to libraries throughout the state, nation, and beyond through electronic communications and inter-library loan (ILL) further enhancing the collection beyond what the library might acquire.

User interest is a guiding force of the library collection development plan. Interest may be gauged by:

- Circulation statistics
- Surveys of users and/or potential users
- Direct requests of users
- Direct interaction between users and library staff (staff experience)
- Wear and tear of a particular collection or subject area
- Current events – local, national and international
- Vagaries of popular culture

Beyond user interest, other considerations for selection may include:

- Quality of writing or production as gauged by reviews
- Perceived accuracy
- Relationship to existing collection and other materials on the subject
- Reputation and/or significance of the author, artist, etc.
- Need for variety and balance of viewpoints within the collection
- Contemporary interest or permanent value
- Price and availability

Requests for purchase received from customers for material published within the most recent 12 months will normally be honored. It is likely that if one person is interested in new material others will be as well. This does not apply to most research material or items related to specific educational curricula. Requests for purchase of material outside the 12 month window will normally be interloaned instead, unless current events dictate otherwise.

The library attempts to minimize waiting time on reserve lists through membership in the WALS shared catalog, purchasing for the “lucky day” hold exempt collection, and the

purchase of multiple copies. A rule of thumb is for the library to keep the ratio of holds to copies to 3:1 for books. This is not possible for feature film DVDs. It is recognized that the library will never be able to acquire enough copies of new releases to satisfy demand because of the extreme popularity of DVDs. Unfortunately; customers must turn to commercial sources to satisfy this demand unless they are willing to wait. The library will investigate licensing of downloadable video as an alternative when this becomes available.

Titles in the adult DVD collection of the library are selected to support the informational, instructional, and recreational needs of the community.

Titles selected will be considered in terms of the following criteria:

- Content – present and potential relevance to community needs
- Entertainment value
- Demand in community
- Accuracy and depth of coverage
- Quality of presentation
- Cost of material based on the current budget
- Strengths and weaknesses of the current collection
- Presentation of all sides of controversial issues where possible

Acceptable level of quality will be determined in the following ways:

- Opinion of qualified reviewers in recognized, authoritative review sources
- Recognition by awards
- Longevity of appeal for reissued materials
- Appearance on public television networks

The library recognizes that some DVDs may be regarded by certain individuals or groups as controversial, whether by political expression, frankness of language, or moral implication. Selection will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval by any individual or group in the community but rather on the evaluation of the DVD's literary merit, authenticity, honesty of presentation and topical interest. Materials, however, where appeal of the film is achieved strictly by sensational, erotic or other exploitative means will not be selected.

Collection Maintenance:

The responsibility for collection maintenance – selection and weeding – is delegated by the Director to Librarians and Library Assistants. All staff possessing a Masters Degree in Library Science as well as experienced Library Assistants who regularly work with the public will take part in selection. The Director designates various staff to make purchase decisions for specific areas of the collection based on a *Collection Development Plan*. The *Collection Development Plan* describes broad areas of the collection and provides

specific priorities and guidelines for selectors. It is updated every two years by staff and provided to the Board for review.

Selection tools include professional journals, popular media such as *People*, newsmagazines, and *The New York Times*. Criteria for selection include the likely popularity of an item based on reviews, media blitzes such as author tours or selection by national book clubs, the reputation of the author, and popularity of similar works by other authors. Non-fiction items may also be judged by the popularity of the subject, the relation of a work to the existing collection, and enduring value.

Space limitations prohibit keeping every work of fiction acquired, even for classic authors. The library will attempt to maintain a representative selection of the works of major authors of American literature, as well as some representative works of the various schools and genre's of English and World literature. The fiction collection will be geared toward popular reading and encouraging reading. Collection development cannot be based on the "fervent hope theory" – if you leave a good book on the shelf long enough, someone will read it. Sharing agreements with other libraries allow us to meet customer demand for books that we do not own.

Weeding:

Weeding is an essential part of collection management for several reasons:

- Studies indicate that regular weeding will increase circulation.
- Customers are assured that the information they find on library shelves is as accurate and up to date as possible.
- All libraries, including FDL, have limited shelf space. Weeding is necessary to make sure that the collection size does not exceed the shelving capacity of the building.
- Weeding saves time for customers and staff. It is easier to find material when shelves are less crowded. In some cases regular weeding can help us avoid using the top or bottom shelf which many customers find difficult to view and/or reach.
- Removing worn material makes the collection more appealing.
- Staff involved with weeding gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the collection.
- There are monetary costs associated with keeping an item just as there are in acquiring an item.

The decision to keep or discard an item is as important as the decision to purchase and is given the same consideration. All those who are involved in selection are involved in weeding as well. All areas of the collection will be weeded at least once every two years except as noted below. Weeding at FDLPL will be guided by *The Crew Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding* published by the Texas State Library in 1995, as well as the expanded *Weeding Guidelines by Dewey Class* compiled by the Cuyahoga County Ohio Public Library in 2003. Additional or notable guidelines are as follows:

- One of the key predictors of future circulation is the past circulation of an item. Unless there are other compelling reasons to keep an item, works that have not circulated in the last two years or that have a poor circulation history will be withdrawn.
- Standard works such as *Fiction Catalog* and *Public Library Catalog* may be consulted when deciding whether or not to keep borderline items with low circulation though inclusion in a standard work is usually not in and of itself sufficient reason to retain an item.
- Books that are updated annually such as travel books or various catalogs are weeded as new editions arrive.
- Pamphlet files (other than local history) are rigorously weeded annually.
- Added copies of best sellers may be withdrawn when books are removed from the new book shelf or as demand dictates.
- Weeding on the bookmobile is continuous because of space considerations. Many items taken from the bookmobile are added to the regular collection
- Any collection may be weeded at any time as need dictates.
- When in doubt, books may be left on the shelf until the next weeding cycle.

Deciding whether or not to retain or discard an item comes down to the professional judgment of individuals based on training, experience, and even the interests of the person making a decision. Because of time constraints and the size of collections, most decisions regarding retention must be made relatively quickly. There are no black and white rules that may be followed since weeding a collection is as much art as science. It is important that all involved agree on the rules; however the guidelines written and cited above are just that – guidelines. That said, it is a basic responsibility of all professional staff to demonstrate good judgment and accountability in regard to collection maintenance, both selection and weeding.

Gifts:

The Fond du Lac Public Library welcomes gifts of useful materials as long as they meet the same selection criteria as purchased items. Gifts of money or materials will be used or disposed of according to the best interest of the library and the community as judged by staff. The library may accept donations of cash to purchase materials for a specific audience or on a specific subject. Any other restrictions on the use of a gift must be approved by the Director in writing prior to acceptance of the gift. The library reserves the right to refuse gifts to purchase material outside of our collection development policy, or when the purchases would provide a significant imbalance in the point of view of a collection.

Books and other materials will be examined by staff assigned to select items for the library. Library staff will make the final decision as to the use and display of donated items. Except in extreme cases, usually involving large collections, books and other materials will not be evaluated prior to their being donated to the library. Donated items that fall outside the current need of the library are normally added to a book sale. Items that are added to the collection and later withdrawn may also be placed in a book sale. A

bookplate identifying the donor may be affixed to items that are added to the library collection.

The Fond du Lac Public Library is not a museum and thus has limited space for permanent displays. Gifts of art and other realia will be evaluated by staff for artistic quality and/or historic significance and local interest. This evaluation will be forwarded to the Library Board who will make the final decision whether or not items in question will be accepted. The President of the Board of Trustees may appoint a subcommittee of the Board to make this determination.

While donors may reasonably expect that donated art and realia may be retained for a significant time period, many items will eventually lose their historic or local interest and may be disposed of. In lieu of accepting an item as a gift, the Director may accept an item as a long term loan. An accession form will be completed on all art and realia accepted by the library as a gift or long term loan. (The form is optional for items accepted for short term display in the exhibit hall.) This form should be signed by the donor and accepting staff. Forms will be kept on file in the business office for as long as the library retains an item, and no less than ten years after an item has been disposed of or returned to the donor.

Reconsideration of Material:

It is a basic responsibility of public libraries to make differing points of view available within its collection. FDLPL does not endorse particular beliefs or views, nor does the selection of an item express or imply endorsements of the viewpoint of the author. Library material will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting them from theft or damage.

Comments from members of the community about the collection or individual items in the collection frequently provide librarians with useful information about interest or needs that may not be adequately met by the collection. The library welcomes expression of opinion by patrons, but will be governed by the Collection Development Policy in making decisions to add or delete items from the collection.

Patrons who request the reconsideration of library material will be asked to put their requests in writing by completing and signing a form, appended to this policy, entitled *Request for Reconsideration of Library Material*.

Upon receipt of a formal written request, the Director will ask for background information from the library staff as to criteria used in ordering the material in question, its place in the collection and reasons for having the material in the collection. Outside consultants may be asked for additional information as is pertinent to the subject in question.

The Director will, at the earliest possible date, study the information provided by the library staff and respond, in writing, to the person who initiated the request for reconsideration.

In the event that the person(s) who initiated the request is not satisfied with the decision of the Director, he/she may submit a written request for a hearing before the Library Board of Trustees. Upon receipt of the request, the Board President will place the request on the agenda of the next Board meeting or schedule a special meeting to consider the request. The person(s) as well as the public will be notified of the time and place of the meeting. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of presentation and number of speakers at the meeting.

After hearing from the person(s) making the reconsideration request as well as others wishing to speak, the Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of FDLPL; will review the background information provided by the library staff; will review the position of the patron; and will review the decision of the Director. Based on the information presented, the Board will vote to uphold or override the decision of the Director.

Fond du Lac Public Library Board of Trustees Procedure for Holding Hearings Regarding Requests for Reconsideration

1. Upon receiving a written request for a hearing regarding a *Request for Reconsideration* for any item in the FDLPL collection, the Director shall:
 - a. Create an information packet containing:
 - i. The original *Request for Reconsideration*
 - ii. The Director's written response to the request
 - iii. Copies of any reviews, correspondence, memos from staff, etc. used by the Director to form his/her opinion.
 - iv. Copies of the *Fond du Lac Public Library Collection Development Policy*.
 - b. The information packet will be supplied to each member of the Board of Trustees, the City Manager, the complainant, and any member of the public who may request it.
 - c. When feasible, the Director will obtain additional copies of the item under reconsideration for review by the Board of Trustees.
 - d. The Library Director, in consultation with the President of the Board of Trustees, will schedule the meeting in which to hold a hearing regarding the item under reconsideration. Such meeting shall take place within about 30 days of making the information packet and item under reconsideration available to the Board.
 - e. As soon as the date, time, and place of the meeting have been determined, the Library Director shall post public notice of the meeting pursuant to Chapter 19 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Such notice will also inform the public that written comments regarding the item under reconsideration shall be accepted up to 7 business days prior to the meeting.

2. The Director shall send out a second notice of the hearing to the Board and to the public seven business days prior to the meeting. Copies of any written comments from the public received since the first meeting notice will be included in a packet sent to the Board as well as any members of the public who may request them.
3. The agenda for the hearing shall be as follows:
 - a. Call to order by the President or presiding officer of the Board of Trustees
 - b. Roll call and determination of a quorum.
 - c. Presentation by the complainant. Such presentation will be limited to no more than 60 minutes.
 - d. Presentation by the Director. Such presentation will be limited to no more than 60 minutes.
 - e. The President or Presiding Officer shall entertain a motion from a member of the Board to either a) recess the hearing and reconvene within seven business days; or b) proceed with comments from the public.
 - f. Comments from the public will be heard for up to two hours and thirty minutes
 - i. . Comments from individual speakers will be limited to no more than five minutes unless a member of the Board of Trustees shall request that the individual be given an additional 5 minutes. The President shall ask for a second to the motion and obtain a majority vote from trustees present before granting the additional minutes.
 - g. Following comments from the public the President or Presiding Officer shall entertain a motion from a member of the Board to either a) open deliberations by Board members; or b) recess the hearing and reconvene within seven business days.
 - h. Deliberations among Board members.
 - i. No further comments from either staff, members of the public, or the complainant will be heard during deliberations except to answer specific questions as may be asked by members of the Board of Trustees. Answers to specific questions will be brief.
 - i. Motion concerning the disposition of the item under reconsideration. Once a motion has been made, seconded, and voted on by the Board of Trustees, the decision of the Board will be considered final.
 - j. Motion to adjourn.
4. At the time of the Public Hearing(s), members of the public wishing to speak will be asked to register as they enter the place where the hearing is to be held. The staff member assigned to facilitating registration will offer each person wishing to speak the opportunity to draw a number at random. Numbers drawn will determine the order of presentations.



REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL

PART ONE

Type of Material _____

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher or Producer (if known) _____

PART TWO

Request Initiated By: Name _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Individual Represents:

_____ himself/herself

_____ organization _____
(Name of organization)

_____ other _____
(Identify other person, persons, or group)

PART THREE

1. Specify what you object to in the material (cite pages, scenes, etc.)

2. What do you think might be the effects of reading, viewing, or listening to this material?

3. What do you think is positive about this material?

4. Did you read, view or listen to the entire material? If not, what parts?

5. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by critics?

6. What do you believe is the theme of this material?

7. What action would you like the Library to take about this material?

8. In its place, what material would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

9. Other comments:

Signature _____

Date _____