

EDITORIAL

Collection Building

The process of building library collections is as old and as significant an issue as libraries themselves. Much time is spent in graduate library school programs discussing selection policies, censorship, new media, and collection maintenance. Practitioners in the field daily grapple with the problems of public demands and of inflationary trends in the fields of information dissemination. In 1979 John T. Corrigan, editor of *Catholic Library World*, confronted the moral issues of collection building and maintenance; he wrote,

“Today, as probably never before, there is a need to revitalize our positions as guardians, organizers and facilitators of the free flow of the world’s depository of knowledge. The reasons for our personal renewal are to be seen in light of the new technologies, the cultural changes that are taking place around us, and in the continuing effort. . .to preserve those values so necessary for. . .people who are responsible and responsive to their fellows.” (*Catholic Library World*, December 1979, 196).

Indiana’s library community has continually addressed the problems of collection building. Involved in librarianship in a state which prides itself on being fiscally responsible, professionals have often intertwined the issues of staffing, facilities, and collection use.

Thus, their standing policies for collection building, as well as their proposals for change, often have a direct relationship with the realities of the existing funds available and their public’s support of the library’s overall program.

The fact that Indiana librarians build collections which reflect their community needs, be they educational or avocational, is substantiated by perusing policy statements, building plans, and budget summaries of the libraries themselves. It is further exemplified in the articles found in this issue of *Indiana Libraries*.

Interlibrary loan services have greatly expanded the possibilities of all libraries. Sharing materials at a relatively low cost to all involved can allow all libraries the opportunity to build their collections in specific directions suited for local patron needs and still have the ability to temporarily secure specialized materials needed by one individual within their public. The history of interlibrary loan services and of their applications in Indiana are summarized by Karen Chittick Stabler in her lucid article. Further, some problems and future needs are discussed by Stabler, setting the stage for future innovations within interlibrary loan practices.

Les R. Galbraith deals with a major modern concern for Indiana librarians: collection building *and* maintenance of religious materials. Galbraith is succinct in his appraisal of the field; he gives his readers some practical guidelines which can easily be applied.

The final two articles deal with traditional topics which have long concerned librarians: intellectual freedom and community support of library services. Terence F. Sebright approaches the need to establish a well defined selection policy from the perspective of Indiana laws concerning the public library's funding and structure. His arguments reflect the Indiana tie between fiscal responsibility and ethics. Nick Schenkel approaches the topic of collection development from the viewpoint that head librarians must develop their overall services, and thus their collection growth, in correlation with their staffing potential. Schenkel's viewpoint is that of a forceful young administrator who daily faces the current trend of budgetary moderation and entrenchment. His outlook reflects the realist who recognizes that Indiana communities are tightening their budgets in response to recent federal funding cutbacks.

Robert N. Broadus addressed the problems of collection building a decade ago, and commented that building a library collection was much like planning and building a real building. On the other hand, he pointed out that in collection building there was always a degree of uncertainty because, "The librarian is never sure what bricks are going to be available, or what new ones will come on the market. . . ." (*Selecting Materials for Librarians*, H. W. Wilson, 1973, 26.) This issue of *Indiana Libraries* points to a professionalism of thought that takes into account those uncertainties as reflected by past Indiana experiences. It reveals that whenever new bricks do become available, Indiana librarians will analyze their quality as well as their short-term possibilities in the building process. Thus, maintenance and collection building are integral components in Indiana library services.

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