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AJL Bibliography Bank

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Reference Department

AJL Bibliography Bank

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Abstract: The AJL Bibliography Bank was established in 1995 to disseminate informative booklists to its members. Patrons of the Bank may request or contribute bibliographies. This article discusses the history of the Bank, how it is run and its future plans.

Introduction

The Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) Bibliography Bank was created as a service for AJL members. Synagogue and school librarians tend to feel isolated in their individual settings. The Bank is a way of helping these devoted individuals.

Every librarian creates bibliographies as part of his/her job. Instead of using them just in your own library, why not share with others? Send your lists to the Bank.

The Bibliography Bank was conceptualized in 1995 by Toby Rossner, then AJL SSC (Synagogue, School, Center Division) President. Toby conceived the idea after attending a conference of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE) where she learned about the Curriculum Bank that is set up as a sharing of curriculum materials amongst its members. The thought of bringing this service to AJL was an excellent one.

Amalia Warshenbrot graciously chaired the Bank, in response to the professional help she received from AJL. Together, Toby and Amalia created the policies and Amalia faithfully served as chair for five years.

In 1996, there were 55 bibliographies in the Bank; in 2002, there were 112. The number of requested bibliographies has risen from 23 in 1996 to 406 in 2001. These statistics obviously show how needed and appreciated the Bank is.

Mechanics – How Does the Bank Work?

The constantly updated list of bibliographies is maintained on the AJL web site: <http://www.jewishlibraries.org>. To view the list, click on Resources on the left hand side of the home page. Then click on the Bibliography Bank link.

Each AJL member may request three free bibliographies per calendar year, although two first class stamps are required for each order. If more bibliographies are needed, the cost is ten cents per page. For each bibliography contributed to the Bank, you will receive a credit for three free lists. Thus, the more you contribute, the more you save. There is no limit to the number of bibliographies that can be requested. As new bibliographies are received, the information is posted on Hasafran, the AJL listserv.

In order to contribute a bibliography, please follow these guidelines:

A bibliography should have at least ten titles. While annotation is desirable, it is not a requirement.

Bibliographies should include standard bibliographic information – author, title, publisher, copyright and number of pages. Date the list.

Put your name and institution on the list.

Print on one side of white paper only. Number the pages.

If possible, submit the bibliographies electronically.

The list is constantly being updated, so check the web site. Deleted lists are stored in the AJL archives. No editing of bibliographies is done by AJL members and AJL will not endorse the content.

Bibliographies may be submitted electronically as this saves both postage and time in copying the lists. Since not all e-mail programs accept attachments in the same manner, paper copies are still kept of all bibliographies submitted.

It is hoped that one day all of the bibliographies will be available online, ready to print. As of now, the Bibliography Bank is a service for our members only. We would like this to remain as an incentive for people to join our organization. Updates of older bibliographies are always welcome. This keeps our list fresh and current.

The Bibliography Bank is here to stay. Please utilize this wonderful service by both requesting and contributing bibliographies.

Bibliography List

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- "Boy's Book Club Suggested Reading: Grades 4-6." 2000. 5 pages. Annotated. Books are divided into categories: contemporary, science fiction, Israel, historical fiction, World War II and biography. Other resources are included. Available electronically.
- "Comparative Religion: Judaism and Christianity." 2000. 1 page. Annotated. Nine books for adults comparing Judaism and other religions.
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- "Books and Videos: Middle-High School." 2001. 4 pages. Annotated. New fiction and nonfiction books and videos recently published. Available electronically.
- "Books to Help Children Cope With Change, Conflict and Crisis." 2000. 4 pages. Annotated. Books and videos dealing with such topics as death and dying, old age, and divorce. Grade levels are given.
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The latest copy of this annual list is kept in the Bibliography Bank. Includes Sydney Taylor winners and honor books, as well as notable books.

Elana Gensler is the AJL Vice President for Publication and past chair of the AJL Bibliography Bank. She is the School Library Media Specialist at the Hebrew Academy of Long Beach in New York and is also the editor of Sifria, the newsletter of the Long Island Chapter of AJL.