

POLICIES FOR THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOOK AWARD PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Green Mountain Book Award Program (hereafter referred to as GMBA) is to encourage Vermont's young adults in grades 9-12 to become enthusiastic and discriminating readers.

GOAL

The goal of the award is to offer an annual list of books of good literary quality that:

- Engages high school students,
- Reflects the interests of high school students,
- Represents a variety of genres, formats and viewpoints,

and to make that list available to young adults through school and public libraries. See Appendix I for specifications.

ORGANIZATION

The GMBA Program is sponsored by the Vermont Department of Libraries (VTLIB). The GMBA Committee is responsible for the workings of the program and the selection of books using the GMBA Criteria for Book Selection. The Committee, with the help of the VTLIB, promotes the award in the state. The VTLIB provides financial assistance for the work of the committee (see duties of the VTLIB for specifics on financial responsibilities).

COMMITTEE SELECTION

The committee consists of eight (8) adult members, up to two (2) teen members, plus the Youth Services Consultant of the Vermont Department of Libraries. The Youth Services Consultant serves on the committee as a representative of the sponsoring agency but does not hold an office and is not a voting member. Vacancies on the committee are announced on various relevant listservs and via email to interested audiences in Vermont.

In the selection of adult committee members, consideration is given to the different experience and expertise of the candidates so as to maintain a well-rounded and balanced committee (e.g. school and public librarians, teachers, booksellers). Candidates must live and/or work in the state of Vermont on a year-round basis. Geographic distribution is considered in the event that selection among equally qualified persons becomes difficult.

In selection of teen committee members, consideration is given to their ability to complete the reading, an adult professional letter of recommendation, and confidence in their ability to attend meetings (i.e. transportation doesn't provide a huge issue for them).

Adult committee members serve a three-year term with the option to renew once. Teen committee members serve a one-year term with the option of renewing through their senior year of high school. New committee members are selected by consensus and shall be chosen at the June meeting so that they may attend the August meeting. A committee member who moves out of state and/or no longer works in Vermont must relinquish his/her position on the committee. Any member planning to go off the committee before his/her term is up shall let the committee chair know enough in advance so that a replacement can be found before the June meeting.

The committee shall meet and elect its officers for a one-year term by June of the appropriate year. Potential officers are nominated by a current committee member, their nomination is seconded by a committee member, and the decision is reached by a simple majority vote. The executive committee consists of the following officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. These new officers will take over their official duties immediately after the June meeting. In addition to the officers there are other responsibilities on the committee which are assigned to members on a yearly basis: technology specialist, publisher liaison, liaison to the "GMBA Irregulars" (support group composed of GMBA alumni and others interested in the GMBA Committee whose goal is to help raise awareness of the Master List and increase voting numbers), and award coordinator.

MEETING SCHEDULE

GMBA meetings will be held according to the following schedule.

June (early-mid month):

- Appoint new members and vote on officers.
- Reevaluate policies and procedures. Revise as needed.

August (mid-month):

- Review the entire preliminary list of nominated titles (nominated electronically, ongoing process from June-January).
- Each committee member should nominate 5-10 books by August to begin the list of nominated titles eligible for the Long List (see Terminology for definitions of "nominated titles" and "Long List"). Committee members will aim to nominate a range of genres (specifically attempting to include nonfiction and graphic novels).
- Members prepare a quick book pitch (1 min. or less) for 5-10 nominations. They will bring physical copies of the books, if possible.
- Members volunteer to be official second and third readers for each nominated title. The Secretary records the title, author, and designated readers in a spreadsheet that will be posted in an online platform. At this point the spreadsheet is view-only.
- The Secretary will record any titles that have already been read by at least three members.

- The three “official” readers are responsible for reading the books by their designated meeting (October or January). Members will discuss the books at those meetings and seek to come to consensus about whether to move the book forward to the Long List. Other committee members may participate in the discussion if they have read the book.

October (early):

- Readers discuss nominated titles from August, focusing on authors A-M (or ½ of the nominated titles from August). This discussion determines whether these titles should be moved to the Long List (for the March meeting). At least three readers must agree for it to move forward for it to be put on the Long List.
- Members prepare a quick book pitch (1 min. or less) for any nominated titles since August. They will bring physical copies of the books again, if possible.
- Members again volunteer to be official second and third readers for each nominated title. The Secretary records the title, author, and designated readers in a spreadsheet that will be posted in an online platform.

January:

- Deadline for suggesting titles for the Long List.
- Readers discuss nominated titles from August, focusing on authors N-Z (or second ½ of the books nominated in August), as well as all books nominated in October.
- Any books that have received three nominations since the October meeting on the online platform are eligible for the Long List, and will be discussed accordingly.
- Members will evaluate whether there are any books with less than three readers but with very positive reviews that the committee might want to move to the Long List.
- Long List is determined before meeting is adjourned.

March:

- Prior to meeting, members are required to read all books on the Long List and should tentatively make their own top 15.
- Members bring physical copies of all books on Long List to be displayed. At the end of the meeting, physical copies of books on the Master List will go to the Vermont Department of Libraries. Members can take home or donate books that did not make the Master List.
- Procedure for running March Meeting:
 - Chair facilitates review of each book and members vote. (Initial round)
Votes are all recorded by Secretary.
 - Top third of number of votes = yes - automatically makes the final cut to be discussed
 - Middle third of number of votes = maybe
 - Bottom third of number of votes = eliminated from further discussion
 - Evaluates the top third list for a mix of genres, reading levels, formats, cover design, appeal to teenagers.
 - Line up physical books and evaluate in above terms. (Questions the Chair is asking the committee: What’s missing? What do they look like together? What do we want to nominate to move from maybe list?) The

Chair can recommend to take a vote, and/or face-off two books to choose between them. Note: this part of the process is flexible depending on the number of books in consideration.

May:

- Several members of the committee present the new Master List at the Dynamic Landscapes conference.

DUTIES OF THE GMBA CHAIR

In addition to the shared responsibilities of each member of the committee, the GMBA Chair will:

- Set dates and agendas for and facilitate of all meetings (or arrange for facilitation by another committee member). When setting dates, the Chair offers a range of days and times and selects a date and time at which the most committee members can be present. When selecting locations, the Chair attempts to find mutually convenient places for the meetings.
- In consultation with the Youth Services Consultant, facilitate local media coverage for award.
- Ensure that new committee members are welcomed by email, and provided with a copy of “Policies for the GMBA Program”--which includes the nominations procedures and selection criteria--and names and contact information for other committee members.
- Ensure that all unsuccessful applicants for committee membership are notified via email, encouraging them to apply again in the future if appropriate.
- Identify and request potential nominated titles from publishers. This is a job the Chair can share or delegate.
 - Identify potential nominated titles via professional publications (i.e. Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal) and other sources, such as local booksellers and social media.
 - Solicit potential nominated titles from committee members.
 - Coordinate with VTLIB to request books and identify contacts at publishing houses.
 - Coordinate notification of authors whose books make the Master List.
 - Solicit additional copies of books on the Master List for use by VTLIB as discussion sets.
- Arrange for several members to present the Master List at Dynamic Landscapes.
 - Ensure that a proposal is submitted in January or February.
 - Ensure that several members will be present at the conference in May.
 - Ensure that the presentation is completed.
- Ensure that a physical award is acquired and sent to winner and arrange for press releases.
- Identify and remediate committee members who are not meeting the expectations regarding duties of committee members and/or not adhering to the selection criteria for nominated titles.

- Correspond with:
 - Committee members.
 - People in Vermont and other states inquiring about the GMBA Award.

The chair may appoint someone on the committee to help with any of these duties.

DUTIES OF THE GMBA VICE CHAIR

- Facilitate meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- Support Chair as necessary.

DUTIES OF THE GMBA SECRETARY

In addition to the shared responsibilities of each member of the committee, the secretary will:

- Record all minutes of all GMBA Committee meetings.
- Type up and post the minutes on our online platform for all committee members to view within two weeks of each meeting.
- Keep track of lists of nominated titles and the Long List.
 - Create a document from all nominated titles (done online), which is viewable by all members and posted to our shared online platform.
 - Keep track of which committee members are assigned to read each book.
 - Create the Long List, also posted to our shared online platform, which will serve as our required reading list for our March Meeting.

DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES – YOUTH SERVICES CONSULTANT

The Youth Services Consultant will:

- Serve as an ex officio member of the GMBA committee and act as a liaison between the VTLIB administration and the committee. Officially represent the Department of Libraries as co-sponsor of the award and therefore actively participate and vote on items involving GMBA committee policy. The person in this position may recommend books and participate in the book discussion, but does not vote on the final list.
- As soon after the March meeting as possible:
 - Create a voting form and the new Master List with annotations.
 - Distribute or make available the voting form and the new Master List with annotations to all Vermont public and school libraries.
 - The Department of Libraries will provide financial assistance for typing, printing and distributing the voting form and Master List, and will post these documents on the VTLIB website.
 - Print bookmarks for conferences.
 - Send jobbers, bookstores and interested groups a copy of the new Master List.

- After the voting deadline in April or May:
 - Record and tabulate the votes.
 - Notify the publisher and author of the winning book.
 - Commission the award as chosen by the committee.
 - Notify the appropriate media (SLJ, Horn Book, VOYA, etc.) of the winning book.
 - Present the award to the winning author either by mail or in a ceremony organized by the committee

- Create and distribute related materials:
 - Edit the GMBA handbook each year and arrange for its printing and distribution.
 - Distribute the handbook as requested.
 - Arrange for the printing and distribution of bookmarks each year.
 - Arrange for the printing and distribution of other materials as needed.
 - Make all materials available online.
 - Arrange for cataloging of Discussion Sets and make them available to libraries to borrow.

DUTIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Members will:

- Read and evaluate eligible books.
- Nominate titles for the new list.
- Attend all meetings throughout the year, virtual attendance is highly discouraged.
- Attend and actively participate in the March meeting to select fifteen (15) titles for the new Master List.
- Prepare and present booktalks for the GMBA program at the annual Dynamic Landscapes Conference.
- Be willing to assume additional responsibilities as the need arises, such as holding office. In addition, support officers and Chair, in particular, in their many duties.
- In consultation with the Youth Services Consultant, publicize the GMBA award program in their community and, if time permits, in their geographic region. This may include messaging local listservs, arranging for special features in local papers, making local school contacts, and possibly even individual school visits or booktalks.

VOTING

VTLIB sends out the online voting form to teenagers across the state. Voting happens individually. In order to be eligible vote, a reader must read three books off the list. This happens on an honor system. While the list is intended for grades 9-12, readers younger or older who have read three or more books may also vote on their favorite. There will be a drop-down menu on the voting form where voters specify their age bracket.

Voting opens after the March Meeting, and ends by May 1st.

The GMBA winner will be announced by May 15th.

AWARD

A suitable award will be created to be presented to the winning author. The award is presented by the Vermont Department of Libraries. This presentation shall be made at a time and place chosen by the committee chair and the Department of Libraries. GMBA Committee members will help publicize this award.

THE GMBA MASTER LIST

The purpose of the Green Mountain Book Award is to encourage Vermont high school students to become enthusiastic and discriminating readers. The GMBA Committee reads a wide variety of books each year to select 15 eligible titles (see eligibility requirements). Books included on the new Master List are selected by a consensus of the committee.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Books are nominated by committee members. Committee members should reach out to local librarians, booksellers, teenagers, and other relevant constituents to identify potential nominated titles. In addition, committee members identify books through professional publications and social media sites, such as Goodreads. Committee members obtain their books through: receiving boxes from VTLIB, local libraries, and other possible channels.

To be eligible for the Master List:

1. The book must have been published in the current calendar year. Reprints and compilations previously copyrighted are not eligible. Note: This is the American publication date.
2. All forms of writing are eligible for consideration – fiction, non-fiction, short stories, graphic novels and poetry.
3. Books written by a previous recipient of the GMBA Award may be considered at the discretion of the committee.
4. Books must have two professional reviews to be eligible for consideration.
5. Books should appeal to teenagers, but do not specifically have to be marketed as a young adult title. They should be appropriate for teens in grades nine through twelve.

TERMINOLOGY

The following terms will be used as selections move from nomination to the Master List:

“Nominated Titles” – titles that have received one or more votes. Committee members must have read titles and verified their eligibility before nominating a title (voting for it). Nominated titles with 3 or more votes moved to the “Required Reading List.”

“Long List” – the list of titles that all committee members will read, from which the final selection of 15 titles will be made. Usually 40-50.

“Master List” – the final 15 titles selected for the annual list.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Selections should engage high school students and reflect their interests, and represent a variety of genres, formats, identities, reading levels, and viewpoints.

To meet the above standards, the committee considers the following elements:

1. Theme
2. Presentation of information, including accuracy, clarity, and organization
3. Plot
4. Characters
5. Setting
6. Author’s style
7. Book design

The committee uses questions Appendix I to evaluate books for these elements.

REVIEW JOURNALS FOR YA BOOKS

Booklist

Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books

Horn Book Magazine

School Library Journal

Library Journal

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Kirkus

Appendix I

Evaluating Books for the Green Mountain Book Award

Evaluating Teen Appeal

1. **Audience:** Who is the intended audience for this book? Does it have appeal for both young women and men?
2. **Age-Appropriateness:** Does the book appeal to teens? Is the content accessible to teens? Will teens have any problems comprehending the material?
3. **Reading Experience:** Is the book enjoyable? Is it pleasurable to read?
4. **Book's Appearance:** Is the book's cover attractive, or dull? Will the cover grab the attention of teens? Does the cover look dated?
5. **Subject Matter:** If the book contains controversial content such as graphic sex, violence, profanity, drug and alcohol use, racial defamation and stereotypes or abuse, is the inclusion of these elements gratuitous, or does it fit well with the story?

Evaluating the Literary Aspects of a Book

1. **Title:** What is the significance of the title?
2. **Setting:** Is the setting important to the story? Is the setting an integral part of the story, or merely a backdrop?
3. **Plot:** Is the storyline well-structured? Does the author use narrative elements such as plot, subplot, and foreshadowing and are these elements fully resolved at the end of the book? Does the plot move in chronological order, or through a series of flash-back episodes?
4. **Conflict:** What is the major conflict in the story? What is the conflict faced by the protagonist(s)?
5. **Theme:** Can you identify the theme?
6. **Point of View:** Which type of perspective is used to tell the story: 1st person, omniscient, or 3rd person (i.e. objective)? Is the author's use of perspective consistent?
7. **Characterization:** Is the characterization flat, or three-dimensional? Are primary and secondary characters sufficiently developed?
8. **Quality of Writing:** Is the book well-written? Does the author possess a unique style of writing? Are the narration and voice unique?
9. **Literary Devices:** Does the author use literary devices such as figurative language, imagery, metaphor, symbolism or hyperbole?
10. **Stereotypes:** Does the book stereotype certain groups or individuals? Does the book reinforce negative stereotypes about ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians or people with disabilities? If applicable, do text and illustrations show gender and cultural diversity?
11. **Editorial Issues:** Are there gross editing errors? Typos? Technical errors?

Additional Questions for Non-Fiction Titles

1. **Relevance of Topic:** Does the book fill a gap in available material on the topic?
2. **Organization:** Are the contents well organized and clear?

3. **Accuracy of Information:** If non-fiction, or historical fiction, is the author's work accurate? Objective? Current? Well-researched? Is the author specifically qualified to write the book? Does the author accomplish any stated goals?
4. **Graphs and Diagrams, Illustrations:** Are photos, graphs, and/or diagrams clear? Do photos or illustrations enhance and clarify the text? If a graphic novel, do the illustrations complement and enhance the text?