

## Mission of the Galesburg Public Library

*To serve the community as a general center of information, and to provide opportunity and encouragement for people to use its services and materials to meet their educational, personal, professional, recreational and cultural needs.*

That our community recognizes the importance of a library to its members is evidenced by its overwhelming support for the construction of the new Galesburg Public Library building to house the many resources available to its patrons, including a highly trained and dedicated staff.

Imagine then, a nation where an ideology had found a home that was inimical to the free pursuit of knowledge and where knowledge was tightly controlled to hew to a particular line of thought, no matter how irrational. That nation was Germany in 1933. On May 10 of that year, students and professors sympathetic to the National Socialist Party burnt over 20,000 books from mainly Jewish, communist, liberal and social-critical authors, in the middle of a square in Berlin today called the Bebelplatz.



If you go there now, you will see a memorial consisting of an underground space covered with glass, executed by Israeli artist Micha Ullman. Upon peering into the glass you will see a lighted room of empty shelves, sufficient to contain 20,000 books. The memorial has been placed on the exact spot of the book burning.

Libraries are part of the foundation of our democracy that inform the public debate . It is why we have a Library of Congress. Libraries are a treasure to be cherished and guarded from those who might diminish their importance.