

## EMMA S. CLARK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

### Library Materials Selection Policy

1. The Library shall develop collections of merit and significance, whether acquired by purchase or gift. Each item of material shall be considered in terms of its value to the collection and audience for whom it is intended.
2. Materials to be evaluated shall include a variety of formats, including, but not limited to, hardcover and paperback editions, recordings, videocassettes, audio cassettes, films, compact discs, microforms and maps.
3. Materials shall be evaluated according to objective standards. Flexibility, open-mindedness and responsiveness are required in the evaluation process. Consideration shall be given to expanding knowledge, changing social values, technological advances and cultural differences where appropriate. As change occurs in these areas, the Library may reevaluate materials which were not acquired.
4. Some materials may be judged primarily in terms of artistic merit, scholarship or their value as human documents; others will be selected to satisfy recreational and entertainment needs.
5. Different viewpoints on controversial issues will be acquired, including those which may have unpopular or unorthodox positions. The Library recognizes that those materials which offend, shock, or bore one patron may be considered pleasing, meaningful or significant by another.
6. To avoid unnecessary duplication, consideration will be given to materials available to the public through other area libraries and community agencies.
7. Recognizing that a materials selection policy may result in complaints from the public at large who may not understand the reasons why certain items have been included in the collection, the Library shall develop procedures for reconsideration of the item in question.
8. The Library Board of trustees supports the American Library Association's (ALA) *Bill of Rights* (Appendix A), ALA's *Freedom to Read* statement (Appendix B), ALA's *Free Access to Libraries to Minors* (Appendix C), and (ALA's) *Freedom to View* (Appendix D).

9. The authority and responsibility for the selection of Library materials is delegated to the Library Director, and under his/her direction, to the professional staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience. Suggestions from other staff members and from library users are encouraged and seriously considered in the selection process.

### Goals of Materials Selection

The Emma S. Clark Memorial Library selects, makes available, and promotes the use of library materials, whatever the format, which:

1. Enrich and support the educational, recreational, and informational needs of the users, taking into consideration their varied interests, abilities, and learning styles.
2. Represent differing viewpoints on a subject.
3. Reflect the problems, aspirations, attitudes, and ideals of a pluralistic society.
4. Support business, cultural, recreational, and civic activities in the community.
5. Stimulate self-understanding and skills.
6. Enhance job-related knowledge and skills.
7. Increase knowledge of and participation in the affairs of the community, the country, and the world.
8. Are appropriate to the level of the users. The collections for young people are aimed at meeting the diverse recreational, cultural, and informational needs of that segment of the population from infancy through adolescence. Materials are included to provide enjoyment, stretch the imagination, cultivate a love of books and reading, stimulate creative abilities, supplement study, and provide an awareness of the broad spectrum of moral and social values. Materials are selected which vary in format, content, and level to meet wide-ranging interests and demands, to help young people understand their own development, and to prepare them for informed participation in society.

## Criteria for Materials Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to the changing needs of the residents of the Three Village area. These changing needs require that materials be evaluated initially and on a continuing basis. As a result, materials not recommended for purchase originally may, in fact, be purchased at a much later date. The converse, that materials may still be considered unsuitable or unnecessary for the collection, is also possible.

Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular section or sections. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

While a single standard cannot be applied to each potential item for selection, materials are judged by appropriate criteria which apply to both purchased and donated materials.

1. Availability and suitability of format.
2. Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience.
3. Critics' and staff's reviews.
4. Reputation of the publisher or producer; authority and significance of the author, composer, filmmaker, etc.
5. Timeliness or permanence of the material.
6. Quality of writing, design, illustrations, or production.
7. Relevance to community needs.
8. Potential and/or known demand for the material.
9. Relative importance in comparison with existing materials in the collection on the same subject.
10. Availability and accessibility of the same material in the county.
11. Price.

### Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Factual Works

1. Recency and accuracy of the information presented.
2. Competence of author.
3. Objectivity.
4. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
5. Clarity of presentation.
6. Usability of arrangement.
7. Inclusion in standard bibliographies and indices.

### Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works Representing an Opinion

1. Representation of a challenging, even though extreme or minority, point of view.
2. Clarity and logic of presentation.
3. Usability of arrangement.
4. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
5. Degree and accomplishment of purpose.
6. Availability of materials on the subject.

### Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Imagination

1. Representation of an important movement, genre, trend or culture.
2. Vitality and originality.
3. Artistic presentation and quality evidenced in the plot, setting, theme, characterization, point of view, and style.
4. Sustained interest and entertainment.

## Withdrawal and Discarding of Library Materials

Materials are regularly withdrawn from the Library's collection. They are withdrawn and discarded because:

1. They are out-of-date, that is, no longer timely or accurate.
2. They are so badly worn or damaged that they cannot be bound or mended.
3. It is cheaper to replace them than to repair them.
4. They are once-popular materials no longer used.
5. Space considerations.

Materials, deemed lost or missing, are officially withdrawn from the record of Library holdings if they cannot be replaced.

## Replacement of Library Materials

A replacement is an item purchased to take the place of an identical title previously in the collection. It is the Library's policy not to replace automatically all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. The need for replacement in each case is judged by two factors:

1. Existence of adequate coverage of the subject, especially if more current material is available.
2. Demand for the specific title.

## Gifts of Library Materials

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used or disposed of as the Library determines is appropriate. New titles acquired in this manner are subject to the basic standards of selection. Replacements and duplicate copies are added to the collection if needed. The cost of processing and the availability of shelving space are also factors in determining the acceptance of gifts.

Procedures have been developed for the reconsideration of materials to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Once an item has been accepted for purchase, based on the Selection Policy of the Library Board of Trustees and the criteria for selection, it will not be automatically removed upon request.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees  
on March 4, 1992

# *Library Bill of Rights*

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939.

Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980;

inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

## Appendix B

# THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom

to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression  
The Association of American University Presses, Inc.  
The Children's Book Council  
Freedom to Read Foundation  
National Association of College Stores  
National Coalition Against Censorship  
National Council of Teachers of English  
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## Appendix C

### **Free Access to Libraries for Minors**

#### **An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation. Equitable access to all library resources and services shall not be abridged through restrictive scheduling or use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, nonprint, or digital format. Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.<sup>1</sup> Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether material is not constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As *Libraries: An American Value* states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services.” Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that *only* parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and *only their children's*—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

*See also* Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program and Access to Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008.

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1 <sup>1</sup>*See* Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville, 422 U.S. 205 (1975) "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." *See also* Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist., 393 U.S.503 (1969); West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); AAMA v. Kendrick, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

# Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the **First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States**. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**