

COLLECTION

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT - MATERIALS SELECTION

The word “Materials” has the widest possible meaning. It may include, but is not limited to, books, pamphlets, maps, magazines, and journals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, audio media, and digital information owned or accessed by the Philmont Public Library (Library), including the Internet.

The Library adheres to the principles contained in the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read*, and *Freedom to View* statements, all of which can be found in this document.

The ultimate responsibility for selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of the policies approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The Library Director may authorize staff to apply this policy in building the collection.

WEEDING

Weeding in the Philmont Public Library is an on-going activity necessary to maintain collections so that they offer a balance between standard classics and currently popular materials, while eliminating incorrect information and worn materials. Collections should also reflect usage patterns and trends, as topics and formats may need to be weeded based on waning customer interest.

It is important to note that weeding is always based on professional judgment. Just as in selection, the content of the current collection, resource sharing, materials available from publishers and producers, and community needs must all be considered in decision making. In weeding materials of certain sensitive or controversial subjects, such as religion or politics, the Library should strive to maintain a balance of viewpoints. The Library should also strive to provide materials on a wide range of reading levels.

For some subjects, however, such as medicine, no information is better than outdated or inaccurate information. In others, such as technology, science, finance, and the law, materials may become outdated rapidly. In most cases, out-of-date titles should not be retained even if nothing else is available in the collection.

The purpose of weeding is to:

1. Utilize available space in the best and most economical way.
2. Maintain up-to-date collections and the Library's reputation for reliability.
3. Increase speed of access and improve accuracy of retrieval.
4. Remove materials least likely to be used in the future.
5. Increase circulation.
6. Locate materials that need to be repaired, rebound, or replaced.
7. Save the expense of housing materials unnecessarily.
8. Review the collection for content, and identify areas where additional titles are needed.
9. Become aware of changes in the way the community uses the collection.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S 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 for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
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

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S FREEDOM TO VIEW

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 guarantees 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.

COPYRIGHT LAW

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. The Library is legally obliged to adhere to the copyright law. Any violation of copyright laws shall be the responsibility of the user, and patrons using public machines are liable for any infringement.

USE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some Library users. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the works in relation to building the collection and to serving the interests of the community.

The use of rare and scarce items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm.

The choice of Library materials by patrons is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself, censorship may not be exercised to restrict access to the materials by others.

Responsibility for the use of materials by minors, including use of the Internet, rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of minors.

Use of the collections and services owned and accessed by the Library for patron use must be in accordance with prevailing local, state, and federal law as well as the Patron Codes of Conduct.

Patrons shall not have more than six DVD's and/or videos which are owned by the Library checked out at any one time. Additional DVD's and/or videos from other libraries shall not be included in this number.

LOCAL HISTORY

The purpose of the Library's collection is to preserve materials that document the history of the Village of Philmont and surrounding communities, and to make these materials available to researchers and the general public, as well as for exhibition. The Library holds these materials in trust for future generations, and therefore, for preservation reasons, materials may be used only in the Library.

Donations shall be accepted only if the Library believes it can make good use of the material. The Library reserves the right to dispose of materials inappropriate to its collections in the following manner: After first offering to return materials to their donors, the Library shall have the option of offering items and/or collections to other institutions. In the event that reasonable attempts to find willing recipients should prove unsuccessful, the Library maintains the right to sell or discard those items/collections. The Library may also enter into cooperative arrangements with other organizations in order to preserve historical materials and/or make them more widely available.