

MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

A. RESPONSIBILITY

1. It is the function of librarians to select and to withdraw library materials, and to advise on their use. They are qualified through training and experience, however, they must of necessity work within limitations of space and budget. Recognizing that sensitivity to the needs and interests of the community is essential to the development of library collections, the Scott County Library System welcomes suggestions from customers, trustees and authorities in various fields. Librarians, however, are responsible for judging the needs of their collection and their community, and they must make the final choices.
2. The Library Director may delegate to specific staff members the responsibility for selection of materials in special areas, but recommendations of these staff members are always subject to review by the Director.

B. SCOPE

1. The Scott County Library System is a public library supported by the taxes of the residents of the county. All agencies of the Scott County Library System belong to a single system with a single policy. The collection, with the exception of reference materials, moves freely from branch to branch.
2. The Library's collection is predominantly targeted to an English speaking audience. Materials in languages other than English will be purchased in response to customer demands and the changing demographics of the County. Specific formats may be added or eliminated due to changes in technology and to availability. The Scott County Library provides access to selected online resources.
3. The Scott County Library seeks to provide a broad range of materials to meet the varied needs of its customers. Local history and genealogical materials relating to the county and its surrounding area are particularly sought. Histories, local newspapers, books by local authors and books about the state of Minnesota and Scott County are all collected.
4. The Scott County Library System will not attempt to be or to develop a research library
5. The Scott County Library is a member of the MELSA, MINITEX, and MnLINK. Our participation in these networks provides our residents access to the collections of other participating libraries on a reciprocating basis. Every effort is made to locate and borrow from our state interlibrary loan network those specialized materials that are beyond the scope of the Scott County Library collections.

C. SELECTION PRINCIPLES

1. The FREEDOM TO READ and the FREEDOM TO VIEW as endorsed by the American Library Association and specifically stated in their "Library Bill of Rights" constitutes the cornerstone of the Scott County Library System's material selection policy. (see attachments) The purpose of the

policy is to guide the library staff and inform the public of the principles upon which selection is made.

2. The library serves as a center for reliable information for people of all ages, preschool through adult. Responsibility for the children's use rests with their parents or guardian. The library supplies materials for the education, information and recreation needs and interests of county residents.
3. The Library shall attempt to recognize patron demand (direct requests and proven popularity of similar material types and genres) in the selection of materials and will seek out materials that are pertinent and timely.
4. The library will reconsider materials in its collection upon receiving a signed written request from a customer to the Director. (See Request for Reconsideration/Complaint form 2-5a)

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. General

- a. The goal of the collection is to represent a wide range of views, cultures, opinions, and lifestyles in a culturally sensitive and age-appropriate manner. The library will attempt to provide authoritative and/or significant materials covering all sides of a controversial issue.
- b. The Scott County Library System acquires materials of both permanent and current interest in all subjects, based upon the merits of the work in relation to the needs, interests, and demands of the community
- c. Worn or damaged materials will be, in order of preference, 1-replaced, 2-repaired, or 3-rebound when:
 - i. The item has literary merit; i.e., award winner, classic status, well-known author
 - ii. The item meets the criteria for retention based on the Weeding Guidelines
 - iii. The item is in high demand; i.e., circulates frequently and/or has a hold list
 - iv. The item has local interest
- d. Materials will be withdrawn from the collection when they no longer serve a need. The Weeding Guidelines provide criteria for withdrawing materials.
- e. Gift materials are subject to the same principals which govern purchasing. The library reserves the right to add them to the collection, sell them, or discard them.

2. Fiction

- a. The Scott County Library purchases a wide variety of fiction representing all categories of fiction. The majority of best-selling titles are purchased to the extent of their popularity.

- b. The library attempts to select fiction that appeals to the diverse taste, education and reading ability of our community.

3. Non-Fiction

- a. The selection of non-fiction materials is subject to the following criteria:
 - i. Significance of subject matter
 - ii. Authoritativeness of the writer and reputation of the publisher
 - iii. Accuracy of the information
 - iv. Timeliness of subject matter
 - v. Popular demand
 - vi. Impartial opinion or clearly stated bias
 - vii. Local interest (subject, author or publisher)
 - viii. Appropriateness and relevancy of the subject to the community
 - ix. Historical value
 - x. Availability of resources on the subject
 - xi. Relationship to the current collection
 - xii. Durability
 - xiii. Cost
- b. Textbooks will be purchased only as they serve the general public.
- c. Medical and legal materials will be purchased only to the extent that they are useful to the lay person.

4. Juvenile and Young Adult

- a. The Juvenile and Young Adult fiction collection is designed for active educational and leisure reading of children; it is not a historical archive of children's literature
- b. Non-fiction collection supports the school, hobby, informational, and leisure reading needs of children through Grade 5
- c. Content should be appropriate for the general category in which the item is cataloged, keeping in mind that there is a wide range of ages in each category.

5. World Languages

- a. The Scott County Library System will maintain a collection of materials in languages other than English where an actual or potential demand exists.
- b. This collection will be aimed at meeting the recreational and informational needs of the communities they serve. Materials selected will reflect the general collection development guidelines, with an emphasis on life skills, language assistance, and acculturation. Materials will also be selected to help maintain a connection to native languages and cultures.

6. Reference

- a. Reference materials are those whose arrangement and treatment of their subject are to be consulted for definite items of information rather than to be read consecutively.

- i. Supports basic independent study of the lifelong learner and the general public
 - ii. Support homework
- b. Reference materials will be collected in available formats including print, electronic resources, and online resources
- c. Selection criteria include:
 - i. Content
 - ii. Currency
 - iii. Cost
 - iv. Reading levels
 - v. Quality
 - vi. Need
 - vii. Accuracy
 - viii. Authoritativeness

7. Recorded Books

- a. The Scott County Library System purchases recorded books on tape and CD for children and adults.
- b. The selection includes fiction in a variety of genres and non-fiction including biographies and foreign language material.

8. Audio-Visual materials

- a. The Library purchases audio-visual materials targeted to all age groups as part of its collection development. The purposes of these materials are:
 - i. to provide pleasure in the use of leisure time;
 - ii. to serve as a resource for the serious musician or student;
 - iii. to assist the listener in self-education and life-long learning;
 - iv. to broaden cultural horizons and enlarge informational experiences
 - v. to serve as representation of our social and cultural heritage;
 - vi. to supplement individual and group study;
 - vii. to provide resources for library programming.
- b. Recorded music selection emphasis is aimed at a balance and representative collection of classical (orchestral, choral, vocal, etc.); folk-ethnic; jazz; popular; soundtracks; country-western; sound effects; language instruction; original radio broadcasts; children; and other materials suitable to musical appreciation and/or individual instruction.
- c. The video/DVD collection exists to serve the general informational and recreational needs of the Library community and contains adult and juvenile feature and informational titles. Emphasis is placed on classic films; adult and children's literature adapted to film; documentaries; how-to and instructional titles; and titles of general interest to families, especially children and young adults. Informational titles may include topics such as travel, sports,

documentaries, arts, hobbies and home repairs. The collection is for home use only, restricted to individual or family viewing, except when permission is explicitly granted by the copyright holder.”

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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

The Freedom to Read Statement

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.

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