

Madison County Public Libraries Collection Development Policy

Introduction

The purpose of the Madison County Public Libraries is to select, organize and make freely and easily available to the people of the community printed and non-printed materials, within the limitations of space and budget, which will aid them in education, information, research, recreation, and culture, and in the use of leisure time.

The library recognizes that many books, newspapers and magazines are controversial and that any given item may offend someone. Selections will not be made on the basis of any assumed approval or disapproval, but solely on the merit of the work as it relates to the library's purpose and as it serves the needs and interests of the community as a whole.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and nothing will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from mutilation or theft.

Responsibility for the reading of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult materials will not be limited by the possibility that they may come into the possession of minors.

Patrons not finding desired material in the library's collection may request that it be purchased. Patrons finding certain library materials objectionable to the community may request that it be reconsidered by using the "*Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources*"¹ form.

The materials selection policy will be reviewed periodically by the staff to ensure that it meets community needs.

The "*Library Bill of Rights*"², the "*Freedom to Read Statement*"³, and the "*Freedom to View Statement*"⁴, as adopted by the American Library Association, are a part of this "*Collection Development Policy*".

Responsibility for Selection

The final responsibility for the selection of library materials, as for all library activities, rests with the Library Board of Trustees. However, the Board delegates to the Director authority to interpret and guide the application of this policy in making day-to-day selections.

Selection of Materials

The selection of materials is a prime activity within the library and is based on needs and requests of patrons of all ages, races, and creeds, and of organizations with a wide range of interests.

The library takes no sides on public issues, and does not attempt to promote any beliefs or points of view, nor does it endorse the opinions expressed in the materials held. The library recognizes its responsibility to provide materials presenting various points of view, within the limitations of space, budget, and availability to enable people to make their own decisions.

¹ See Page 7.

² See Page 8.

³ See Page 8.

⁴ See Page 11.

Criteria of Selection

Materials will be judged on the basis of the content and style of the work as a whole, not by selected or random passages or scenes.

No item in a library collection can be indisputably accepted or rejected by any established given guide or standard. However, certain basic principles can be applied as guidelines. Every item must meet one or more of the following criteria as are applicable to its inclusion in the collection.

- Contemporary or permanent value.
- Quality of writing, design, illustrations, or production.
- Reputation of the publisher or producer, authority and significance of the author, composer, film maker, etc.
- Relevance to community needs.
- Potential and/or known demand for the material.
- Price.
- Availability of materials elsewhere in the area.
- Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience.
- Availability and suitability of format.
- Attention of critics and reviewers.
- Space limitations.

Moreover, criteria for selection, withdrawal, and replacement of works of imagination - fiction, drama and poetry - also include:

- Representation of a significant genre or national culture.
- Originality.
- Literary quality.
- Strength of characterization and plot.
- Sustained interest.
- Authentic reflection of human experience.

Demand is a valid factor in book selection. Material selected for this service will be of popular interest and high demand or of significant current interest, not always enduring value. Best sellers are evaluated on their individual merits following selection policies.

Selection Aids

Selection of materials is done from book reviews in professional library and popular journals and magazines, subject bibliographies, annual lists of recommended titles, publishers' catalogs, customer requests, and salesmen for specific materials. The standard selection tools used by librarians include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Booklist
- Library Journal
- Publishers Weekly
- Kirkus
- New York Times Book Review
- Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
- Horn Book
- VOYA

Clientele to be Served

Adults

The library will make its first priority providing materials relevant to the day-to-day needs, interests, and activities of out-of-school adults. All backgrounds, abilities, and levels of education identifiable in the adult community served by the library will be taken into consideration as materials are selected.

The broad range of fiction poses a special problem in book selection. In selecting fiction, the library has set up no arbitrary single standard of literary quality. An attempt is made to satisfy a public varying greatly in education, interests, tastes, and reading skills.

Young Adults

It is essential that the library recognize the importance of providing services to meet the needs of the young adults, those citizens at the age between youth and maturity who no longer see themselves as children, but whom society does not recognize as adults. Here in Madison County, we consider young adults to be middle grade to senior high people from the age of twelve to the age of eighteen.

The young adult (YA) collection should bridge the gap between children's literature and adult's literature with emphasis on books centering on YA interests and informational needs. Varied reading and interest levels must be provided as there is a wide variation in sophistication and maturity levels in this group. It must be kept in mind that this is a period of rapid mental growth, widening interests, and changing ideas and attitudes.

The selection of materials for YAs should include:

Fiction

Both in hardback and paperback, a large portion of the collection will be YA classics (those books that have remained popular from year to year, i.e. books by Paula Danziger or Robert Cormier) and contemporary novels. Paperback copies of "just for fun" books such as Sweet Valley High romances, Christopher Pike, etc., are acceptable. A careful selection of historical fiction should be included as school assignments occasionally require these to be read. In addition, quality science fiction and fantasy written for YAs will be purchased based on reviews and requests.

Non-Fiction

Titles purchased for the YA collection should address topics of real concern to this age group, such as: hobbies, personal appearance, and popular culture. Non-fiction books should be accurate, current, clearly written and attractive in format.

Juveniles

The library will continue to target preschoolers in the interest of encouraging an appreciation of the library's resources during the formative years. To assist in this goal, the library will continue to offer story time programs and to purchase quantities of Everybody books. Everybody books may be either educational or recreational in intent, including picture books, concept books and board books.

For school age children, the library will purchase materials for informational, recreational and cultural needs, including classic literature, current hardback and paperback fiction, including genres such as mystery and suspense, sports, and science fiction. The library will encourage a continuous use of the public library for all children.

POLICIES BY FORMAT OF MATERIAL

Books

Most books, especially those considered to be of lasting value, are purchased in hardback. Books that are mainly for recreational reading will be purchased in paperback. Occasionally a title of lasting worth will be available only in paperback. Annual editions of reference materials and computer books will be purchased in paperback when available.

Large Print Materials

Large print materials are purchased to meet the needs of the community. They are all chosen by the same standards of format and content that apply to other materials purchased by the library. In addition to purchased books, the library also circulates a changing selection of large print books loaned to us by the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Video Collection

DVDs are added to the collection, following the same criteria as books. The video collection consists of a mix of feature films including current high interest and old classics, non-fiction films including self-help, educational, how-to, travel, etc., and children's films. No films which are rated "X" will be included in the library's collection, and any film whose sole aim is the arousal of pornographic interest or the excessive glorification of violence will not be selected.

Audio Books

Recorded books are purchased within the same guidelines as other books.

Newspapers

The Madison County Library subscribes to the Asheville Citizen-Times and the News-Record. Old issues of the News-Record and microfilm of the News-Record are kept.

Periodicals

For the most part, periodicals are selected using the same criteria as for books. Periodicals are purchased for general and popular reading. There is no attempt to purchase specialized periodicals for professionals, researchers or graduate students.

Branch Library Collections

Materials are purchased for the branch libraries with the interests, viewpoints and needs of the community served by the branch in mind. These collections contain a core collection of standard, essential works and popular materials. These collections offer a sample of the resources the modern public library has to offer.

Gifts

The library accepts gifts of materials, but reserves the right to evaluate and dispose of them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased-materials. Out-of-date material, duplicates of items for which additional copies are not needed, and material in poor physical condition will not be added to the collection. Such materials will be sold and the monies used for library purchases.

Suggestions of specific titles or subjects are welcomed when memorial or honor donations are given, but the final decision, based on the library collection, rests with the library.

The library does not accept gifts with “strings”.

The library cannot make a commitment to keep any collection or group of books on a special shelf apart from other books in the library. The library reserves the right to inter-shelve gifts with other materials on the same subject.

Individual volumes will be marked with bookplates identifying the donor if requested.

The library does not appraise gifts or provide evaluations of gifts for tax deductions or other purposes, but will acknowledge receipt of gifts in writing if requested by the donor.

Weeding

Weeding is the continuous evaluation of the library collection by the professional library staff. This process is an integral part of collection development and maintenance.

Basically, there are six criteria for weeding. Used with judgment and knowledge of our patrons, they are as follows:

1. Materials contain misleading and/or factually inaccurate information.
2. Materials are worn and beyond mending or rebinding.
3. Materials have been superseded by a new edition or by much better materials on the subject.
4. Materials are irrelevant to the needs and interests of our patrons.
5. Materials have no discernible literary or scientific merit.
6. Materials are not included in the standard public library bibliographies, and have not been checked out in three years.

Material will not be removed solely as a result of pressure or demand.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and courteous manner.

- ❑ When possible, patron concerns about library materials should be handled as they arise by the staff person to whom they are made.
- ❑ If the complaint is made at a public service desk, when the desk is busy, refer the complaint to your supervisor or whoever is on duty in a supervisory capacity.
- ❑ If the patron is still not satisfied after speaking with the Library Director, then the patron is encouraged to fill out a Patron Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form.
- ❑ The Library Director will offer a written response within fourteen days of receiving the form.
- ❑ If the patron is not satisfied with this response, he or she may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the Library Board of Trustees.
- ❑ Upon receiving a written appeal to the Library Director's response, the Chairperson will inform the Board of Trustees of the complaint at its next regularly scheduled meeting.
- ❑ The written appeal will be placed on the Trustees' agenda as new business. A public hearing will be held only if the majority of the Trustees, present and voting, vote in favor of the hearing. If approved, the public hearing will be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board of Trustees.
- ❑ The Library Board of Trustees must make a formal response to the complaint and/or hearing at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The Library Board of Trustees is the final board of appeal in reference to public library materials.

PATRON REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Board of Trustees of the Madison County Library has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the Library Director and has developed reconsideration procedures to address concerns about these resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to:

**Library Director
Madison County Public Library
1335 North Main Street
Marshall, NC 28753**

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Do you represent yourself? _____ Your organization? _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Video | <input type="checkbox"/> Display |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Recording |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Title _____

Author/ Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention? _____

3. Have you read/examined the entire resource? _____

4. What concerns you about the resource? (Use other side or additional pages if necessary)

5. Are there resources you suggest to provide additional information and/or viewpoints on this topic?

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; amended June 28, 1967; amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996

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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens 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 America 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 with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it 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 citizens 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. Revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000 & June 30, 2004 by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee. A Joint Statement by: American Library Association and Association of American Publishers

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:

To provide the broadest possible 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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

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.

To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer of film maker or on the basis of controversial content.

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. Additional copies may be obtained for \$1.00 (to cover postage and handling) from: American Film & Video Association, 920 Barnsdale Road, Suite 152, La Grange Park, Illinois 60525, (312)482-4000. Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990
