

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

1. Introduction:

Library materials are one of the greatest instruments of freedom and knowledge. They reflect mankind's history, knowledge, and ideas from the beginning of record.

It is in the public interest for libraries to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions. Freedom is not freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and inoffensive. The freedom to read is essential to our democracy.

The Board of Trustees of the DeKalb Library endorses the American Library Associations "Freedom to Read Statement" (Appendix M-1), the "Library Bill of Rights" (Appendix M-2), and "Statement on Labeling" (Appendix M-3). They are herewith incorporated into the Library's Materials Selection Policies. The library also accepts as its general purpose the following statement from Public Library Service (Chicago A.L.A. 1956, P.31): "The public library as an institution exists to provide materials which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another. Its function is to assemble, preserve and make available to all people the printed and other materials that will assist them."

2. Censorship:

The Board of Trustees, Library Director, paid and volunteer staff, and committees of the Library, while avoiding acquisition or retention of materials of little merit or little interest to the members and users of the Library, shall neither censor nor promote by disproportionate emphasis any particular political, moral, philosophical, patriotic, religious, or aesthetic convictions, opinions, or modes of expression.

The Board of Trustees, Library Director, paid and volunteer staff, and committees of the Library shall oppose, resist, and disregard every form of censorship from any source of authority. The fact that Library material may be the subject of a prosecution in the State of Illinois or elsewhere, or of a court decision in another state, or of a Federal Court decision involving importation, use of the mails, or interstate commerce shall be presumed to have no legal consequence to the Library, except that the precise terms of an order or competent jurisdiction shall not be violated.

The policies of the Library shall be based on the following considerations:

- a) That many Library materials which have been most controversial or objectionable to some persons or groups have, in due course, been recognized to be among those which most, rather than least, belong in public libraries.
- b) That the responsibility for materials selected by a child must rest with the parent or legal guardian. Children will not be limited to materials in the Youth Services collection, and selection of materials will not be limited or inhibited by the possibility that controversial materials may come into the hands of children.

- c) That if any idea or expression is truly dangerous or evil, the best protection against it is a public that has been exposed to it and has rejected it, and the least protection is a public that has been shielded from it by official or self-appointed guardians.
- d) That the guarantees of free speech and free press in the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Illinois apply with more than usual, not less than usual, force to controversial or objectionable expression.
- e) No act of the Board of Trustees, Library Director, paid and volunteer staff, and committees of the Library in accordance with these policies and considerations shall be reversed, countermanded, or penalized by any trustee, Librarian, or committee of the Library.

In the event that any person or group shall object to the Library's acquisition, display, or retention of any Library material on political, moral, philosophical, patriotic, religious, or aesthetic grounds, the objection shall be recognized as an indication that the Library material in question may well be of more than routine interest and may be likely to be desired by persons who wish to judge its merits and demerits for themselves. Objectors shall be notified of the Library's policies, either by providing them a copy of this policy or by other suitable means.

3. Role of the DeKalb Public Library:

In accordance with Illinois State Library requirements, and using the book "Planning and Role-Setting for Public Libraries", the Board of Trustees has determined that the Library can best serve the community by concentrating on being:

- a) Popular materials Library
- b) Reference Library
- c) Door to Learning
- d) Electronic information center
- e) Formal education support center
- f) Independent learning center
- g) Community information center
- h) Community activities center

To accomplish these aims, the Library states the following:

- 1) The Library is a community institution that attempts to meet the informational, cultural, recreational, and educational needs of all of the community residents regardless of age or formal schooling.
- 2) The character and emphasis of the Library's collection are influenced by the existence of other libraries in this area that provide specialized materials for a particular clientele. The Library does not duplicate expensive or seldom read or used materials that are available in other local libraries or through ILL.

4. Selection Guidelines:

The Library will assemble, preserve, organize, and offer guidance in the use of print and non-print materials that enable DeKalb residents to:

- a) Find reliable and current information and keep pace with significant ideas and with progress in all fields and knowledge
 - b) Become more familiar with their cultural heritage.
 - c) Supplement formal study and encourage informal self-education.
 - d) Become more enlightened citizens.
 - e) Become more capable in their occupations.
 - f) Develop their creative capacities and increase their appreciation of the arts, literature, and the sciences.
 - g) Promote personal and social well-being through an enjoyment of reading, viewing, and listening.
5. The Library will work with other agencies in order to realize more fully its aims.
 6. The Library will cooperate with the schools in order to:
 - a. Encourage good reading, viewing and listening habits among young people.
 - b. Orient young people in the proper use of the Library.
 - c. Help meet the supplementary reading needs of students in elementary, secondary, college, and adult-education classes.
 7. The library will enter into cooperative ventures with other libraries to provide better library service for DeKalb residents.
 8. To enable citizens to understand the world in which they live, the Library will attempt to provide materials that present widely diverse points of view, including those that may be controversial or unorthodox.

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Youth Services:

Materials for the Youth Services collection are selected to enrich the child's literary and artistic tastes, to satisfy his/her informational needs, and to provide recreational reading, listening, and viewing at all levels of growth. The basic policy of Library material selection for children is to choose the best new materials and replace and duplicate the older materials which have proved their worth.

Reviewing sources such as, but not limited to, *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Library Journal* are used in deciding what titles to add.

Assignment of maturity or reading level (picture books, easy reading, elementary grades, junior high school), is made according to prevailing norms, but is in no way intended to restrict any person in his or her use. Parents have the responsibility for guiding their minor children's reading, listening, or viewing.

Materials on sex education that have been reviewed favorably in the above-mentioned reviewing sources should be added as necessary.

Every effort will be made in the non-fiction collection to provide appropriate materials of general interest, as well as to support the school curriculum.

Ultimate responsibility for materials added to the collection rests with the Youth Services manager, although suggestions from staff and patrons are welcomed.

Audiovisual Services:

The audiovisual collection is designed to meet the information, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the Library's patrons. This collection includes music of all genres on compact disc; spoken fiction and non-fiction; DVDs including feature films, children's videos and non-fiction; periodicals pertinent to music and audiovisual technology; reference books on music and film.

Choices for the above-named formats are made through a variety of methods and from applicable sources including ratings and reviews, and staff and patron requests.

Feature films are considered for purchase based on reviews by recognized reviewers and rated lists. Award-winning films, both new and old, will be purchased for their unique contribution to film. Non-fiction and children's videos should be favorably reviewed in recognized sources.

Ultimately, selections of material, whatever the format, is based on reviews, requests and collection analysis.

Information Services:

The print reference collection is designed to be available to all patrons at all hours the Library is open. Digital databases are available via the Internet at all hours. The print materials do not leave the Library and are selected for accuracy of information, ease of use for quick answers, timeliness, and areas of great or frequent interest.

Ultimate responsibility for materials added to the collection rests with the head of the department, although input from other staff and from patrons is encouraged.

Various selection aids are used in deciding actual titles to add. These include:

1. Reviewing sources such as, but not limited to, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, New York Times Book Review.
2. Publishers' catalogs, and brochures or sales representatives.
3. Recommendations from persons with knowledge and background in the subject area.

Adult Collection:

A general and diversified collection of materials will be provided in the Adult area of the Library.

In fields of law and medicine, materials are provided for the layman, not for the specialist.

No attempt is made to supply textbooks used in schools and colleges in this area. However, no book will be excluded simply because it is a textbook.

Paperback books may be purchased to supplement the collection and to duplicate titles and subject in demand.

Periodicals are selected as the most current course of news, information, and opinion; for their value in research; and for recreational reading.

Materials that have received favorable reviews in recognized sources will be provided on sex education and sexual issues.

Some of the reviewing sources used include, but are not limited to: *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, book review sections from newspapers, and general interest periodicals such as *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Scientific American*.

Books specifically requested by individual patrons will be purchased whenever possible if they will serve to enrich the collection and if they fit the Library's selection criteria.

In general, Library materials are excluded for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Inaccurate information.
2. Lack of integrity.
3. Present one side only of a controversial question and written in a violent, sensational, inflammatory manner, or make false or undocumented statements. However, it is the Library's responsibility to provide materials that will enable the citizens to form their own opinions. Therefore, the Library may provide materials that may be argumentative, representing different points of view.
4. Professional works in law and medicine.
5. Ephemeral books and other materials not purchased because of cost, slight demand or availability elsewhere; picture books that are too expensive for content.
6. Out-of-date material with information that is no longer accurate or when newer information is available.
7. Library materials that may add nothing new to a field already well covered in other sources

Responsibility for the selection Library materials belongs legally to the Board of Trustees but is delegated to the Library Director, who has the sole and final authority for materials selection within the guidelines of these policies.

Religious Materials:

The DeKalb Library will endeavor to build religious collections that offer a broad spectrum of information on the texts, doctrines, history, and leaders of all major religions and religious philosophies. To achieve this end, the Library will ordinarily purchase any religious materials of broad general interest. Library materials that proselytize, propagandize, or foster intolerance toward other religions will not be included in the Library collection. Library materials published church-owned or church-sponsored publishing houses or other organizations will be accepted as gifts or will be purchased when they meet selection criteria.

WITHDRAWAL OF MATERIALS

General Procedures:

Systematic removal from the Library collection of materials no longer useful is essential to maintaining the purposes and quality of resources. Such removal, or "weeding," should be done regularly, taking into account the following factors:

1. Physical condition of the material due to damage or normal wear and tear.
2. Provision in the Library of adequate coverage in the subject area.
3. Availability of special materials in more comprehensive library collections in this area.
4. Outdated materials, especially in non-fiction titles.
5. Those materials deemed no longer useful to the Library's collection may be disposed of at the discretion of the Director.

PATRON COMPLAINTS

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees not to remove arbitrarily any book or other circulating or reference material that is in the Library's collection.

Complaints from patrons regarding Library materials shall be handled in the following manner:

1. Complaints shall be in writing on a form provided for that purpose (Appendix M-4) and signed.
2. The Director shall respond to the complainant.
3. The Director shall inform the Board, but shall not name the complainant without the consent of the complainant.
4. If the complaint cannot be solved satisfactorily between the Director and the complainant, the complainant shall be invited to attend the next Board meeting.
5. The Director is assured the backing of the Board.
6. If the complainant chooses to request a hearing by the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting, the following should be understood:

All meetings of the DeKalb Library Board of Trustees are open to the public. However, addressing the Board is a privilege granted specifically by the Board. To understand how the hearing will be structured, the following outline is provided. Because other business must be considered at each meeting, stated limits on the number of speakers and the time allotted to each speaker may be set by the Board if necessary.

- a. Presentation of reconsideration request by petitioner.
- b. Recommendation of Director.
- c. Comments by interested parties.
- d. Questions to participants from Library Board.
- e. Action by Board or scheduling of date for action.

GIFTS OF MATERIALS

The Library accepts gifts of books, sound recordings, paperbacks, periodical subscriptions, and other library materials. Appropriate acknowledgement will be made of such gifts.

In the case of used books and other materials, the judgment of the librarian will prevail as to whether such books will be integrated into the collection.

Receipts for income tax purposes will be given when requested for gifts made to the Library. The valuation of the materials donated must be made by the donor.

In the case of non-restricted cash gifts over \$250.00, the Director will refer the matter to the Board with recommendations.

BEQUESTS AND TRUSTS

The following guiding principles have been adapted from the "Statement of Policy regarding Gifts and Bequests to Libraries" adopted by the Council of the American Library Association:

1. Any program for gifts and bequests should be formulated carefully and with long-term objectives which should be kept constantly in the public mind.
2. The DeKalb Library encourages memorials in the form of funds for Library purposes and development of trust funds because they represent the opportunity to carry on the life interest of an individual or a group and can continue a beneficent service throughout the years.
3. The Library encourages individuals to write bequests to the Library into their wills and emphasizes that a modest bequest is just as dignified and acceptable as a large one. The Library may also be a suitable beneficiary of an insurance policy.
4. In considering any bequest to the DeKalb Library (of materials, money, or physical property), the donor is strongly urged to consult the Library Director in order to make the benefaction of the greatest possible use both for the present and for the future.

AREAS OF SPECIAL ACQUISITION

The DeKalb Library through its local history collection preserves literature and photographs that document the history of DeKalb and provide a record of current and past happenings in the community.

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

APPENDIX M-1

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

1. 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.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Material should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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

Amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980

By the ALA Council

APPENDIX M-2

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label “controversial” books, 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 the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subject to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. 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.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally unavailable ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections. We believe that free communications 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 ment 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 which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which 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 contained in the books 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 books 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 man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author. A book should be judged as a book. 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 men can flourish which draws up lists or 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 literature 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; not can machinery be devised which 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 book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The idea of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. 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. 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 each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes 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.
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, book men 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 expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their facilities, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out of lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed 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.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association

Association of American Publishers

Originally issued in 1953

APPENDIX M-3

STATEMENT ON LABELING

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Labeling is the practice of describing or designating certain library materials by affixing a prejudicial label to them or segregating them by a prejudicial system. The American Library Association opposes this as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor's tool.
2. Some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association opposes the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library.

The American Library Association opposes efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge. The statement does not, however, exclude the adoption of organizational schemes designated as directional aids or to facilitate access to materials.

Adopted July 13, 1951. Amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981 by the ILA Council.

APPENDIX M-4

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____ Phone # _____

Are you a registered borrower of this library? _____

Are you representing Self _____

Organization _____

Organization name

Author _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Material was read Thoroughly _____

Partially _____ Which parts? _____

PLEASE BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR ANSWERS. IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED, USE BACK OR ADDITIONAL SHEET.

What do you believe is the purpose of this material? _____

What elements of value did you find in the material? _____

What is your objection to the material? _____

What do you feel might be the result of reading or using this material? _____

In its place, what material on this subject would you recommend? _____

Signature _____

Received by _____ Date _____

Audiovisual Services:

The audiovisual collection is designed to meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of the Library's patrons. This collection includes music of all genres on compact disc and audiocassette; spoken fiction and non-fiction, both unabridged and abridged, on CD and audiocassette; videos and DVD's including feature films, children's videos and non-fiction; CD-ROMs for children and adults of an educational nature; periodicals pertinent to music and audiovisual technology; and reference books on music and film.

Choices for the above-named formats are made through a variety of methods and from applicable sources including ratings and reviews, and staff and patron requests.

Feature films are considered for purchase based on reviews by recognized reviewers and rated lists. Award-winning films, both new and old, will be purchased for their unique contribution to film. Non-fiction and children's videos should be favorably reviewed in recognized sources.

Ultimately, selections of materials, whatever the format, is based on reviews, requests and collection analysis.

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