

C. C. Mellor Memorial Library Collection Development Policy

1. Purpose

This policy describes the nature of C.C. Mellor Memorial Library's collection and provides guidance to staff in developing and maintaining the collection. The continuous review of the Library collection, one of the Library's major assets, is necessary as a mean of maintaining an active collection that meets the interests and needs of its users.

2. Definitions

Collection Development: includes the planning, selection, acquiring, cataloging, and weeding of the Library's collection of all formats.

Library Materials: include, but are not limited to, the following formats: books, periodicals, reference materials, newspapers, and audiovisual materials such as audiocassettes, CDs, VHS tapes, DVDs, CD-ROM software, educational on-line databases available using the Internet.

Weeding or De-selection: is the regular, on-going, and systematic evaluation process whereby Library materials are withdrawn from the collection based on specific criteria such as outdated, worn, damaged, and/or duplicated material.

Reconsideration of Library Materials: is the process in which a Library patron files a complaint or a request concerning a specific item owned by the Library.

3. Objectives

The C. C. Mellor Memorial Library selects, organizes, and provides open access to information, resources and services that help community residents meet their personal, educational, cultural, vocational, recreational and professional information needs. The Library strives to provide the best possible collection for users within its financial resources and space constraints. The decision to select an item is based on patron demand, anticipated need, timeliness, and the effort to maintain a wide and balanced collection. The Library recognizes its responsibility to provide a wide range of materials for users of all ages, education levels, and socio-economic backgrounds. All materials are available for use by all customers.

The collection is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet current needs. The collection is current and popular, not archival, and provides general coverage of subjects that reflect the characteristics of the community.

The Library strives to maintain materials representing all sides of an issue in a neutral, unbiased manner. Selection of materials by the Library does not mean endorsement of the contents or views expressed in those materials. The existence of a particular point of view in the collection is an expression of the Library's policy of intellectual freedom.

The C. C. Mellor Memorial Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View statements of the American Library Association which are included at the end of this policy.

4. Selection Criteria

C. C. Mellor Memorial Library selects material for its collection in accordance with professionally accepted professional guidelines. Ultimate responsibility for selection materials lies with the Library Director within the framework of these guidelines established by the Board of Trustees. Specific selection responsibilities are delegated to appropriate staff members, such as selection of children's and young adult materials to the Children's and Young Adult Librarian.

Library materials are selected on the basis of informational, educational, cultural and recreational value to the community. Materials are selected in compliance with the mission and goals of the library. Space and budget constraints, as well as the ready accessibility of materials in other Allegheny County libraries and through interlibrary loan, are also considerations in selection.

Due to finite resources there are certain items that the Library does not collect:

- Rare books, unless they are of a local history nature.
- Textbooks, unless subject material is not readily available in other resources.

The community has a role in shaping the Library collection by participating in its development through suggestions and feedback. This includes reserve requests, purchase suggestions, and reconsideration of Library materials.

4.1 Collection Development and Management Criteria

In building a collection to meet the needs of residents, Library staff evaluates materials according to one or more of the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable.

General criteria:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs.
- Suitability of physical form for Library use.
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience.
- Cost.
- Importance as a document of the times.
- Relation to the existing collection.
- Relation to other material on the subject.
- Attention by critics and reviewers.
- Potential user appeal.
- Requests by the public.

Content criteria:

- Authority.
- Comprehensiveness.
- Skill, competence and purpose of author.

- Objectivity.
- Consideration of work as a whole.
- Clarity.
- Currency.
- Technical quality.
- Representation of diverse points of view.
- Representation of important movements, genres or trends.
- Vitality and originality.
- Artistic presentation and/or experimentation.
- Sustained interest.
- Relevance and use of the information.
- Effectiveness of characterization.
- Authenticity of history or social setting.

Special considerations for electronic information resources:

- Ease of use of the product.
- Availability of the information to multiple, concurrent users.
- Technical requirements to provide access to the information.
- Technical support and training.

4.2 Gifts

Items donated to the Library or given as a memorial or in honor of an individual must meet the same standards as other items selected for inclusion in the collection. If a donated item is not added to the Library's collection, it will be placed in the Library's Annual Book Sale. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift, donation, or memorial either before or after its acceptance by the Library.

5. Weeding/De-selection

An active and continuous weeding program is essential in maintaining a viable and useful collection. Materials are withdrawn from the collection through systematic weeding because of loss or physical damage. The following criteria are used in deselection of materials:

- Worn or mutilated items.
- Duplicate copies of seldom used titles.
- Materials which contain outdated or inaccurate information.
- Superseded editions of specific titles.
- Materials no longer of interest or demand.

The Library does not automatically replace all materials due to loss or damage. Decisions on replacement are made with the following criteria: demand for item, existing coverage of the subject in the collection, relevancy, availability, and cost.

6. Reconsideration of Materials

The Board of Trustees recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the collection. The Board and staff further believe that reading is an individual, private matter. While an individual is free to

select or reject materials for himself, he cannot restrict the freedom of others to read or inquire. Responsibility for children's choice of reading materials rest with their parents or legal guardians. The Library does not stand "in loco parentis".

Individuals may request reconsideration of a selection decision of Library materials by submitting a written request for reconsideration to the Library Director. The Library Director will review the request and respond to the individual in writing.

The Board of Trustees, upon request, hears appeals of the Director's written response. Appeals must be presented in writing to the Board of Trustees at least ten days in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting. Decisions on appeals are based on careful review of the objection, the item in question, and the American Library Association's Guidelines on Intellectual Freedom.

Library Bill of Rights (American Library Association)

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

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

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

The Freedom to Read Statement (American Library Association)

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 (American Library Association)

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