

WEYAUWEGA MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Adopted _____
Amended _____

I. Objectives

The "Library Bill of Rights" and the "Freedom to Read" statement shall be the basis for the selection of materials.

Adopted June 18, 1948

Amended February 1, 1961, by the ALA Council

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basis policies which should govern the services of all libraries:

- a. As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality of the political or religious views of the writer.
- b. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national and local and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- c. Censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the printed word.
- d. Libraries should enlist the cooperation of allied groups in the fields of science, of education, and of book publishing in resisting all abridgment of the free access to ideas and full freedom of expression that are the tradition and heritage of Americans.
- e. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins or political views.
- f. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members.

ALA FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The Freedom to Read

Source: Intellectual Freedom Manual, Third Edition,

Compiled by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, American Library Association, Chicago and London, 1989, Pages 91-95

American Library Association

50 E. Huron Street

Chicago, IL 60611

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 the 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 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 subjected 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 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 solution, 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 available 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 communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards 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:

a. 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 that 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 adopt 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.

b. Publishers and librarians 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 the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

c. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

d. The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced. Beyond that, there is no place in our society for extra-legal 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.

e. 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.

f. 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.

g. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

II. Responsibility

The end responsibility for selection of all materials, as well as for all library activities, rests with the librarian who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Weyauwega Public Library Board. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff, however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

III. Criteria for selection

Points to be considered in all selection; adult, children and young adult, are literary, readability, timeliness of work, educational, and significance of author as a writer, and available funds. Appearance of title in special bibliographies of indexes will also be used as a guideline. Selection aids to be used in building the library's collection include the standard lists, professional periodicals, book publisher catalogs and library awards and prizes. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed on public media. Materials are judged on basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

IV. Interlibrary Loan

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested.

Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of this library's collection.

In return for utilizing interlibrary loan to satisfy the needs of our patrons, the Weyauwega Public Library agrees to lend its materials to other libraries through the same interlibrary loan network, and to make an effort to have its current holdings listed in a tool that is accessible by other libraries throughout the state.

V. Gifts and Donations

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if appropriate and needed. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information the director can dispose of them as he/she sees fit. The same criteria of selection which are applied to purchased materials are applied to gifts. Memorial gifts of books or money are also accepted and if requested suitable bookplates will be placed in the book/books. Specific memorial books can be ordered for the library on request of a patron if the request meets the criteria established by the Board. It is desirable for gifts of or for a specific titles to be offered after consultation with the library director. Book selection will be made by the director if no specific book is requested. The Weyauwega Public Library encourages and appreciates gifts and donations.

By law, the library is not allowed to appraise the value of donated materials, though it can provide an acknowledgment of receipt of the items if requested by the donor.

VI. Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library director and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. The "Crew Manual" will be used as a tool in weeding. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials.

VII. Potential Problems or Challenges

The Weyauwega Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons, but selection of titles will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of established

professional standards and the principles stated in this policy.

Materials will not be marked or identified by the Library to show approval, disapproval, or any other evaluation of their contents by the Library.

Parents or legal guardians have sole responsibility for the use of materials by their minor children. Selection of materials for Weyauwega Public Library collections will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

VIII. Challenged Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise difference of opinion regarding suitable materials. When a patron objects to a particular selection, the objections shall be made in writing and the following procedures will be adhered to in processing the complaint.

1. The party registering the complaint will complete a copy of the **Citizen's request for Reconsideration of a Work** form. Sample is attached to the materials policy.
2. The Staff will be asked to submit a written statement indicating why the material was chosen and how it contributes to the accomplishment of public library goals and adds to the collection.
3. The complainant shall submit the completed form to the Library Board or the Librarian. The Library Board will review the material being questioned. In reviewing material, they shall utilize professionally selected aids, check general acceptance of materials by reading reviews, weigh values and faults against each other and form opinion based on the material as a whole and not on parts pulled out of context. Following individual review of the material the Library Board shall meet to discuss the material and prepare a report. One copy of the report shall be given to the complainant, one copy to the Librarian and one copy will remain with the Library Board.
4. The decision of the Library Board is final.