

Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association

Library Collection Development Policy

I. PREFACE AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association's mission is to support the appreciation and preservation of local history, and to nourish the joy of reading, the discovery of ideas, and the power of information. The central library, based in Montrose, serves as the center for library activity in the county and provides services to the library locations in Forest City, Susquehanna, and Hallstead and also to Outreach Services. The SCHS & FLA participates in Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Libraries System, including the InterLibrary Loan program, through the Northeast District Library Center. The Library's Collection Development Policies and Practices must respond to the rights of citizens throughout Susquehanna County to obtain information for the individual interests and needs and to obtain materials for their educational and recreational use. The policy statements which follow are intended to guide the selection and acquisition of print and non-print materials for the libraries of the SCHS & FLA and to reflect the association's continuing commitment to meet the needs of the public which it serves.

II. GENERAL POLICY

A. RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Responsibility for policies concerning selection of reference materials and a circulating collection of books and other materials resides ultimately with the Board of Trustees of the Association. The responsibility for collection development rests primarily with the Administrator/Librarian who operates within the framework of the Board's policies and who delegates tasks to various staff members as deemed appropriate.

B. GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The selection of materials for the collection is a process based on: the needs of the community; familiarity with the materials in the collection; awareness of appropriate bibliographies and professional selection tools; consideration of financial resources of the Association; the principles of the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Act, and the Freedom to View (see Appendix I - III); and compliance with the Pennsylvania Public Library Code and regulations of the Pennsylvania State Library and Advisory Council on Library Development, and in accordance with guidelines from the Governor's Advisory Council on Library Development. The collection is developed primarily to provide the resources required to satisfy the needs of the population of Susquehanna County, and secondarily to offer courtesy service to non-residents in accordance with the Association's goals. Criteria such as accuracy, clarity, permanent or timely value, authoritativeness, and social, historical or literary significance will be considered. Through consideration of demographic, economic, and socio-cultural trends and accumulated circulation data, efforts will be made to identify and meet the needs of the population.

Flexibility and constant awareness of changing needs will be characteristic of the Collection Development process. The library materials covered by this policy may be in any form or language which meets the needs of the public, including printed and nonprinted materials.

C. GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR DISCARDING MATERIALS

The same standards are applied to material withdrawals as are applied to acquisitions. Given the size and scope of the collection, the limited physical durability of library materials, the demand for use and circulation, and special constraints, an average turnover rate of five to ten years is predicted for the collection. Periodic weeding of all materials is necessary. The library does not necessarily replace the exact materials that are lost, damaged, or worn out. The decision to replace is heavily influenced by continuing demand. Other factors to consider are: the number of duplicate copies; existence of adequate coverage in the field with remaining materials; the availability of copies elsewhere in the network; and the availability and replacement cost of the specific work. Materials that are withdrawn from the collection will be disposed of in one or more of the following ways:

1. Public sale,
2. Donations to the other local libraries or,
3. Items that have deteriorated beyond use will be recycled if possible or disposed of in a discreet manner.

III. DONATIONS

In accordance with Article 8, Section A of the Association By-Laws, the Administrator/Librarian shall be responsible for the recording and acknowledging of all significant gifts and bequests to the Corporation with the date and the name of the donor.

A legal instrument of conveyance, a Deed of Gift Form, may be requested for certain gift items at the discretion of the Administrator/Librarian. Gifts of print or non-print materials from individuals and organizations are evaluated according to the same selection policy that covers the acquisition of purchased materials. The acceptance of a gift by the Corporation does not mean that the Corporation will ultimately add the gift to the collection. Title to all donated objects should be obtained free and clear without restrictions to use or future. Acknowledgment of the gift will be made upon the donor's request and a copy kept on file for a period of five years.

A. GIFT ITEMS

Gifts of Library materials are accepted with the understanding that materials not selected for addition to the collection will be disposed of according to the stated guidelines. Gifts are accepted without restrictions placed by the donor.

B. MEMORIALS

A Memorial Gift Form card will be used to record memorial donations and gift materials. All gifts are subject to the rules and regulations of the Collection Development Policy. The Memorial Gift Form card will be kept on file for a period of five (5) years. An acknowledgment is immediately sent to a person or persons designated by the donor. When the memorial item has been purchased, items are recorded in a memorial card file arranged alphabetically by the name of the deceased. It will bear the name of the memorial item and the name of the donor along with the name of the owning library. Notification is then sent to the designated person, describing the memorial item. Notification is also sent to the donor. As further acknowledgment, a plate will be placed on the memorial item stating the name of the honoree and the donor. Memorial items can be disposed of according to the stated guidelines.

IV. COMPLAINTS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. VERBAL PROCEDURE

The staff will attempt to create an atmosphere wherein citizens will feel free to discuss collection development policies and make suggestions or recommendations. Citizens offering complaints, suggestions or recommendations will be given respect and attention. Staff will be familiar with this Collection Development Policy and the related appendices and will attempt to explain this policy in a courteous, informal conversation. Staff will offer interested inquirers a copy of the Collection Development Policy and related appendices for review. If the citizen asks to speak to someone higher in authority, the staff will refer him or her to the Administrator/Librarian or make an appointment if the Administrator/ Librarian is not available. Inquirers may be offered a form to complete for submission to the Administrator/Librarian. Telephone complaints will be handled in a similar manner with appropriate forms mailed to citizens when necessary. Staff shall note the date, time, name and address, and topic to be discussed so that the appropriate contact can be made.

B. WRITTEN PROCEDURE

When a citizen expresses a desire to file a complaint or make a written suggestion or recommendation, a form will be provided by the staff member to whom the desire is expressed. The forms, "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Any Library Material" or "Citizen's Suggestions and Recommendations," will be available at the circulation desk and will be given with the suggestion that the citizen complete it and return it to the Library.

All completed forms will be filed with the Administrator/Librarian, who will attempt to reply within one month. The Administrator/Librarian must inform the citizen of a written complaint, suggestion or recommendation whenever a waiting period longer than one month will be necessary. The Administrator/Librarian will respond to the citizen citing appropriate policy statement. In the event the citizen wishes to pursue a matter subsequent to the response from the Administrator/Librarian, a second form shall be submitted to the President of the Board of Trustees of the Association. All items will be given serious consideration.

APPENDIX I

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 that 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.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual.

APPENDIX II

FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them.

To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and

teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose.

What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety

and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses, Inc.
The Children's Book Council
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

APPENDIX III

FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association
CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Board of Trustees of the Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association (Board) has delegated the responsibility of the selection and evaluation of library resources to the Administrator / Librarian and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. The Administrator / Librarian may consult the Board in the reconsideration process.

Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. The information you share in this form will be part of the review process. Note that the information you provide may be shared with the Board. Please be thorough in your responses.

You will be notified of the decision of the Administrator/Librarian via email or mailed letter.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

Do you represent self? ____ Organization? ____

Resource on which you are commenting:

____ Book ____ Audio Recording ____ Video ____ Magazine ____ Newspaper ____ Database

____ Library Program ____ Library Display

____ Other _____

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

Have you examined/read/listened/viewed the entire resource? ____ Yes ____ No

Please comment on the work/resource as a whole. What are your specific concerns about the work?

Quote one or more passages from the item that illustrates your concern.

Would you regard the item as appropriate for any age group? If so, which?

What do you feel might be the result of experiencing/viewing this item?

Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

Other comments that would be helpful to the Administrator / Librarian reviewing this request?

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CITIZEN'S SUGGESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

All submitted ideas will be given serious consideration. Ideas submitted in writing will have a response within one month of filing whenever possible. Whenever a longer period is involved, the submitter will be so advised.

Date

Signature

Address

Phone

Name of Staff Member receiving form

1. What suggestion or recommendation do you wish to make?

2. How will this improve existing conditions or practices?

3. What will be the impact of your idea in terms of space, time, money, personnel or other significant cc

4. Who will be the primary beneficiary if your idea is implemented?

5. Would portions of the public served by this Association be less able to benefit from this idea than others?