

Materials Selection Policy
Completely Revised
Adopted by the Board of Trustees
June 28, 2004
Reviewed and Re-approved September 24, 2007

Mission Statement

*Carroll Public Library provides materials and services
to promote and satisfy the thirst for information, knowledge, and a good story.*

This selection policy is intended to implement the mission of the Carroll Public Library. The purpose of the selection process is to obtain expertly selected books and other materials which further the Library's purpose of providing information, reference assistance, and recreational material of general interest.

The Carroll Public Library—its Trustees and staff—fully believe in and support the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights", the "Freedom to Read," and the "Freedom to View" documents. (pp. 6-11)

General Guidelines

1. Because the Library serves a public embracing a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and reading skill, it will always seek to select materials of varying complexity. Further, it shall be the aim of the Library to serve all patrons regardless of age, physical, social, economic, ethnic, or educational status.
2. In selecting materials for the collections, the Library will pay due regard to the special, commercial, industrial, cultural, and civic enterprises of the community.
3. The Library does not attempt to acquire textbooks or other curriculum-related materials except as such materials also serve the general public.
4. Responsibility for children's use of materials rests with their parents, guardians, or legal custodians. Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that they may inadvertently come into the possession of children.
5. The Library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the collections and to serving the interests of readers.
6. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and no material will be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting it from damage.

Responsibility for Materials Selection

Final responsibility for materials selection lies with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies and objectives determined by the Library Board.

The Library Director will delegate to staff members authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections. Unusual problems will be referred to the Director for resolution.

All staff members selecting library materials will be expected to apply their professional knowledge and experience in making decisions.

Selection Criteria

Within the limits of space and budget, the following shall be considered in the selection of all library materials.

- Accuracy of material
- Currency of information
- Authority/reputation of the author
- Usefulness/relevance to user needs
- Format
- Historical significance
- Lasting value
- Visual appearance and appeal
- Technical/Physical quality (literary and artistic)
- Age appropriateness
- Scope of coverage
- Treatment of subject matter
- Variety of existing material on subject matter
- Popular appeal and demand
- Reputation of the publisher

Selection Process

The librarian will use selection aids such as basic and current general lists, special bibliographies for subject materials, book reviewing journals, and other selection tools appropriate to the materials to be selected. Patrons' requests will be given special consideration. The Library's present resources and acquaintance with the preferences of local readers will also be given special consideration.

Deselection (Weeding) of Library Materials

Weeding or discarding of library materials is an on-going process. This regular evaluation of the collection enhances the reputation of the Library as a public service agency that offers accurate, timely information to its patrons. It also assures the orderly maintenance of a quality collection.

The Library will make every attempt to replace lost or damaged materials, provided that there is still demand for the item and that the item is still available.

Materials that are out-dated, worn or damaged, or no longer in demand will be discarded. Local history materials and classic pieces of literature are an exception.

Two professional tools, Children's Catalog for Public Libraries and Standard Catalog of Public Libraries, are especially useful in the weeding process. The following criteria are also considered:

- Condition of the book
- Validity of the book's contents
- Demand
- Cost comparison-mending, rebinding, replacing, withdrawing
- Historical value
- Literary significance

Weeded materials are offered for sale to the public. All profits from these sales go to the Carroll City General Fund.

Gifts and Memorials

As a general rule, the Carroll Public Library will accept gifts only if there is no condition imposed on their use, location, rebinding or disposal. Special gifts or collections will not be accepted with restrictions which necessitate special shelving or which prevent integration of the gift into the general collection. In deciding whether or not a specific gift item will be added to the Library's collection, the same standards are applied as are used in the selection of an item for purchase.

It is preferable to have money donated to the Library for memorial books or audiovisual items with a subject field specified rather than with a specific title stated. All titles of memorial items should be cleared with the Library Director in advance so that there will be no misunderstandings with regard to its acceptance. If the patron so desires, the Library will be happy to order the desired item and the patron will be billed at the wholesale price. Memorial items will be labeled with appropriate names. Beginning July 1, 2004 a record of memorial items will be created and made available to the public.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

It is the intent of this policy to provide for our library patrons and the Carroll Public Library, a process for reconsideration of library materials. The goal of this process is to provide fair and equal service to every individual. It is also the intent of this policy to provide a guideline for processing written concerns library patrons may have regarding materials in the library's collection.

Library users have individual needs and wants. Therefore, no one person can exercise censorship to restrict access of the material to others. Individuals are responsible for choosing their own materials. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for the selection of materials for children.

The Carroll Public Library supports and endorses the Intellectual Freedom Statements: "Freedom to Read", "Freedom to View" and the "Library Bill of Rights." Copies of these documents are available upon request. (see pp. 6-11)

Patrons wishing reconsideration of library materials should:

1. Complete a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form.
2. Be furnished with published reviews of the material when possible.

Requests for reconsideration will be reviewed by all members of the Library Board and the Library Director acting as an advisor. The Board will decide by majority vote using Robert Rules of Order as to the validity of the request for removal. Each Board member must have read the materials in question.

The Board will take one of the following actions:

1. Maintain current status of the material
2. Change the location of the material
3. Remove the material from circulation

During deliberation, the item in question will maintain its current status. The Library Board will meet and then notify the patron, in writing of its findings.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Please provide the following information about the library material you want to be reconsidered. Continue on the other side of this page if necessary:

Title:

Author (does not apply to all formats):

Format: ___book ___video ___audiocassette ___CD ___DVD

Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? ___yes ___no

Which aspects of the material are you concerned about? Please be specific; list page numbers or sections of the work, and what is objectionable.

Is there anything good about this material?

Have you read the library's Materials Selection Policy and any reviews that may have been provided to you? ___yes ___no

What action do you recommend the Library Board take:

_____ Change the item's location (for example from Children's to Young Adult).

_____ Withdraw the item from the library.

_____ Other. (Please explain.)

Are there other works you recommend to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

Signature

Date

Thank you for your interest in the library.

Library Bill of Rights

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

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

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,
by the ALA Council.

The 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary 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 misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. 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.

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.

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 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 that challenges the established

orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

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

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

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

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

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

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

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

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. 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.*

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.

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

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

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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

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

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#) and
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently Endorsed by:

- [American Association of University Professors](#)
- [American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)
- [American Society of Journalists and Authors](#)
- [American Society of Newspaper Editors](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith](#)
- [Association of American University Presses](#)
- [Center for Democracy & Technology](#)
- [The Children’s Book Council](#)
- [The Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)
- [Feminists for Free Expression](#)
- [Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
- [International Reading Association](#)
- [The Media Institute](#)
- [National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
- [National PTA](#)
- [Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays](#)
- [PEN American Center](#)
- [People for the American Way](#)
- [Student Press Law Center](#)
- [The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

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 guarantees 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 by the ALA Council January 10, 1990