

PERTH AMBOY FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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WWW.PERTHAMBOYPUBLICLIBRARY.ORG

Collection Development Policy

Introduction

The Perth Amboy Free Public Library is a community institution dedicated to providing the public with carefully selected materials to aid the individual in the in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure and the creative use of leisure time. The Collection Development Policy upholds the mission of the Perth Amboy Public to serve all the people of Perth Amboy equally and impartially to the best of our ability by providing the best and most useful resources to meet the informational needs of the entire community.

This Collection Development Policy provides guidelines for the library staff in their role as selectors of library materials. It also serves as a method of communicating the Library's principles to the public, the Library's funders, and other libraries. Collection development is the ongoing process of assessing the materials available for purchase or licensing and making the decision, first on their inclusion and second, on their retention.

The American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, The Freedom to View, Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors, and The New Jersey Library Association's People's Rights to Libraries have been endorsed and adopted by The Board of Trustees. The principles therein espoused are integral parts of this policy.

The collection development policy, like all other library policies, will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is a living document that addresses up to date collection and library concerns.

Clientele and Situation

The Perth Amboy Free Public Library serves a diverse community of over 50,000 residents plus many others who work in the community. Perth Amboy is an eclectic and ethnically diverse community and within broad categories are individuals with different needs, backgrounds and ambitions.

The Library is a member of the Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium and cooperatively loans and borrows books from other member libraries. Additionally the Library is also a member of the Libraries of Middlesex, Middlesex Union Reciprocal Area Libraries (M.U.R.A.L.) and also has arrangements with a state supported inter-library loan system. By participating in such agreements, Perth Amboy Residents are permitted to use other libraries and the library can supplement its resources with materials borrowed from other libraries through these larger entities

Scope of the Collection

The primary goal of collection development is to provide the best possible collection with the

financial resources available. The decision to select any item for the collection is based on demand, anticipated need, and the effort to maintain a wide and balanced collection, representing all sides on an issue. The policy does not require the trustees to purchase or discard any particular book or materials in the collection unless the book either fulfills or fails to meet the mission of the library.

The inclusion of an item in the library collection in no way represents an endorsement of its contents. Only individuals can determine what is most appropriate for their needs and can define what materials or information is consistent with their personal or family values. Parents and legal guardians have the responsibility for their children's use of library materials.

Professional and special materials, such as legal, medical and religious works, are only purchased if they are of general interest.

The Library does not support educational curriculums through the purchase of textbooks. Textbooks may be added to the collection if they provide the best or only source of information on a subject, or to complement an existing area with another perspective.

The majority of the Library's materials are in English, however there are collections of materials in other languages such as Spanish and Polish, to serve users who prefer those languages. Materials relating to Perth Amboy, Middlesex County and New Jersey (in that order) will be emphasized.

Selection Criteria

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process that involves a general knowledge of the topic and an understanding of the community's needs. Library materials are selected on the basis of informational, educational, cultural and recreational value. These materials are selected in compliance with the mission and goals of the library. The following evaluation criteria include but are not limited to:

- Public demand and anticipated demand
- Importance and value to the collection and library users
- Significance of the subject matter
- Local interest
- Cost and budgetary constraints
- Authority, accuracy, and artistic quality,

Reviews from professional and popular media are a major source of information about new materials. Standard bibliographies, indexes, book and media lists by recognized authorities, including best seller lists, and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas also may be used.

Not all materials and information found via the Internet are part of the collection. Only web-

based resources accessed over the Internet that are specifically, selected using the criteria outlined in this policy are a part of the collection. Special consideration for electronic information sources are:

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

The Library also maintains a website to provide information about the library to the public and to assist patrons in doing further research. Links are provided to useful subject-focused sites which provide accurate information. The criteria for selecting and retaining links are the sites' educational and informational value and currency. The Library attempts to provide balance when linking to sites containing controversial information. Sites whose apparent sole purpose is advertising will be avoided. Indicators of site quality include easy to use, clearly stated scope, documented, accurate, and verifiable content, compatibility with popular browsers, and handicapped accessibility. Due to the ever-changing content of the Internet, the Library cannot be responsible for the content of other sites to which it may link.

Suggestions for Additions to the Collection

To assure the acquisition of resources desired by Library users, customer suggestions are always considered for their addition to the collection. Customers can request that specific items be purchased by filling out a Recommendation for Purchase form both online or in the library.

Gifts and Donations

The Library gratefully accepts gifts of books, electronic media, and historical materials but reserves the right to evaluate and dispose of such gifts following the criteria applied to purchases. Those which do not meet the library's objectives and policies may be refused. If materials are not placed in the Library's collection, will be sold, donated to other organizations or recycled. The library does not provide an appraisal of donated items. The library will, upon request of the donor, provide a written receipt for gifts, indicating the number and general description of materials. No other conditions may be imposed relating to any gift or donation either before or after its acceptance by the library.

Withdrawal of Materials

The collection is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet contemporary needs. With the exception local history and local interest items, there is no intent maintain an in-depth collection in an area. All other collections are current and popular, not archival, nor are materials needlessly duplicated. Materials that are worn, damaged, outdated, duplicated, no longer accurate, and no longer used may be removed from the collection. The professional staff of the library, under the general direction and supervision of the Library Director, will be solely responsible for the withdrawal of materials.

Materials Selection Responsibilities

Final authority for the determination of the policies in this document is vested by statute in the Library's Board of Trustees. The responsibility for the collection and maintenance of the library collection is delegated to the Director operating within the framework of policies and objectives determined by the Library Board. The Director has, in turn, delegated this authority to other members of this staff who are cooperating in the collection development process. Furthermore, all Library staff members and the public are encouraged to recommend items for consideration. Recommendations are evaluated based on the same criteria for selection as items purchased for the collection.

Reconsideration of Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, there can be differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons are encouraged to express their opinions of the contents of the Library's collection. Customers who request the reconsideration of library material must complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form. A copy of this document is included in the Appendix. The completed form will be given to the Library Director for a written response. A decision will be made regarding the material within a reasonable amount of time, with written reasons for the decision conveyed to the patron. Appeals from the Library Director's decision may be directed only to the Board of Trustees for their final decision.

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.

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

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.

Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views.

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.

APPENDIX II.

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 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

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.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expressions. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

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.

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

Appendix IV.

Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors (formerly titled "Free Access to Libraries for Minors")

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users violate the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The "right to use a library" includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, educational level, literacy skills, or legal emancipation. Equitable access to all library resources and services shall not be abridged through restrictive scheduling or use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, games, software, and other formats.¹ Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.² Librarians and library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize librarians or library governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As "Libraries: An American Value" states, "We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services." Librarians and library governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's—and only their children's—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children.

Librarians and library governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free, equal, and equitable access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies

equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Librarians and library governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Note:

See *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant's Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011): a) Video games qualify for First Amendment protection. Like protected books, plays, and movies, they communicate ideas through familiar literary devices and features distinctive to the medium.. And 'the basic principles of freedom of speech . . . do not vary' with a new and different communication medium."

See *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): "Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors." See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 under previous name "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; and July 1, 2014.

Appendix V

People's Rights to Libraries

The New Jersey Library Association affirms its belief in the public right to library service - as stated in the following tenets:

1. All people are entitled to free access to the information and knowledge within a library.
2. All people are entitled to obtain current, accurate information on any topic of interest.
3. All people are entitled to courteous, efficient, and prompt service.
4. All people are entitled to assistance by qualified library personnel.
5. All people are entitled to the right of privacy in the selection or use of materials.
6. All people are entitled to the full service of the library network on a local, regional, state, and national level.
7. All people are entitled to the use of a facility that is accessible, attractive, and comfortable.
8. All people are entitled to access to the policies regarding the use and services of a library,
9. All people are entitled to library service that reflects the interests and needs of the total community.

Reaffirmed by the NJLA Executive Board September 2006

Adopted by NJLA Executive Board, 1978

Appendix VI.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

If you have found materials or library resources about which you have concerns, please complete this form to assure prompt, complete consideration by Library staff.

MATERIAL FOR CONSIDERATION

Author/Producer: _____ Publisher: _____

Title: _____

Dewey Number (if any) _____ Date/Edition: _____

Type of Material:

Book Magazine/Newspaper Video/DVD Electronic Database Other _____

Did you read, view or listen to the entire work or a portion of the work? All Part

Please describe your concerns regarding this material:

What specific pages/sections illustrate your concerns?

How did this material come to your attention (optional)?

What action would you like the Library to consider?

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Organization _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please send completed form to: Library Director, Perth Amboy Free Public Library, 196 Jefferson Street Perth Amboy, NJ 08861