

Library Materials Selection Policy

ALBERT WISNER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Approved by the AWPL Board of Trustees
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Albert Wisner Public Library
Library Materials Selection Policy
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I. Objectives in Selection

Part II. Factors of Selection

Part III. Types of Materials

Part IV. Types of Collections

Part V. Student Use

Part VI. InterLibrary Loan

Part VII. Gifts

Part VIII. Individual's Right to Comment on Library Materials

Part IX. Copyright

Appendix I. Library Bill of Rights

Appendix II. Free Access to Libraries for Minors

Appendix III. Freedom to Read Statement

Appendix IV. Freedom to View Statement

Appendix V. Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Part I. OBJECTIVES IN SELECTION

The Albert Wisner Public Library attempts to provide a comprehensive, well-balanced collection of general materials to meet the needs of the community. Library materials are provided in order to:

- facilitate informal education and encourage life-long learning
- meet information and recreational needs

The provision of materials means more than occasional availability. It means a supply sufficient to make the Library a dependable source for most of the people most of the time. In addition to books, the Library also selects and provides non-book sources of knowledge and opinion.

Part II. Factors of Selection

A. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

The Director, operating within Board policies, is responsible for the selection of books and other library materials and for the weeding of worn and out-dated materials. Responsibility for selection and maintenance of collection areas is delegated by the Director to the professional staff of the Library. Annually, the Director and the professional staff review the Materials Budget of the Library and designate funds into selection areas for the growth, maintenance or replacement needs of the collection. The budget is allocated in a manner to meet, as far as possible, the needs of the community served.

B. CIRCULATION CRITERIA

Materials are purchased both for circulation and the non-circulating reference area. Materials may be placed in the non-circulating area because they are necessary to support the research needs of the community, or because of their high cost, currency or extreme high demand. The Library tries to provide the most current edition of a reference book in the Reference area, within the constraints of the materials budget. Older editions may be then moved into the circulating collection.

C. SELECTION CRITERIA

Materials are selected to improve the quality and representation of the collection. Selection decisions are based on:

1. Accuracy of information
2. Authoritativeness
3. Readability
4. Social significance
5. Availability of funds
6. Favorable reviews in critical library and other library review publications
7. Author's reputation and/or significance
8. Comprehensiveness of the coverage or treatment of the subject
9. Timeliness - reflecting new or emerging fields of knowledge
10. Anticipated relevance to or demand by the community
11. Relationship to other materials in the collection

Other methods of evaluation may either supplement or be substituted for favorable reviews, including an examination of the book itself.

Materials may be purchased because of their popularity and the great interest they have aroused, despite the fact that they might not meet the usual standards of literary quality. Whenever possible, multiple copies of popular works will be purchased. Abridged and condensed works are not purchased except when the abridgments are accepted literary works or in audiovisual format.

D. WITHDRAWAL OF MATERIALS

Removing items from the collection is an integral part of collection development. Materials are withdrawn from the collection in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, relevance and condition. Frequency of circulation, community interest, availability of newer editions or more valid materials are prime considerations in de-selecting, or "weeding."

Responsibility for collection maintenance and for the disposition of withdrawn materials rests with the Library Director and designated staff. Withdrawn items may be sold through the Friends and Bookends book shop for the benefit of the Library, offered to other RCLS libraries, to other non-profit organizations, recycled or discarded.

E. FORMATS PURCHASED

The Library maintains collections of books and non-print materials. Non-print materials include Books on CD, DVDs, Music CDs. The Library also lends Kindles, and makes available e-books for downloading onto portable devices through the Overdrive Digital Library. Books are also available for streaming via Hoopla Digital. These formats, and the equipment they require, are selected using the same criteria as for other library materials.

F. CONTROVERSIAL WORKS

Serious works presenting an honest aspect of some problems of life are not excluded because of frankness or coarse language. The Albert Wisner Public Library subscribes to the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and follows the principles of the Freedom to Read and the Freedom to View Statements (see Appendix).

Books relating to countries, races, nationalities and religious groups are carefully selected. Those which reflect any seriously discriminating attitudes are not purchased. Books which are recognized as Classics and are of considerable literary merit are retained, even though they may contain a word or phrase that is unacceptable by today's standards.

The Library will provide works representing different points of view, thus allowing patrons to make up their own minds about serious and important questions. Books will not be excluded because of the race, nationality, political or religious views of the author. Such a policy is in the American tradition of freedom of speech and press. Censorship of books urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinions will not be accepted.

Part III: Types of Materials

A. PRINT MATERIALS

1. Books

a. Non-Fiction

The Library will provide the most useful materials in subjects of established or realistically anticipated demand. Initially, broader treatment of a subject area will be preferred, but depending on the specific need or degree of demand, the Library may also purchase additional works of greater depth, comprehensiveness and specificity.

b. Fiction

The Albert Wisner Public Library recognizes the importance of Fiction as a source of personal enrichment and growth. Every effort will be made to obtain titles of popular works in multiple copies to meet patron demand. In the event that space and budget limit this, the InterLibrary Loan process will be used to obtain additional copies of titles.

2. Newspapers and Periodicals

Current periodicals are used for source material not found in books and are intended for both Reference use and recreational reading. Current issues of periodicals are kept as reference materials; when the newest issue of a periodical is received by the Library, the older edition becomes available for circulation. The Library keeps back issues of periodicals for two to three months.

The public access computers contain databases which list articles by subject and contain some articles in their full-text format.

The Albert Wisner Public Library maintains subscriptions to newspapers of local as well as national coverage. Local newspapers are kept for a period of several weeks and then are recycled. The Warwick Valley Dispatch and the Warwick Valley Advertiser are maintained in the Library online on its Local History web page, and on microfilm.

3. Local History Vertical File

The Local History Vertical File includes pamphlets, clippings, maps, brochures and other materials that are of local, historical interest. Placement in the Vertical File is dependent on format and arrangement is by subject.

B. NON-PRINT MATERIALS

1. Music CDs

Both music and spoken recordings will be purchased; the emphasis will be on classic, current, vocal and instrumental recordings to suit a wide variety of tastes.

4. DVDs

Video recordings are added in DVD format. Every effort will be made to purchase recordings when they are made available to the general public. Blu-Ray DVDs are not purchased because of extremely low demand among patrons for this format. As with materials in other formats, Interlibrary Loans will be used to obtain additional titles of interest to our users.

DVDs are for home use only, and are protected by copyright. Any other use, including public performance, in whole or in part, is prohibited by law.

Part IV: Types of Collections

The collection of materials in the Library is divided into four collection areas: Children's, Young Adult, Adult and Reference. Patrons are guided to materials which are best suited to their needs; however, no patron is restricted to any particular collection because of age. Patrons are encouraged to view and use all collections as their needs and interests require. The use of materials by all patrons is an individual or family responsibility. It is the policy of the Library not to act *in loco parentis*, in keeping with the principles of equal access to information and materials for all patrons. Therefore, the Library will not restrict any patron, including children, from access to any type or class of material, nor from any information in the Library.

Part V: Student Use

Use of the Library by students of all ages is encouraged.

Teachers are encouraged to visit the Library to determine the scope of our collections so that assignments can be given with full knowledge of the resources available in the community. Teachers are also encouraged to visit the Library to choose titles which most closely fulfill the needs of the assignment.

In the event that a student should use the Library and fail to find the materials necessary for the completion of an assignment, the librarian will provide him with a letter which verifies his effort and clarifies for the teacher the problem with providing materials.

Albert Wisner Public Library supports the schools' use of Summer Reading Lists for students. Each Spring, the Library contacts schools in an effort to obtain the current Summer Reading Lists. The Library attempts to maintain a sufficient number of copies of the titles on the lists to meet the student demand. Students should request Summer Reading materials early enough so that the Library's reserve system can be used.

Part VI. InterLibrary Loan

The Albert Wisner Public Library belongs to a network of libraries including the Ramapo Catskill Library System, the Mid-Hudson Library System and the SouthEastern New York Library System. These library systems form the network from which materials are requested through the Interlibrary Loan process. In addition to these public library systems, some area public schools and universities may also be used as a source of Interlibrary Loan materials.

The Interlibrary Loan process may take from two to eight weeks to complete, depending upon the location of and the availability of the requested materials. Materials which are not available in the local loan area may be searched for through the nationwide OCLC system. .

InterLibrary Loans are not a substitute for developing an adequate collection. Rather, they provide the patron access to specialized or technical materials not readily available in a public library.

Part VII. Gifts

Gifts to the Library are appreciated. Money to purchase materials will be accepted only with the understanding that the Albert Wisner Public Library exercises the final responsibility for deciding which titles and formats will be purchased. However, the librarian will consult with the donor to ensure that the selections, as far as possible, are mutually satisfactory.

Donations of materials to the Library are accepted with the understanding that they will be evaluated according to the Library's Materials Selection Policy. The librarian will make the decision to add the donated materials to the Library's collection, place them for sale in the Library's Friends and Bookends used book shop (the proceeds of which benefit the Library) or discard them. The Library does not appraise books for income tax purposes, but will give the donor a note acknowledging receipt of the materials.

A special gift plate may be placed in gift materials indicating the name of the donor or the name of the person in whose honor the item was given.

Part VIII. Individual's Right to Comment on Library Materials

The public library has the responsibility to meet the informational and recreational reading needs of all the members of the community. The Albert Wisner Public Library recognizes that the views and beliefs of its patrons are individual and worthy. If a patron finds it necessary to request reconsideration of the placement of materials in the Library's collection, s/he should request a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (see Appendix) from any staff member of the Library. The form must be completed in its entirety and signed. No form will be accepted by the Library without a signature.

The Director will review the request and may designate a staff member to review the material and find other professional opinions in regard to it. The Director will then reply in writing to the complainant. If the patron deems the Director's decision

unsatisfactory, the patron may then appeal to the Library Board of Trustees. The Trustees' decision on the matter is final.

Part IX. Copyright

It is the patron's responsibility to ensure that s/he uses all Library materials in accordance with current federal and state copyright laws.

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views.
6. 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, June 27, 1967 and January 23, 1980
by the ALA Council of the American Library Association

APPENDIX II

FREE ACCESS TO LIBRARIES FOR MINORS

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the 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 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.

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 in the library. 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.¹ 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 material is not 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. 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 governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their children. 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.

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

¹ 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 [422 U.S. 205, 214] 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 *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, supra. Cf. *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943)."

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004.

APPENDIX III

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.

APPENDIX IV

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 or expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible 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 and other audiovisual materials on the basis of 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

APPENDIX V

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Albert Wisner Public Library serves people from all walks of life with a variety of viewpoints and tastes and we welcome your comments. Before completing this form, you may find it informative and helpful to read the following summary of the Library's policy on library materials:

Albert Wisner Public Library's professional staff chooses books and other materials to meet the informational, educational and recreational reading needs of the citizens of the community. The staff is guided by the Materials Selection Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Library. The Trustees and staff support the belief that the right to read and the right to free access to library collections for persons of all ages are essential to the individual's freedom of thought, which is fundamental to democracy. The Trustees have also adopted the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the Freedom to View Statement which represent the Library's interpretation of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In practice, this means that the Library will resist efforts to remove or censor materials.

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For copies of the Materials Selection Policy, the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read or Freedom to View Statements, please ask a librarian or check the Library's website.

All forms must be signed. No form submitted anonymously or without a signature will be reviewed. The Library Director will respond in writing to your comments.

Your Name: _____ Date submitted: _____

Your Address: _____

Your telephone number: _____

Your signature: _____

Title & Author of Book (or other material): _____

Please comment below on the material as a whole. Please be specific about those matters which concern you, and feel free to suggest other materials on the subject for our consideration. Use the reverse side of this page if necessary. Thank you.