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Marshall District Library

Library Collection Development Policy

The following statement of policies was adopted on June 29, 2004, revised October 9, 2007, June 30, 2011, June 28, 2016, February 11, 2020, January 10, 2023 and supersedes all previous material selection policy statements.

A. Purpose

This collection development policy exists to guide librarians in carrying out their work assignments, to inform the public of the methods used by the Marshall District Library to fulfill its mission in our community, and to provide guidelines for creating open access to information in a neutral, unbiased, objective fashion.

B. Intellectual Freedom

The Marshall District Library Board of Trustees and librarians believe that the right to read and the right to freely access information are important concepts of intellectual freedom, integral to a democracy, and therefore the library supports these three intellectual freedom documents:

The Freedom to Read Statement

The Library Bill of Rights

Libraries: An American Value

(See attachment)

C. Objectives

The Marshall District Library collects, organizes, and makes informational, educational, and recreational materials available to its users in convenient formats including but not limited to books, periodicals, newspapers, microforms, Blu-Ray Discs, DVDs, CDs, software, downloadable media, equipment, and public computers with Internet access. The library strives to maintain an up-to-date collection of standard works in all fields of knowledge plus timely materials on current issues, and items in demand.

In addition to collections fulfilling the requirements of serving the general public, materials will be selected to meet the need of business, professional, government, and community organizations. Materials selection will also include consideration of the needs of the homebound, persons with visual and physical impairments, and those individuals with learning disabilities. The needs of adult beginning readers and of people for whom English is not the principal language will also be considered. Both the adult and youth collections will serve as supplementary curriculum support for student use, as well as for the general reader.

D. Responsibility for Selection

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director and, under his/her direction, to the professional staff that are qualified by reason of education, training and experience.

E. Format

The library provides materials and services that reflect the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of its users. In so doing, the library provides access to content through print, multimedia, and technology. The library recognizes that content and medium should be suitably matched, and that library patrons have different learning styles and preferences for how they receive information. Therefore, the Marshall District Library provides materials in a variety of formats including, when appropriate:

- a. Print – such as hardcover books, paperbacks, magazines, and newspapers.
- b. Non-print – such as audio, DVD, Blu-Ray Disc, CD, equipment, and microform.
- c. Digital resources – such as on-line databases, software programs, downloadable books, downloadable audiobooks, and the Internet.

The Marshall District Library considers all types of media to be in the realm of human expression and part of the human record. Because the library functions in a rapidly changing society, it is flexible regarding changes in communicative material, both in form and style of expression. The library does not reject materials for acquisition solely on the basis of medium. Materials in alternative formats are judged in terms of the General or Electronic Format Criteria for Selection.

F. General Criteria for Selection

1. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, must meet some of the following criteria:

- a. Appeal to the interests and needs of the community.
- b. Permanent value as source material or interpretation.
- c. Vitality and originality of thought.
- d. Contemporary significance.
- e. Artistic excellence.
- f. Entertaining presentation.

- g. Accuracy and objectivity.
- h. Suitability of physical format for library use.
- i. Skill, competence, and purpose of the author.
- j. Technical quality (in selection of non-book material).
- k. Local, state, or regional historical significance.
- l. Cost and availability.
- m. Importance of the subject matter to the collection.
- n. Clear presentation and legibility.

G. Electronic Format Criteria

1. Additional criteria are considered when selecting materials available in electronic formats.

- a. Ease of use of the product.
- b. Accessibility to multiple users.
- c. Access to needed equipment.
- d. Enhancement of the print equivalent (if any) in terms of speed, flexibility, combinations of search terms, or general utility.
- e. Continued access to retrospective information, when necessary or desirable.
- f. Reduction of space requirements over print products.
- g. Reduction in number of copies of a print source, when purchased for multiple locations.
- h. Technological compatibility of electronic resources.

Links to any website or electronic service from www.yourmdl.org does not imply endorsement of the content of that site or of a particular point of view. The Library reserves the right to add or remove links at any time that do not meet the selection criteria. While every effort will be made to screen for inappropriate content in the linked web resources, users will need to evaluate for themselves the validity and the

appropriateness of information found. The Library is unable to monitor or control the content of electronic information, which changes rapidly and unpredictably.

2. Reviews: Primary sources for materials selection are reviews in professionally recognized periodicals, standard bibliographies, booklists by recognized authorities, and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas.

3. Requests: All requests from patrons for specific titles or subjects will be considered. The library collections will contain a variety of materials with a diversity of viewpoints. Whenever there is enough demand or interest in a title or subject, an item with unfavorable reviews may be purchased. Self-published items will only be considered if the item is of local interest or by a local author. Some patron requests may be fulfilled through the library's Interlibrary Loan services.

4. Textbooks: Providing textbooks and curriculum material is generally held to be the responsibility of the schools. Textbooks may be purchased for the collection when they supply the best or only information on a specific subject.

5. Specialized Materials: specialized materials of limited community interest will not ordinarily be purchased. Referral to other library collections and interlibrary loan will be used to supply patrons with these materials. Supplemental materials for students and information for specialists are provided in a limited number of fields, the library avoiding unnecessary duplication in subject areas which are the special prerogative of other community resources.

H. Discard

Discarding materials from the Library's collection is selection in reverse. Systematic removal of materials which are no longer useful is necessary in order to maintain a current and accurate collection of information resources. Many of the same criteria of evaluation for selection are utilized. Additional criteria, which may also be applied, are:

1. Changing collection development priorities.
2. Insufficient use.
3. Irreparable damage.
4. Misleading information.
5. Obsolete information.
6. Space availability.

I. Replacement

The need for replacement of lost or damaged items is weighed using the same criteria used for acquisition. It is not the library's policy to automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. Each case will be weighed individually.

J. Gifts

The library will encourage and accept gifts with the understanding that gifts of material will be added to the collection only if they meet the same standard required of purchased material. Gift materials not meeting those standards, or unneeded duplicates of items already owned, may be given to other organizations, sold, exchanged, or recycled. Gift items will normally be integrated into the regular library collection in normal sequence, available to all library patrons and otherwise handled as any other material belonging to the library. Gift items may be marked with an appropriate bookplate. A letter, for tax purposes, may be sent to the donor, if requested, at the time the donation is made; however, the library does not do appraisals. Whenever a gift is no longer needed, it will be disposed of in the same manner as purchased material.

K. Request for Reconsideration of Material

Choice of library materials for personal use is an individual matter. Responsibility for the use of materials by children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection shall not be inhibited solely by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children. The library respects each individual parent's right to supervise their children's choice of reading materials. A parent or guardian who chooses to restrict the materials their children select must accompany those children when they use the collection in order to impose those restrictions.

Requests for Reconsideration of Library Material will be reviewed by one or more members of the library staff who have responsibility for materials selection, and by the Library Director. The Library Director will send a written decision to the requester within 30 days of form submission. Should the requester wish to appeal this decision, he/she may make an appeal in writing directly to the Library Board which will schedule and conduct a public meeting within 30 days of the written appeal.

The Library Board may choose to make a decision on a material challenge as a body at this meeting or they may choose to form an advisory committee consisting of two library board members appointed by the Library Board president, two library staff members appointed by the Library Director, and two community members appointed by the Library Board President. This advisory committee will review the material and present a recommendation to the Library Board within 60 days of the public meeting. The Library Board serves as the final authority in cases involving retention or withdrawal of library materials.

Judgment for each challenged item shall be in place for a period of three (3) years from final disposition, beginning 30 days past the Library Director's decision or on the date of the Library Board's decision if there is an appeal. If the item is retained, this will render the item ineligible for a challenge for this three year period. If the item is removed from the collection, the same item will be ineligible for acquisition for the library's collection for the same period.

See attached complaint form



Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Type of Material Book Audiobook DVD/Blu-Ray Disc Other (please specify)

Title of Item _____

What did you find objectionable about this item?

Did you read or view the entire item?

Are there any pages or sections in particular that you can cite for examples?

Are you familiar with any published criticism of this item?

What is your recommendation for this item?

Is there another title that you would recommend the library purchase in place of this item?

L. Document 1

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

L. Document 2

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:

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

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

Libraries: An American Value

Libraries in America are cornerstones of the communities they serve. Free access to the books, ideas, resources, and information in America's libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government.

Libraries are a legacy to each generation, offering the heritage of the past and the promise of the future. To ensure that libraries flourish and have the freedom to promote and protect the public good in the 21st century, we believe certain principles must be guaranteed.

To that end, we affirm this contract with the people we serve:

- We defend the constitutional rights of all individuals, including children and teenagers, to use the library's resources and services;
- We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve;
- 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;
- We connect people and ideas by helping each person select from and effectively use the library's resources;
- We protect each individual's privacy and confidentiality in the use of library resources and services;
- We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services;
- We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners - informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched.

Change is constant, but these principles transcend change and endure in a dynamic technological, social, and political environment.

By embracing these principles, libraries in the United States can contribute to a future that values and protects freedom of speech in a world that celebrates both our similarities and our differences, respects individuals and their beliefs, and holds all persons truly equal and free.

**Adopted by the
Council of the American Library Association
February 3, 1999**