

# STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## I. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to guide librarians in the selection of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which materials of all types are selected, how the collection is developed, and how it is maintained. The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement have been endorsed by the Stoughton Public Library Board of Trustees and are integral parts of this policy. (Appendices A and B attached)

## II. Definitions

A. "Collection Development" refers to the ongoing process of selecting, securing, organizing, displaying, and maintaining Library materials of a variety of formats for use by patrons of all ages and interest levels.

B. "Selection" refers to the decision that must be made either to add material to the collection or to retain material already in the collection.

## III Goals of Materials Selection

The primary goals of materials selection are: to maintain a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference, and research; to support the democratic process by providing materials for the education and enlightenment of the community; and to provide recreational and cultural resources. The collection, with the exception of the Kvamme Library, is not archival and is reviewed and revised on an on-going basis to meet contemporary needs.

The Library Board and/or staff does not espouse or promote any particular content as presented in any of the materials in the collection.

## IV. Objectives

The Stoughton Public Library wishes to provide all individuals in the community with books and other materials to aid the individual in the pursuit of education, information, research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time. The collection is intended to offer a choice of format, treatment, and level of difficulty so that most patrons' needs can be met.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **V. Responsibility for Selection**

The ultimate responsibility for selection of library materials rests with the Library Director, who operates within the framework of the policies determined by the Stoughton Public Library Board of Trustees. This responsibility may be shared with other members of the library staff; however, because the director must be available to answer to the library board and the general public for the actual selections made, the director has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendations of the staff.

## **VI. Criteria for Selection**

A. The main points considered in the selection of materials are:

1. Current usefulness or permanent value
2. Authority and competence of author
3. Scope and comprehensiveness of subject treatment
4. Clarity and accuracy of presentation
5. Relative importance in comparison with other materials on the subject
6. Existing library holdings
7. Budget
8. Popular appeal

B. Reviews are the major source of information about new materials. Major sources of reviews include: professional journals including "Booklist", and "Library Journal", and local/national newspapers and magazines.

The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title that is in demand. Consideration is therefore given to requests of library patrons and materials discussed on public media.

C. The Stoughton Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the principles stated in this policy. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.

- D. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for reading and viewing of library materials by their children. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of children.

## **VI. Interlibrary Loan**

Because of limited budget and space, the library cannot provide all materials that are requested. Therefore, interlibrary loan is used to obtain from other libraries those materials that are beyond the scope of the Stoughton Library's collection.

## **VIII. Gifts and Donations**

The library accepts gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that they will be added to the collection only if they meet the general selection criteria. If they are not needed because of duplication, condition, or dated information, the director can dispose of them as stated in the Gift, Donation, Bequest Policy. Designated monetary gifts will be accepted and used in accordance with the Gift, Donation, Bequest Policy.

## **IX Textbooks**

Providing textbooks and curriculum materials is generally held to be the responsibility of the schools. Textbooks should be purchased for the collection when they supply information in areas in which they may be the best, or the only, source of information on the subject.

While the public library collection is not developed with the school curriculum primarily in mind, attempts will be made to respond to student use and supplement the curriculum demands, while adhering to the selection criteria outlined above.

## **X. Kvamme Local History Collection**

The library maintains a collection of local history materials, including microfilm of the local paper, transcripts of oral histories, and government and civic publications.

The Kvamme Local History Collection does not attempt to be a comprehensive collection of all local history and municipal materials. Collection development concentrates on frequently used and requested materials.

## **XI. Discarding**

An up-to-date, attractive, accurate, and useful collection is maintained through a continual discarding and replacing process. Replacement of worn items is dependent upon current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, availability of newer editions, and historical and/or permanent value of particular items.

## **XII. Challenged Materials**

- A. Although materials are carefully selected, there can arise differences of opinion regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection are invited to discuss this concern with either the Children's Librarian for resources purchased for use by children or the Library Director for all other materials.
- B. The Library Director or the Children's Librarian will meet informally with the concerned patron within 14 days to discuss the objection. If the discussion of the matter informally produces no resolution, the complainant may complete a "Statement of Concern About Library Resources" form, which is be forwarded to the Director. (Appendix C)
- C. Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library materials will be sequestered except for protection from injury or theft.
- D. The review of questioned materials will be treated objectively and as an important matter. General acceptance of the material will be checked by consulting authoritative lists and critical reviews in light of the library's selection policy. Passages will not be taken out of context, and the material will be evaluated as an entity.
- E. The Director will respond in writing to the complainant within 14 days with a decision regarding the resource in question. The Director will keep a log of forms filed and his/her response.
- F. In the event of an appeal on the decision of the Library Director, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Stoughton Public Library Board of Trustees with the Library Board serving as the final arbiter. After a final decision, the resource in question shall not be reconsidered for one calendar year.
- G. The "Statement of Concern about Library Resources" form may also be used by the complainant who appeals a decision not to purchase a particular item. The basic procedure will be the same, resulting in a written decision to the complainant.

Adopted: September 12, 2001

Revised: October 15, 2002

Revised: October 9, 2003

Revised: October 14, 2004

Revised: April 11, 2007

# 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.

## Appendix B: The Freedom to Read statement

### **THE FREEDOM TO READ**

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  
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:

American Association of University Professors  
American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression  
American Society of Journalists and Authors  
The 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  
People for the American Way  
Student Press Law Center  
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## Appendix C: Statement of Concern about Library Resources

**Stoughton Public Library**  
**Statement of Concern about Library Resources**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_\_ Book                      \_\_\_\_\_ Video/DVD                      \_\_\_\_\_ Computer Software  
\_\_\_\_\_ Magazine/Newspaper      \_\_\_\_\_ Cassette/Compact Disc      \_\_\_\_\_ Internet Resource  
\_\_\_\_\_ Library Program              \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. What brought this resource to your attention?
  
2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.
  
3. Have you read or listened or viewed the entire contents? If not, what parts?
  
4. What do you feel the effect of the materials might be?
  
5. For what age group would you recommend this material?
  
6. In its place, what material of equal or better quality would you recommend?
  
7. What do you want the library to do with this material?
  
8. Additional comments: