



VERMILION PARISH LIBRARY

PO DRAWER 640 ABBEVILLE, LA 70511
405 E. ST. VICTOR ST. ABBEVILLE, LA 70510
337-893-2674 FAX: 337-898-0526

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy on collection development for Vermilion Parish Library is to guide in the selection, retention, and removal of materials and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made, based on the Vermilion Parish Library Mission Statement:

“The Vermilion Parish Library serves to enhance the quality of life of patrons of all ages, education, philosophy, occupation, economic level, ethnic origin and human condition with materials, information, and services through a network of branches. The library is committed to providing everyone with resources and programs to fulfill their informational, educational, recreational, cultural, and technological needs.”

II. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

The Vermilion Parish Library strives to ensure a free and equal opportunity to all residents of Vermilion Parish, both children and adults, to secure reliable materials, information, and professional guidance, which will enable them to enhance and broaden their cultural, educational, vocational, and recreational lives, and thereby to contribute to the development and enrichment of the community.

The library supports the principles of the Freedom to Read Statement and Library Bill of Rights and provides, within financial and spatial limitations, a large, responsive, and stimulating collection of material to assist in the personal and social development of citizens irrespective of age, race, religion, national background, or economic, social, or professional status. All materials are selected by this Library in accordance with these basic objectives.

The library also recognizes the purposes and resources of other libraries in the community and shall not needlessly duplicate functions and materials. For items that the library opts not to acquire, we will try to obtain them through interlibrary loan.



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III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIALS SELECTION

This Library Board adopts as part of its policy the following paragraphs from the Library Bill of Rights:

- 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.

Final responsibility for collection development is and shall be vested in the Director. However, the Director may delegate to such members of the staff as are qualified by reason of training, the authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections. Unusual problems will be referred to the Director for resolution.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

The following standard criteria are considered in recommending titles for purchase and establishing the overall value of a title.

1. Current interest
2. Literary merit
3. Authoritativeness: Authors' reputation and significance as writers, or their knowledge of the subject
4. Importance of subject matter to the collection
5. Timeliness or permanence of the title.
6. Appearance of title in special bibliographies or indexes
7. Existing subject matter in the collection
8. Absence of subject matter in the collection
9. Cost of the item and available shelf space
10. Community standards

The library develops collections aimed at the special needs and interests of youth in the community ages 0 - 17. The library does not act "in loco parentis (in the place of a parent)." The reading and viewing activities of youth under 18 are the responsibility of parents or guardians. Materials selected primarily for children and adolescents are marked accordingly and located in designated areas of the library.



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The library believes that individuals should have access to more than one point of view and that the individuals' personal taste will dictate what they choose to read. It follows that free access to different points of view must be offered. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some people. Serious works which present an honest picture of some problem or aspect of life will at times be controversial, but they will not be excluded because of visual format, coarse language, or frankness.

v. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

A. Louisiana and Local History

The library has the responsibility of collecting, organizing, and making available extensive information about Vermilion Parish, the parish's various communities, and Louisiana.

The library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history. Therefore, it will seek to acquire state and municipal public documents, and it will take a broad view of works by Louisiana authors as well as works relating to the State of Louisiana, whether or not such materials meet the standards of selection in other respects.

However, the Library is not under any obligation to add to its collections anything about Louisiana or produced by authors, printers, or publishers with Louisiana connections if it does not seem to be in the public interest to do so.

B. Motion Pictures

The library purchases and accepts as gifts motion pictures that fit within the overall materials selection guidelines. The library applies the ratings assigned by the Motion Picture Association of America to films. When a film is unrated, the professional staff of the library will assign a rating, using the same criteria as the MPAA.

C. Textbooks

The library does not acquire textbooks or other curriculum related materials.



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VI. GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Unconditional gifts, donations, and contributions to the library may be accepted by the Director on behalf of the Library Board of Control. No gifts or donations conditionally made shall be accepted without the approval of the Director.

The same standards of selection will govern the acceptance of gifts as govern purchases by the library. If material is useful but not needed in this Library's collection, it may be disposed of at the discretion of the Director.

VII. MAINTENANCE OF COLLECTION

Systematic examination of materials in terms of usefulness to the public as defined in this policy is necessary to maintain relevant resources. Adjustments are based on level of public demand; physical condition of the item; other titles available on the same subject; use of the materials; currency of information; and availability of space.

VIII. RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

The selection of library books and materials is predicated on the library customers' right to read, and similarly, their freedom from censorship by others. Many titles are controversial, and any given item may offend some people. Selections for this Library will not, however, be made because of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the material in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the readers.

This library holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that--while all are free to reject for themselves books and other materials of which they do not approve--they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

A. *General Requests for Reconsideration*

1. All requests for reconsideration shall be submitted in writing to the library on the Vermilion Parish Library Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form.
2. Requests for reconsideration may be made by any library patron who meets the definition of a library patron. Library patron is defined as "a person residing in the parish in which the parish or municipal library is located who has reached the age of majority and who holds a library card from the library." [R.S. 25:225 B (2)].



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3. The library shall make a written determination and notify the library patron.
4. Appeal(s) of these determinations can be made to the library board of control within thirty (30) days of the notification of the determination.

B. Requests for Reconsideration Related to R.S. 25:225: Minors' Access to Sexually Explicit Materials

1. All requests for reconsideration shall be submitted in writing to the library on the Vermilion Parish Library Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form.
2. Requests for reconsideration may be made by any library patron. Library patron is defined in Article VIII(A)(2) in the preceding section.
3. Pursuant to LA R.S. 25:225, all requests for reconsideration on the basis of the material being sexually explicit as defined in the statute shall be reviewed by the Library Board of Control in an open meeting. The Library Board of Control meets quarterly.
4. The Library Board of Control shall determine whether the library material meets the definition of sexually explicit material by majority vote in an open meeting pursuant to the requirements of LA R.S. 42:11 et seq.
5. The Library Board shall make a written determination and notify the library patron.
6. The decision of the Library Board is final.

Approved by Vermilion Parish Library Board of Control

Revised: December 9, 2009

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Revised: November 7, 2023



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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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.



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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 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 least 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.



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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, 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.



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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



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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.