

# **Hagaman Memorial Library**

## **Collection Development, Management & Reconsideration Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

Hagaman Memorial Library is the center for community enrichment and as such it seeks to provide information, resources and programs for lifelong learning as well as to improve to the quality of life of East Haven residents by providing a top notch collection of materials in multiple formats, current technology, and cultural opportunities.

### **Purpose of the Collection Development, Management & Reconsideration Policy**

The purpose of the Collection Development, Management & Reconsideration Policy is to provide guidance for librarians and to inform the public of the principles on which collection decisions are made. This policy is directed toward building and maintaining—within the limits of funds and space—a collection that covers a diverse range of interests, tastes, viewpoints, values and levels of ability, in order to serve the greatest number of library users and potential library users possible.

Hagaman Memorial Library recognizes and celebrates the different experiences and viewpoints that make up our community. We will strive to be flexible and conscientious in our evaluation of materials, to ensure a collection that reflects many perspectives while supporting an atmosphere that is inclusive, kind, and welcoming for all.

### **General Selection Factors**

Hagaman Memorial Library obtains, organizes and makes available materials which provide information about one's work, community, the world, and one's place in it, and which serve the recreational needs of the community. Four factors govern the selection of materials for the library:

- (1) The needs of the individual and the community, both expressed and unexpressed
- (2) The individual merit of the work
- (3) The existing collection, budget, and services
- (4) Adherence to the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights* and *Freedom to Read Statement*. These documents are provided in Appendix A and B.

Secondary considerations include: availability and cost of the item; amount of similar material already in the collection; extent to which the materials may be available elsewhere in the community or the library consortium; physical format of the material; attention by critics and/or reviewers; and local interest or demand.

In choosing materials to suit a variety of tastes, differing viewpoints are included. In following this policy, the library, its director, staff, and board do not endorse the opinions expressed in the materials that are collected. The Library recognizes that some materials chosen may be offensive, shocking, or of no interest to some library users, but may be meaningful and significant to others.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

All staff members and members of the general public may recommend materials for consideration. The ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the director. However, the director and Board of Trustees entrusts the responsibility of selecting, managing, and deselecting library materials to its professional staff, whose education and experience prepare them for these important duties. Several professional staff members are responsible for material selection and maintenance duties. Professional staff, in making these decisions, do so in an inclusive manner based on principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than prejudice, and judgement rather than censorship. Variety and balance of opinion are sought whenever possible. Selections are customized to the community served rather than to the tastes, views, and interests of the individual selector.

### **Access to Library Materials**

The Library provides free access to materials, including but not limited to: books, magazines, newspapers, online databases, and sound and video recordings. The Library recognizes the importance of allowing individuals to form their own opinions and, therefore, acquires materials of a controversial nature. Open access is provided for all users, and materials are made accessible to all. The Library does not act as a censor in the reading, viewing, or listening of any member of the community. Responsibility for the reading, viewing or listening of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that these materials may come into the possession of minors. The Library does not act *in loco parentis*.

A work will not be excluded from the collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, because of frankness of expression, or because it is controversial. It will be evaluated as a complete work and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. The library recognizes not all users will respond to all materials with the same level of enthusiasm. Some materials may seem controversial or even distasteful to some library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is not the right of any library user or users to deny access to library materials to others. The freedom to choose from a wide range of informational and artistic materials will not be abridged.

### **Placement of Library Materials.**

Placement of materials within the Library is a professional decision. Criteria for placement include: age level; assigned subject classification; physical format; susceptibility to loss or damage; rarity or cost. The Library labels the materials for placement only, not to predispose the user for or against materials. The Library considers the various components of its collections to be elements of one unified collection. In general, the Library does not maintain special interest collections. Materials may be put in the non-circulating reference collection because of cost, format, comprehensiveness, high use, or high rate of theft.

### **Evaluation & Deselection Criteria**

Maintaining an attractive, up-to-date, and useful collection requires a continual deselection and replacement process. From time to time, it is necessary for materials to be deselected from the collection to make room for new or important work. Materials are evaluated by members of

professional staff to determine whether they will be retained, relocated, or replaced. Deselection of materials is based on the “CREW” method, which stands for Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding, and is a professional guide for reviewing and withdrawing materials from each library collection. For more information on the CREW method, see: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/ld/pubs/crew/crewmetho12.pdf>

## **Gifts**

Donations of materials or funds to enrich the library collection are welcome. However, donated items must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All gifts are evaluated by library staff as to format, condition, quality, and content. No conditions may be placed on gifts by the donor. Materials not added to the collection may be given to the Friends of the Library Book Sale or disposed of by other means. Funds may be donated for the purchase of materials. However, library staff selects the materials to be purchased. The library reserves the right to make the final decision on the use or disposition of all gifts.

## **Requests for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

The choice of library materials by a library user is a personal matter. While an individual may reject materials for themselves, they cannot exercise censorship or otherwise restrict access to materials for others. In the event that a member of the community would like to request reconsideration of library materials, the following procedures have been established to ensure that all concerns are addressed in a consistent manner.

Requests for reconsideration must be made in writing, using the Hagan Memorial Library Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form. This form must be returned in person at Hagan Memorial Library, 227 Main Street, East Haven, Connecticut 06512. A copy of the reconsideration form can be obtained from the library circulation desk or on the library’s website. It must be filled out in its entirety. Incomplete forms, those received by mail or email, or those that have not viewed the complete work may be discarded. Complete forms will be reviewed by the Library Director and a response will be provided to the library patrons who submitted the form. In the event that this does not resolve the concern, the form can be resubmitted for reconsideration by the library Board of Trustees, who will work with the library director to reach a resolution.

Once an item has been approved for purchase based on this selection policy, it will not be automatically removed upon request. Materials will remain in the collection while they are being reconsidered. When a decision has been reached, notice will be given to the contact information provided on the Request for Reconsideration Form.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees, January 17, 2002; Revised by the Board of Trustees, July 17, 2014; Revised approved by the Board of Trustees, August 17, 2023*

## **APPENDIX A: The 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, age, 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.

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*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.*

## **APPENDIX B: 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

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*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*