

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Palo Alto City Library is to enable people to explore library resources in order to enrich their lives with knowledge, information and enjoyment. In order to meet this mission, the Library provides a diverse selection of print and non-print materials, as well as digital resources to meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of its clientele.

The Palo Alto City Library's five facilities together serve a clientele that represents all ages and that possesses a wide range of interests and tastes, educational and career attainments, economic backgrounds, and technological sophistication. This policy is intended to inform the Library's clientele, as well as the community at large, of the guidelines used for the development and maintenance of the materials collection offered by the Palo Alto City Library.

THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTIONS

The Library provides print collections in the form of circulating fiction and nonfiction books, large-print books, reference books, and periodicals; non-print collections composed of media and microforms; and an electronic-resource collection in the form of databases and e-books. All circulating materials are available for transfer between branches. Collections are developed in three major areas: for adults, teens, and children.

The adult collection. This collection represents the largest and most diverse portion of the Library's holdings. It is selected to reflect the wide spectrum of educational, informational, and recreational interests among the adult clientele.

The teen collection. Materials in the Library's teen collection are selected for youth in grades six through twelve. Formats parallel those of the adult collections, with added emphasis on popular culture and interests, youth health and well being, as well as homework and school-projects support.

The children's collection. Materials in this collection are selected in a variety of formats for children from infancy through fifth grade. Materials are chosen to reflect the wide range of interests, and cognitive and reading abilities, within this age group and to instill a love of reading and learning. Materials are also chosen to support homework and school-projects.

Breadth and depth of coverage. As a medium-sized public library that is not part of a larger system, the Library collects a wide range of general-interest materials. These materials are generally of a non-specialist nature. Owing to budgetary and space constraints, the Library is unable to maintain a collection of academic, specialized, or professional titles. The Library does, however, offer a small selection of lower-division college textbooks in general topics among the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities.

Languages. The majority of the Library's collections are in English. The Library owns materials in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Each language collection varies in breadth and depth depending on public needs. The language collections will continue to diversify and evolve to reflect the changing needs and interests of the community.

In the media collection, there is a significant number of motion pictures on DVD in languages other than English, as well as English-language DVDs subtitled or dubbed in other languages.

Special collections. The Library maintains a few special collections for which the development and management differ somewhat from the general collections. The special collections are for in-house use. These collections include a collection of books of significant local historical importance designated the Z Collection, the government documents collection (a selection of official city, district, county, and state publications), and a collection of local historical materials (including the archival collection, administered by the Palo Alto Historical Association).

ALLOCATION OF COLLECTIONS

Main, Mitchell Park, and Children's libraries are the system's largest libraries and possess the most comprehensive collections, including the Library's non-English-language print materials. College Terrace and Downtown libraries' collections largely constitute a subset of materials available at the larger libraries, and their collections are regularly refreshed. Main and Mitchell Park libraries offer separate teen collections, in surroundings conducive to use by this age group.

ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The Director of Libraries has ultimate authority over, and responsibility for, the selection of library materials. The operational responsibility for collection development and management is delegated to the head of the Library's Division of Collection and Technical Services. Professional library staff are assigned system-wide responsibility for selecting materials. Selection responsibilities are allotted according to subject, format, and age level.

PRINCIPLES OF, AND CRITERIA FOR, SELECTING LIBRARY MATERIALS FOR THE COLLECTION

The principles of, and criteria for, selecting materials for the Palo Alto City Library's collection are guided by recognized standards of the library profession and conditioned by the Library's size, clientele, and budget. The staff who select library materials apply standards commonly found in the profession, with the goal of building and maintaining a collection that serves the educational, informational, and recreational pursuits of the community of library users.

Broadly stated, the principles of selection require that all areas of knowledge be represented in the collection; that the content of works considered for acquisition be evaluated objectively and dispassionately; that works not be selected or rejected solely on the basis of their creators' origins, backgrounds, or views; and that a wide range of viewpoints on issues susceptible to debate be represented in the collection. Selectors' decisions are informed and guided by the principles enumerated in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read* (please refer to Appendix B, page 9).

Criteria for selection encompass a number of factors. For any given work, these factors may include considerations of:

- The demand for, and popularity of, previous works by a particular author or artist
- The literary reputation, authority, popularity, and significance of a particular author or artist
- The quality, authority, and level of specialization of the work as evaluated by reviews in professional, trade, and popular periodicals
- The work's pertinence, both in terms of general suitability to the breadth and depth of the collection and in terms of the Library's clientele and their particular interests, pursuits, and needs
- Concerning the teen and children's collections, the work's age-level suitability
- The work's style, clarity, and presentation
- The work's presence in, or absence from, the collections of libraries similar to the Palo Alto City Library
- The work's perceived potential to be put to use — to be checked out or consulted — with reasonable frequency
- The work's physical qualities — its ability to endure multiple uses over an extended period of time
- Price
- Format
- Availability: generally the library is limited to selecting works that are currently in print and available through customary domestic trade suppliers

Evaluations of works by local authors are governed by these same criteria.

CUSTOMER SUGGESTIONS FOR PURCHASE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Palo Alto City Library welcomes input from the Palo Alto community concerning the collection. A suggestion for purchase procedure enables customers to request that a particular item or subject be purchased by the library. All suggestions for purchase are evaluated using the same selection criteria as for other materials and are not automatically added to the collection. The "Purchase Suggestion" form is available on the Library's catalog or [click here](#) for the "Purchase Suggestion" form.

Customers whose suggestions are honored and who include contact information are informed of the Library's decision.

Review or solicitation copies submitted for consideration as potential acquisitions are accepted under the same terms as those for donated items (please refer to the "Donations for the Collection," section, on page 5).

CUSTOMER REQUESTS FOR RE-EVALUATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Customers wishing to recommend the removal or re-assignment of a specific item in the Library collection may submit a "Request for Re-Evaluation of an Item in the Library Collection" form (Appendix A, page 7).

Such recommendations are forwarded to the head of the Library's Division of Collection and Technical Services, who evaluates the recommendation and decides upon the action to be taken. The factors influencing this evaluation may include, but are not limited to, reviews and criticism relating to the work; the work's presence in, or absence from, the collections of libraries similar to the Palo Alto City Library; the treatment and characterization of the work by similar libraries; and the principles set forth in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read* (see Appendix B, page 9). The evaluation and resulting decision are reviewed, and must be approved, by the Director of Libraries, who has the final authority. The customer is then informed, in writing, of the Library's decision.

CRITERIA FOR WITHDRAWING LIBRARY MATERIALS FROM THE COLLECTION

The Library's collections are regularly evaluated to ensure that the materials they contain remain current and in good condition, and that they continue to reflect the interests and needs of the Library's clientele. Reviews, bibliographies, statistical tools — such as circulation reports, collection turnover rates, and customer surveys — and periodic visual inspections of the collections themselves help selectors determine how and to what extent individual items and categories of works are being used and which materials are candidates for withdrawal, repair, or replacement.

Library materials are withdrawn based on the following criteria:

- The information the item contains is obsolete or inaccurate
- The number of copies owned of a particular title is more than required
- The item is not used or seriously underused
- The item is damaged or in poor condition

Except for magazines and newspapers, withdrawn materials are given to the Friends of the Palo Alto Library to be sold or recycled.

RESOURCE SHARING WITH OTHER LIBRARIES: LINK+

In order to expand the range of accessible materials beyond the holdings of the Palo Alto City Library, in 2009 the Library joined Link+, a consortium of public and academic libraries in California and Nevada whose members loan one another available items from their collections. Palo Alto City Library customers may establish Link+ accounts and borrow, free of charge, a wide range of books from participating libraries.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Library is committed to the principles of intellectual freedom. Its administration and staff support each customer's fundamental right of access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity and recognize an obligation to provide as wide a range of materials as possible. In practice, customers make individual choices regarding which materials they use and borrow. By the same token, parents and legal guardians retain responsibility to oversee their children's use and borrowing of library materials. The Library neither denies nor abridges access to materials because of a person's age.

The Library supports, and has adopted, the principles of intellectual freedom and access to materials that are enumerated in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and *The Freedom to Read* (see Appendix B, page 9).

DONATIONS FOR THE COLLECTION

The Library accepts donations of books and media materials in good condition, reserving the right to reject a donated item for any reason. All donations are subject to the following provisions:

- A donated item becomes the property of the Palo Alto City Library
- The Library is under no obligation to add a donated item to the collection or to notify the donor of the disposition of that item
- A donated item may be reviewed for possible addition to the Library's collection, based on condition and customary selection criteria
- Items not added to the collection are given to the Friends of the Palo Alto Library for their book sales, proceeds of which benefit the Library. Once transferred to the Friends, items become their property

- Small quantities of donated items (up to one bag or box) are accepted at library facilities, but it is recommended that donations be taken directly to the Friends' book sale room, located at the Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, or by appointment (650-213-8755). Pick-ups can be arranged for large donations
- Donation-receipt forms are available upon request at the time of donation and are completed by donors. Values are assigned by donors, not by library staff. Donations to the library may be eligible for tax donations; check with your tax advisor

Monetary donations in support of the Library's collections are welcome and may be made to the Library Lovers' Fund, administered by the Friends of the Palo Alto Library, or to the Palo Alto Library Foundation. The Library reserves the right to accept or decline conditions placed upon such donations.

Review or solicitation copies submitted for consideration as potential acquisitions are accepted under the same terms as those for donated items.

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This collection development policy will be reviewed not less than once every five years.

APPENDIX A



REQUEST FOR RE-EVALUATION OF ITEM IN THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

To Be Completed by Library Customer

Date of request:

Title of item suggested for reevaluation:

Author of item (if applicable):

Format of item (e.g. book, DVD, audio book):

Why have you requested that this title be evaluated for its appropriateness for the library collection?

What is your suggestion for the handling of this item?

Your name:

Mailing address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

Thank you for your suggestion. It will be reviewed by a library committee, and you will receive a letter or email notifying you of the decision on your request.

To Be Completed by Library Staff

Staff member receiving form:

Date of receipt:

Library branch where received:

Forward this form upon completion to the Library Division Head for Collections & Technical Services.

APPENDIX B

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 that 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 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their*

own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe,

free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

*American Library Association
Association of American Publishers*