

# **GERING PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

## **Purpose of the Policy**

To provide guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the selection and evaluation of materials which anticipate and meet the needs of the Gering community. Gering Public Library serves a rural community of approximately 8000 people. According to the 2020 Census, its population is comprised of 75% White, 22% Latino or Hispanic and 3% other.

## **Mission Statement**

The Gering Public Library, a department within the City of Gering, is a learning and exploration center for all residents of the community. The Library serves the people of the community by providing educational, information, personal, social, and historical services and materials. With the support of the Gering Library Board, the Library staff effectively delivers these services and materials in a fair and equitable manner for the benefit of its customers.

## **Support for Intellectual Freedom**

The library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library board affirms the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to View, and Freedom to Read policy statements in support of acquiring and managing collections. (See Appendix A)

## **Responsibility for Selection**

The responsibility for selection lies with the staff of the library operating within the areas of service to children, teens, and adults. The ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board.

## **Criteria for Selection**

Library materials are selected by the Library Director and staff.

Competent reviewing media and basic lists of standard works are consulted as an aid in selection.

In selecting materials and developing collections for adults, as well as for children and teens, library staff includes materials that represent the broad range of human experience, reflecting the ethnic, religious, racial, and socio-economic diversity not only of the region it services but also the larger global perspective. Library collections will provide a broad range of opinion on current issues.

The library supports the individual's right to access ideas and information representing all points of view. To this end, the library welcomes and solicits patron suggestions, comments and ideas about the collection and its development.

Within standards of purpose and quality, the library's collection will be built to meet the needs and interests of the community. Collections may contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. Works are not excluded or included in the collection based solely on subject matter or on political, religious, or ideological grounds. In building collections, library staff is guided by the principle of selection, rather than censorship. Furthermore, the selection of a given item for a library's collections should not be interpreted as an endorsement of a particular viewpoint.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be acceptable:

- Current usefulness or permanent value.
- Authority and competence in presentation.
- Importance as a record of the times.
- Relation to the existing collection.
- Relative importance in comparison with other works on the subject.
- High standards of quality in content, format, and binding.
- Cost of the material.
- Requests by library patrons.

Video and audio selections will generally follow the same criteria for books. The nature of the media and the technical quality of production are additional factors to be considered in selecting audio, video, electronic, and other non-print formats.

Sites selected from the internet and linked from the library's homepage are subject to the same selection criteria as other materials.

### **The Use of the Library's Materials**

Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents.

Selection of materials for the collection is not restricted by the possibility that children may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate. Responsibility for the reading selection of children rests with their parents and legal guardians.

No books shall be kept in a controlled area except rare and valuable books.

### **The Scope of the Collection**

The library seeks to draw upon the collection of other libraries to secure by interlibrary loan specialized materials that are beyond the scope of the library's collection or for materials no longer available in the library.

Textbooks are not ordinarily purchased by the library except in subject areas where material in another form is not conveniently available.

The library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history and in works of local authors. The library will, however, apply the same standards of selection to the works of local authors as it does to other library materials.

The library may choose to purchase books in electronic format when available and when cost effective to extend the scope of its collection. These books will be available through the internet and downloadable for library patrons.

## **Gifts**

The library welcomes gifts of books and other materials with the understanding that the Library Director will evaluate them in accordance with the criteria applied to purchase materials. No conditions may be imposed relating to any book after its acceptance by the library.

When the library receives a cash gift for the purchase of memorial books or collections, the selection will be made by the Library Director in consultation with the donor. The name of the donor or person memorialized will be entered on a bookplate. Once in the collection, a memorial item shall be treated as any other item with regard to weeding or replacement.

## **Maintaining the Collection**

The library staff continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its decisions on a number of factors, including publishing date, frequency of circulation, community interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials. Items dealing with local history are an exception, as are certain classics and award-winning children's books. Fiction that was once popular but no longer in demand and non-fiction books that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection.

Materials no longer useful to the library may be given to another library or to the Friends of the Gering Library to be sold for the benefit of the library. Books that are not sold will be disposed of at the discretion of the Friends of the Library.

## **Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Materials available in the library present a diversity of viewpoints, enabling citizens to make the informed choices necessary in a democracy. The library also selects a wide variety of library materials that satisfy the diverse interests of our community. The library upholds the right of the individual to secure these resources, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to some. The library's varied collection is available to all; however, it is not expected that all of the collection will appeal to everyone.

Patrons who wish to request the withdrawal or reclassification of materials currently owned by the library are encouraged to discuss their concerns with a library supervisor or its director. If the patron is not satisfied with the response to their request, they will be provided with information and a form to request formal reconsideration of the library resource.

The following steps will be used when an individual feels that further action is necessary to address concerns about a library resource. For the duration of this process, the material in question will remain in circulation in the library collection.

1. A concerned patron will be given the Collection Development Policy, including Appendix A, and the form, Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials (Appendix B).
2. Patron is required to complete and submit a reconsideration form to the Library Director.
3. Within 15 business days, the Library Director will notify each Library Board member of the complaint and forward available review literature on the material.
4. At the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting after being notified, the complaint will be reviewed and a decision made regarding the complaint.
5. The patron will be notified of when and where the board meeting will be held to address the appeal. The Board of Trustees reserves the right to limit the length of public comments.
6. The Library Director will notify the patron, if not present at the meeting, of the Board's decision.
7. The Library Director will keep the Board informed of any response from the patron.

The decision of the board is final.

## Appendix A

### CODE OF ETHICS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information.

We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.

V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.

VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

***Adopted June 28, 1995, by the ALA Council.***

## FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

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

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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

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

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

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

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

## FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT

The freedom to view, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

***Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.***

## 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 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.***

**Appendix B**

**GERING PUBLIC LIBRARY  
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Book \_\_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent:    Yourself \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  Organization (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  Other (name) \_\_\_\_\_

To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific. Cite pages.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_ If no, what parts did you read? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel might be the result of reading this work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you believe is the theme of this work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary critics? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like your library to do about this work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return by mail or in person to: Gering Public Library, 1055 P Street, Gering, NE 69341