

## Heermance Memorial Library Collection Development Policy

### Philosophy

The Board recognizes that individuals within the community have diverse interests, backgrounds, cultural heritages, social values, and needs. The Board further recognizes that the Library serves all of the people within the community regardless of age, race, national origin, or political or social views.

The Library does not exclude materials that are biased, partisan, or anti-social, or which may offend the tastes of some citizens for reasons of frankness of vocabulary or description, unless these books are also below our accepted standards of selection. A balanced collection will represent all points of view on a subject, even those that might be considered extreme. The purchase of controversial items by the Library does not constitute endorsement of the views expressed.

The Board believes that while anyone is free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, this cannot be exercised to restrict freedom of others to read or inquire.

The Heermance Memorial Library supports the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View* statements, all of which are included as a part of this policy statement.

### Responsibility for Materials Selection

Selection of library materials is and shall be vested in the Director of the Heermance Memorial Library and such members of the staff who are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience.

### Selection Guidelines

Materials for the library collection are chosen for a wide variety of reasons such as information, self-education, and the recreational pursuits of library users. The decision to add an item to the collection by purchase is usually the result of selection based on demand, need, space and budget.

Selection based on demand: Patrons are invited to request the purchase of specific items by the Library. The final decision rests with the Director, who must consider the special need of one individual or group against the needs of the whole community.

Selection based on need: Library materials are added to the collection for the purpose of updating and further developing certain subject areas. Materials are selected from reviews, availability lists, vendor catalogs, bibliographies, and local experts.

The decision to include or exclude a particular item in the library's collection is based on a number of considerations, although they may not all be applicable to each item:

1. Timeliness
2. Effective expression and artistic excellence
3. Evaluations in professionally recognized critical guides
4. Significance of subject
5. Educational and informational value

6. Representation of various points of view
7. Availability of material elsewhere
8. Funds and space
9. Interests and needs of individuals in the community
10. Permanent value as source material
11. Vitality and originality of thought
12. Entertaining presentation
13. Relation to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection
14. Author's reputation or significance
15. Accuracy and authoritativeness of content

In purchasing new materials, the Library makes a distinction between those, which depict prejudice as an aspect of real life, and those, which offer derogatory stereotypes as valid representations. The latter are not added to the collection. However, materials, which authentically portray a period or way of life, are accepted even if stereotyping is included. Materials, which portray the prejudices of real or fictional characters, are also considered acceptable. Materials recognized as classics are acceptable even though they may contain passages widely viewed as objectionable by current standards.

The library does not purchase out-of-print materials for the collection.

Professional and special materials, such as legal, medical, and religious works, are purchased only if they are of general interest.

No attempt is made to purchase all the works by a certain author.

The Library houses a limited local history collection. The Library does not attempt to include artifacts as part of the collection. Books by local authors and books on local matters may be purchased even though they may not meet the standards set forth for the general collection. Patrons are referred to the Vedder Research Library, located in Coxsackie, NY for more extensive information on local history.

The Library accepts gifts of library materials, but reserves the right to evaluate and to dispose of such gifts in accordance with the criteria applied to purchased materials.

Children's materials are purchased by the same general principles that govern selection of adult materials. Responsibility for the choice of reading material for minors rests with their parents or guardians. Selection of materials for the library collection is not restricted by the possibility that minors may obtain materials their parents consider inappropriate, nor are children limited to the children's collection.

### Reconsideration of Library Materials

Whenever any patron objects to the presence or absence of any library material, the complainant will be given a fair hearing. All complaints that cannot be readily resolved by staff members will be referred immediately to the Director, who will discuss the matter with the complainant.

If the patron wishes, they may submit the form "[Request for Withdrawal of Library Material](#)" or "[Request for the Addition of Library Material](#)." If it is a request for the withdrawal, the Director

will examine the item, check reviews of the item, and determine if it conforms to the standards of the materials selection policy. If it is a request for the addition of an item, the Director will check reviews of the item, determine if it conforms to the standards of the materials selection policy, and determine if there are any budget restraints. The Director will decide whether to add, withdraw, or restrict the material in question and will write to the complainant, giving the reasons for the decision. The Board of Trustees will also be notified of the complaint and of the Director's decision.

Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed from use pending final action. If the complainant wishes to contest the decision, they may present the complaint to the Board of Trustees. This may be done by letter or by attending a Board meeting. The Board will consider the complaint and the Director's recommendation. The written decision of the Board shall be final and shall be reported to the complainant.

### Weeding Policy

The Library continually withdraws items from the collection, basing its policy on the elimination of outdated materials, materials no longer of interest or in demand, unneeded duplicates, and worn or mutilated material. Frequency of circulation, community interest, and availability of newer or more valid materials are prime considerations. 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.

Some withdrawn materials are given to the Friends of the Heermance Memorial Library. Proceeds from such donations are used for the benefit of the Library. Because of limited space some withdrawn materials are given to other non-profit organizations.

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees of The Heermance Memorial Library February 10, 2004**  
**Revised by the Board of Trustees of The Heermance Memorial Library March 20, 2014**  
**Revised by the Board of Trustees of The Heermance Memorial Library August 17, 2022**

**Heermance Memorial Library**  
**1 Ely St**  
**Coxsackie, NY 12051**

# The Freedom to Read Statement

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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.

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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.

*A Joint Statement by:*

**American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers**

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

**American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression  
The Association of American University Presses, Inc.**

**The Children's Book Council**

**Freedom to Read Foundation**

**National Association of College Stores**

**National Coalition Against Censorship**

**National Council of Teachers of English**

**The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression**

# Freedom to View Statement

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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

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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.

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; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

**Heermance Memorial Library**

**Request for the Addition of Library Material**

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of material: \_\_\_\_\_

Author of material: \_\_\_\_\_

Format of material: Book, DVD, Music CD, Other

\_\_\_\_\_

ISBN, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you see/hear about this material?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank You for Your Recommendation!

\_\_\_\_\_

**Heermance Memorial Library**

**Patron's Request for Withdrawal of Library Material**

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Format of material: Book, DVD, Music CD, Other \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Whom do you represent?

\_\_\_\_\_ Myself

\_\_\_\_\_ Organization (Please Specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please Specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read, see, listen to or otherwise use the material in its entirety?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If not, then which parts?

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you seen or heard reviews of this material? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, please name the source. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think the material is about?

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To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific)

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What do you feel might be the result of reading, viewing, or hearing this work?

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For what age group would you recommend this work? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything good about the work?

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What would you like your library to do about this material?

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

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

The Library appreciates your interest. Your comments will be forwarded to the Director, who will respond to you by letter.