

EAST ALBEMARLE REGIONAL LIBRARY (EARL) COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Introduction

The East Albemarle Regional Library is a regional system providing library services to the residents of and visitors to Camden, Currituck, Dare and Pasquotank counties in Northeastern North Carolina. System headquarters are located in the Pasquotank-Camden Library in Elizabeth City.

Mission Statement

The EARL Board of Trustees has adopted the following mission:

The libraries of the East Albemarle Regional Library System provide the adults and children of their counties with (1) Information in many formats and answers to questions on a broad array of topics; (2) Support to students enrolled in educational programs to help them attain their educational goals; (3) Assistance and training to improve people's skills in finding, evaluating and using information effectively; (4) Materials and programs to help people with self-directed personal growth and development (lifelong learning); and (5) Current materials for recreational reading, viewing, and listening as well as information on popular culture and social trends in a variety of formats.

Purpose of Selection Policy

Users of the East Albemarle Regional Library System deserve the highest quality library service available within the constraints imposed by financial limitations. Since each of the strategic directions noted above correlates with a materials goal, in order to accomplish its goals, EARL will focus on print and non-print material to support community requests for information about topics of everyday interest and concern. Students in public, private and home schools will find supplementary materials to enhance and amplify their studies although EARL is not necessarily guided in its policy of selection by the curricular needs of schools and colleges. Hence, it is unlikely students will find textbooks or other required assignment-related material in the collection except when those materials coincidentally best serve the general public as well. Users will be able to find research and computer materials to support their needs relating to using computers and information more effectively as well as study skills. Users pursuing lifelong learning interests will find materials to support their search. Users will also be able to find materials on popular culture and social trends, fiction and paperbacks for recreational purposes.

The selection process shall exclude materials characterized by prurience and lacking redeeming social or literary value. However, materials containing an emphasis on sex or

using profanity shall not be automatically rejected for fear of offending someone without consideration of literary value or importance of message. Neither will the origin, background or views of those contributing to the creation of a work automatically cause its exclusion from the collection.

The scope of EARL's collection is intended to offer a choice in format, treatment, and level of difficulty so that most individual library needs can be met and service given to individuals of all ages. All materials will be purchased in the most suitable format for optimum usage which in some cases may be access to a website rather than an item in the library.

Materials in the children's collections may be either educational or recreational (or both) in nature. Items that provide enjoyment and inspiration, cultivate in children a love of books and reading, help them discover more about themselves and their world, and meet their personal information needs. Children are not limited to using only materials in the juvenile collection, although juvenile collections are shelved together to facilitate use. Responsibility for material selected by a child rests with his or her parent or guardian, not the library staff.

Whenever a user request cannot be satisfied at the branch level, intralibrary loan to another system branch will be pursued first, and if the item is not available locally, interlibrary loan will be employed to satisfy the patron need in compliance with the National Interlibrary Loan Code of the United States. A final note must be made regarding availability of materials and funding. EARL libraries purchase those materials for which they have funds; consequently, if funds are not forthcoming, collections will be inadequate. A truism of really excellent library service is that it exists in communities where there is sufficient local support to guarantee adequate funding.

Responsibility for Selection

Ultimately, the responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Board of Trustees. However, the board delegates to the Regional Director authority to interpret and guide the application of the policy. The County Librarian in each county is the person responsible for seeing that appropriate selection decisions are made day-to-day. All staff members selecting materials will be expected to follow this policy in making selection decisions.

Basic Policies Guiding Selection

Basic to the selection process are those documents of collection building established by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement. (See Appendices) In addition, East Albemarle Regional Library subscribes fully to the principles adopted by the American Library Association in all of its "Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights", which include, but are not limited to the following: Access for Children and Young Adults to Non-print Materials; Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks; Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual

Orientation; Diversity in Collection Development; Economic Barriers to Information Access; Expurgation of Library Materials; Free Access to Libraries for Minors; Labels and Rating Systems; Restricted Access to Library Materials; and the Universal Right to Free Expression. (See website: www.ala.org)

Selection Criteria

Materials selected for EARL libraries will meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Accuracy, reliability and authority of author or producer
2. Relevance to community needs
3. Timeliness and permanence of material
4. Quality of writing, design, illustrations and/or production
5. Suitability of subject, style, and level for the intended audience
6. Relative importance of work in comparison with already held materials on the same subject
7. Availability, durability and suitability of format
8. Responsible treatment of subject
9. Evaluation of critical reviews whenever possible
10. Popular demand as related to above.

Since a website may be the best source of current, appropriate material on a subject, the following criteria apply to the selection of Internet sites:

1. Currency and frequency of maintenance
2. Availability of contact information for responsible parties
3. Quality of access through fast loading files, clearly defined elements, ease of use, and graphics that complement rather than distract
4. Stable Uniform Resource Locator (URL) unlikely to change often
5. Complete access without requirements for credit card or personal information.

Selection Tools

Materials may be selected from book reviews in professional and popular journals and magazines, subject bibliographies, annual lists of recommended titles, publishers' catalogs, from reputable salesmen, and by personal examination. Standard selection tools include Library Journal, Booklist, Publisher's Weekly, School Library Journal, Voice of Youth Advocates, as well as others of a more specialized nature.

Materials will not be chosen through telephone solicitation without first reviewing printed information from the publisher or distributor. Materials will not be accepted for purchase on a preview basis.

The library welcomes suggestions of titles or subject areas needing coverage from all citizens. All such suggestions then will be evaluated based on the standards above. The practice of cooperative collection development should be utilized wherever possible.

Formats Collected

In addition to books and periodicals, EARL will provide resources supporting its mission in a variety of formats, such as, but not limited to: videos, DVD's, books on tape, books on CD, microforms, electronic resources, links to recommended Internet sites, and various audiovisual items. A new format will be considered for inclusion in EARL's collection as its popularity increases and as a body of significant titles in that format develops. Immediate inclusion of a new format without giving it time to develop or be replaced by something else would be foolhardy; but after due consideration, new formats affording optimum access for users may be included.

Maintenance of Collection

Selection is only one aspect of collection development. Continuous, consistent attention must be paid to the collection to assure that it remains current, attractive and relevant. Replacing lost or damaged items or finding substitutions for them reintroduces the selection process.

Discarding may occur because the item is out-dated, the subject matter is obsolete, is no longer in demand, has not circulated in a given length of time, was lost or is in poor condition. When discarding is to take place, it should be done according to the accepted professional practices as described in The CREW Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-Sized Public Libraries. (The CREW method advocates the use of Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding). If a book to be discarded is the last copy in the system, particular attention must be given to deciding whether it needs to be replaced, held longer or discarded anyway.

Disposal of discarded items should be handled in a responsible manner, keeping in mind that materials removed from the collection generally are of no further use to the public but in cases where items are still serviceable, they should be donated or sold.

Gifts

The East Albemarle Regional Library System accepts donations of materials with the understanding that items added to the collection must meet the same criteria as purchased materials. EARL shall not accept gifts of materials or donations of art work, furniture, etc. with special conditions or restrictions imposed by the donor such as separate shelving, display in a particular place or manner, guaranteed acquisition or permanent retention. The library is happy to provide a written acknowledgment of donations, but cannot legally appraise the value of materials. Most donated items not added to the collection are made available to the public through the Friends of the Library book sales.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to assure that objections are handled in an attentive and consistent manner. Whenever possible complaints about library materials should be handled as they arise by the County Librarian or his/her designee. An informal discussion with the person, giving him/her the opportunity to explain the concern may be all that is needed. If the complainant wishes to lodge a formal complaint, a "Patron's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form must be completed in its entirety (See Appendices).

Concerns about materials are referred through the normal chain of command from the County Librarian to the Regional Director and should be answered in writing within 14 business days by each. The Regional Director's decision may be appealed to the East Albemarle Regional Library Board of Trustees which is the final authority in such cases. If a patron wishes a hearing before the Regional Board of Trustees, he/she should notify the Regional Director in writing at least one month before the next regular meeting. The Chairman of the Regional Board of Trustees will convey their written decision to the patron within 14 business days of said meeting. The material in question will remain in circulation during the review process.

Challenged materials which meet the criteria set forth in this policy will not be removed from the collection under pressure to satisfy partisan or doctrinal views of one individual or group. Responsibility for the reading, listening and viewing of library materials by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials unsuitable for children might inadvertently come into their possession.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees

January 18, 2001

Amended October 17, 2007

Appendix 1: 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a Library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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 18, 1948

Amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980;

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996 by the ALA Council.

Appendix 2: 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 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 other 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.

Appendix 3: 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 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, and endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

EAST ALBEMARLE REGIONAL LIBRARY

Patron's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Author/Artist: _____

Publisher/Producer (if known) _____

Title: _____

Type of Material (book, periodical, video/DVD, audio recording, microform, electronic resource, etc.) _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Telephone: _____

Whom do you represent? _____ Myself _____ Organization _____ Other

Please specify name of organization/other _____

1. Did you read, view, listen to or otherwise use the material in its entirety?
_____ Yes; _____ No. If not, then which parts?

2. Have you seen or heard reviews on this material?
_____ Yes; _____ No. If yes, please name the source. _____

3. What do you think the material is about?

4. To what in the work do you object? (Please specify)

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

6. For what age group would you recommend this work? _____

7. Is there anything good about the work? _____

8. What would you like the library to do about this material? _____

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

Your signature _____ Date _____

The library appreciates your interest. Concerns about materials are referred through the normal chain of command from the County Librarian to the Regional Director and should be answered in writing within 14 business days by each. The Regional Director's decision may be appealed to the East Albemarle Regional Library Board of Trustees which is the final authority in such cases. If a patron wishes a hearing before the Regional Board of Trustees, he/she should notify the Regional Director in writing at least one month before the next regular meeting. The Chairman of the Regional Board of Trustees will convey their written decision to the patron within 14 business days of said meeting. The material in question will remain in circulation during the review process.