

The Rutherford Public Library Materials Selection Policy

I. PURPOSE:

It is the role of the public library to meet the information and interest needs of the community. The Rutherford Public Library affirms each individual's right of free access to information and ideas, whereby individual thoughts and opinions may be formed. To this end the library acquires and maintains materials representing the history of human thought, expression, and achievement, as well as those reflective of contemporary issues, trends and ideas. The Library considers the needs of all people, neither censors nor judges individual informational requirements or interest, and makes material accessible to all. Library materials are selected to represent all points of view and are not excluded because they may contain language or illustrations offensive to some persons.

II. GENERAL SELECTION POLICY:

A. Authority for selection of materials is delegated by the Library Board of Trustees to the Library Director and the Director's designated staff.

B. The selection of materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to the changing needs of the Rutherford community. Materials are evaluated as complete works and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection solely because it represents a particular aspect of life, because of frankness of expression, or because it is controversial. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are evaluated by the following standards. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive. Neither the order of the general criteria nor the order of items in a list of specific criteria indicates relative importance.

C. The following general criteria are used:

- Present and potential relevance to community needs
- Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience
- Suitability of format
- Importance as a document of the times
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content
- Reputation and/or significance of author, publisher or producer
- Positive review in one or more appropriate professional journals
- Positive critics' and staff members' reviews
- Relationships to existing materials in the collection
- Within limits of budgets for materials
- Not available, or with limited accessibility, from other lending sources
- Insufficient materials available on the same subject
- Author or illustrator is local

- Enhances a specific collection within the Library
- Author or producer is already represented in the collection
- Literary and artistic merit
- Accuracy of content
- Popularity with library patrons

III. SELECTION BY COLLECTION

Adult Fiction

The library provides a collection of standard and contemporary fiction titles as well as genre fiction for the intellectual enrichment, information, and entertainment needs and interests of the adult population of Rutherford. Multiple copies of frequently used titles are provided. Large print, audiocassette, compact disc, and downloadable copies of some popular titles are also available.

Special Criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Collection's need to reflect minority as well as majority cultures
- Literary merit

Adult Nonfiction

The Library maintains a collection of general interest nonfiction titles to provide for the information needs and browsing interests of library patrons. Materials for which there is heavy, temporary demand may be selected with less emphasis on the general criteria listed above.

Special Criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Suitability for intended audience (e.g., research-level books not purchased)
- Depth of subject
- Ease of use, including index, bibliography and illustrations

Periodicals

The Library maintains a collection of magazines for informational and recreational reading. Periodicals for which indexing is available are generally retained for three years in the closed stacks or through the Library's access to subscription databases.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Available indexing (lack of indexing will not exclude a title if it meets patrons needs)
- Community interests as measured by surveys and requests
- Availability of display shelving and storage space

Newspapers

Newspapers are selected to provide local, state, regional and national coverage. Local newspapers plus a selection of regional and national titles are purchased. Issues are

retained for one-three months, with the exception of *The News Leader*, which is retained indefinitely on microfilm.

ESL Collection

The ESL collection consists of books, videos, kits and periodicals serving the needs of adult new readers, ESL tutors, and ESL students.

The Assistant Director selects new materials for this collection from the Adult Services budget based on the recommendations of local ESL committees, providers and specialized selection tools.

Reference Materials

Reference materials provide timely and accurate information on a wide variety of topics. Because of method of use, rarity, or cost, they are maintained for in-library use only.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Currency of the material
- Thoroughness of coverage
- Importance of subject matter to the collection
- Ease of use (especially indexing)

An increasing number of reference tools are offered electronically, generally through the Library's membership in the Bergen County Cooperative Library System and the Highlands Regional Library Cooperative.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria) for electronic reference tools

- Ease of use
- Timeliness of updates
- Licensing restrictions
- Technical support
- Hardware and software requirements

New Jersey Collection

Nonfiction books about Rutherford and New Jersey are housed in separate collections. These materials are selected and retained under the following criteria:

- The Library attempts to be as inclusive as possible in obtaining books pertaining to the history, economic, social and cultural life of Rutherford.
- The Library attempts to be as inclusive as possible in collecting letters, papers, documents, photos, or other primary resource material related to Rutherford poet William Carlos Williams.
- The Library makes no attempt to be inclusive in its collection of materials on Bergen County or the State of New Jersey.

Young Adult Materials

Young adult materials are selected to meet the recreational, educational and cultural needs of patrons in grades 7-12. It is the purpose and intention of this collection to

encourage reading for varied purposes and to act as a transition between the children's and adult collections.

Selection of young adult materials is based on the overall selection policy of the Library, without restrictions or arbitrary qualifications. The collection contains classic and contemporary works of fiction and nonfiction. The collection attempts to reflect subject areas of the school curriculum as well as complement the school library collections.

Responsibility of the choice of titles for individual young adults rests with his or her parents or guardian. The selection of materials for the young adult room will not be inhibited by the possibility that some materials may be objectionable to some parents or guardians.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Suitability for intended audience

Children's Materials

Children's materials are selected to meet the recreational, educational and cultural needs of children from infancy through 6th grade. Additional materials are selected to assist adult caregivers with the changing needs of children. Multiple copies of frequently requested titles are provided.

Juvenile Fiction

The Library maintains a variety of children's fiction from the most distinguished in children's literature to popular titles and new, enticing titles that will attract readers of many tastes and abilities. Popular series titles are purchased in response to patron requests.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Appropriate reading level and interest level

Picture Books

These books, in which illustration is as important as text, serve to introduce children to the world of books. The Library includes a wide variety for adults to read to toddlers and preschoolers and for children to look at and use as they begin to read. This collection includes beginning readers, concept books, wordless books and board books as well as picture books.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Relationship of illustration to text
- Appeal of story and illustration to children
- Age appropriateness of art, text, topic
- Durability of format

Juvenile Nonfiction

The juvenile nonfiction collection contains general informational works, browsing items and subject-oriented materials on topics of interest to children preschool age through sixth grade. The Library does not provide basic texts or materials needed in quantity for schoolwork. It does, however, purchase supplementary materials to enrich the resources available at local schools.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Suitability for intended audience
- Ease of use, including index, bibliography and illustrations
- Quality of illustrations, maps, graphics and photographs
- Usefulness of material for research

Parent/Teacher Collection

Many of the materials in the Parent/Teacher Collection are chosen for their usefulness in helping parents and other caregivers help their children understand and deal with the problems and situations of everyday life. These include both juvenile and adult titles. Additional materials are chosen to meet the needs of adults providing educational and recreational opportunities to groups of young children. Some duplication exists between this collection and the adult nonfiction materials.

Special criteria (in addition to general criteria)

- Suitability for intended audience

Media Collection

The media collection strives to meet information and recreational needs of the community by providing access to, and assistance in locating, information and materials in non-print formats such as DVDs, videotapes, audiotapes and compact discs, and other emerging technologies.

Selection Criteria: The criteria listed include selection consideration for both the adult and children's collections. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable, nor will any single criterion be decisive. These criteria do not replace the judgment and expertise of the staff and there may be some instances when selected titles may not fit any of the listed criteria.

- Emphasize instructional, educational, and informational topics
- Cost and space considerations
- Contributes to a balance and range of information

Feature film selection additional criteria considerations:

- Represents important historical, multicultural, and/or artistic aspects of film making including classic Hollywood films, award-winning films, foreign language films, animated films, and films by independent and local filmmakers.

Recorded music selection additional criteria considerations:

- Represents artists and music of enduring value according to standard resources
- Introduces the major fields and styles of music
- Represents music providing cultural awareness

World Language Collections

The Library is currently developing fiction and nonfiction collections in Korean and Spanish language for patrons of all ages. The selection criteria mirror that in place for English materials.

IV. GIFTS

The Library appreciates gifts of materials or money donated for the purchase of materials. Gifts of materials must meet the policies and criteria stated above. The Library reserves the right to accept or refuse conditions placed upon gifts. All gifts are subject to evaluation by the general and specific criteria listed in the policy for the relevant collections. All gift materials will be accepted unconditionally, however, the Library reserves the right to dispose of them as it sees fit. Any item that is not added may be donated to another institution where it might be used, or it may be sold in the Book Sale. Monies from such sales are used to benefit Rutherford Public Library collections and programs.

Items that are considered unacceptable for the Library's collections include, but are not limited to:

- Materials in poor physical condition
- Outdated materials
- Duplicate materials
- Esoteric materials only of interest to a small group of specialists in a field

If a person or group wishes to donate material in memory of or in honor of a friend, the library staff will be happy to suggest several titles. There are many lists of standard titles and we shall assist interested patrons to select an appropriate title that is a definite asset to the collection.

For income tax purposes patrons who donate materials may make an estimate of the value for tax purposes. IRS allows "fair market value" for deductions. The Library will not assign monetary value to donations received.

V. COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

As materials become worn, dated, damaged or lost, replacement will be determined by the appropriate staff members, who will determine whether or not:

- The items is still available and can be replaced
- Another item or format might better serve the same purpose
- There remains sufficient need to replace that item
- Updated, newer or revised materials better replace a given item

- The item has historical value
- Another library or organization could better provide that or a comparable item

VI. REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Rutherford Public Library Trustees and staff support intellectual freedom and subscribe to the principles of the American Library Association's *Library Bill Of Rights* and its statements on *Freedom To Read* and *Freedom To View*. The Library staff applies the selection criteria described in this Materials Selection Policy and thus endeavor to provide books and other materials that reflect the diversity of viewpoints within the community. Library patrons may nominate books or other materials to be either added to or removed from the collection. When a request for reconsideration is made by a patron, the following procedure is followed:

- A. A member of the Library staff explains the selection policy to the patron. If the patron wishes, s/he may then submit a written Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources to the Library Director.
- B. The completed form is reviewed by one or more members of the Library staff who have responsibility for materials selection, and by the Library Director. The Library staff members objectively review the resource in question to ascertain that the selection criteria and principles stated in herewith were applied in the selection process. The Library Director or a member of the Library staff shall make a written response to the requester within 14 days of the date that the reconsideration form was submitted. The Library Director shall also notify the Library Board of Trustees of each Request for Reconsideration submitted.
- C. If the requester is not satisfied with the decision of the Library staff, s/he may make a final appeal in writing, within seven days, directly to the Library Board of Trustees which will schedule and conduct a public meeting within thirty days of the final written appeal in order to reach a final decision by majority vote.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Requests for reconsideration of library materials may be made by Rutherford residents. Requests are to be submitted in writing through this form, which shall be completed as fully as possible.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

RUTHERFORD LIBRARY CARD # (Please put "N/A" if not a cardholder.): _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(Optional) I am acting as a spokesperson for the following group: _____

Please describe the item in question as fully as you are able:

Title: _____

Author(s): _____

Publisher: _____

Format (Circle One):

Book DVD Audio Recording Magazine Newspaper
Digital Resource (incl. eBooks) Program Display Book List

Call number/location in library, or date of program: _____

Please mark the action you wish taken on this item:

Add it to the Library Shelf it elsewhere Remove it from the Library
 Other (specify): _____

Why? You may use the back of this page if you need more space.



Please explain how such an action would improve the Library's service to the Rutherford community. If requesting to remove an item from the collection, please state specifically the primary harm that might arise from this item:

Have you read/viewed/listened to the entire work? If not, then which parts?

How was it brought to your attention?

Have you read any professional reviews of this material? Please attach copies if possible.

Are there materials you suggest to provide additional information or other points of view on this topic?

Signature: _____

Appendices:

The Library selects materials in accordance with guidelines stated by the American Library Association in its *Library Bill Of Rights*, *Freedom To Read* and *Freedom To View* statements. Those documents are appended.

- *Library Bill of Rights (A-1)*
- *The Freedom to Read (A-2)*
- *Freedom to View Statement (A-3)*

This policy is determined by the Library Board of Trustees and is subject to periodic review and/or revision at the discretion of the Board. Appeals may be submitted to the Board in writing.

Adopted by the Rutherford Public Library Board of Trustees: December 13, 2005

American Library Association Statements

A-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.

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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A-2 The Freedom to Read Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We therefore affirm these propositions:

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

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.

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-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 (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