

Parker Memorial Library COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

GOALS

- To ensure that the Parker Memorial Library collection fulfills the informational and materials related recreational needs of all demographics of the Dracut population.
- To strive for a collection that is balanced, comprehensive, and of adequate size, quality, and diversity to meet the needs of its users.
- To ensure that all parts of the collection are up to date, attractive, and well maintained.
- To increase in the involvement and knowledge of the staff in collection development and management.
- To utilize collection usage statistics to ensure an optimal allocation of the materials budget.
- To continually analyze present formats and to identify new formats that will make the collection more valuable to our patrons.
- To cooperate with the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (M VLC) to insure that our collections meet our consortium responsibilities.

PHILOSOPHY

The Parker Library was founded to provide, organize, and preserve books, materials, and information to increase the recreational and educational level of the Dracut community.

The Library provides materials in a wide variety of formats, as well as the space, technology and programs essential to providing 21st century public library service. The library recognizes the importance of non-book materials both as a supplement to its book collection and to its concept of service. To that end, non-traditional materials will be added to the collection as the need and/or demand arises, and budget allows.

The Parker Library serves the Town of Dracut. We also participate actively in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, a group of 36 libraries in neighboring cities and towns covering a wide geographical area with diverse populations.

Patron usage is the most powerful influence on the library's collection. Circulation, patron requests and patron reserves are all closely monitored, triggering the purchase of new items and additional copies of high demand items. Inherent in our collection development philosophy is an appreciation for each and every library patron. Copies of titles that are expected to be in high demand are purchased in multiple.

MATERIALS SELECTION PROCESS

The Board of Library Trustees delegates the authority and responsibility for selection and management of print, non-print, and electronic materials to the Library Director. The Director allocates the materials budget,

and ensures that the collection is in conformity with the Collection Development Policy. Library materials are selected by the professional staff after consulting professional review media, as well as various online websites. Staff members consult with each other to review the needs of the community as documented in circulation statistics and requests. Additionally, professional staff members have been assigned responsibility for weeding, replacement, and augmentation of the collection.

SELECTION CRITERIA

In selecting nonfiction material, the selectors consider the author's popularity, competency, and the potential usefulness to the library's collection. First, staff members attempt to meet the patrons' demands, purchasing materials with wide appeal. Second, material is bought that is both pertinent and timely. The Library makes a special effort to obtain material representing all sides of controversial issues. Third, staff members look to see that the author presents his or her material accurately, clearly, and in a readable manner.

The library continuously updates materials in the areas of health, government, technology, science, and current events to meet the informational needs of our patrons. The library attempts to purchase new nonfiction in a variety of popular subject areas. We also maintain a new nonfiction display in the main reading room on the first floor.

Local history and genealogical materials relating to Dracut are also sought for the collection. Histories, newspapers, vital records, town reports, books by local authors, and books about the Merrimack Valley are collected.

The library attempts to purchase a wide variety of fiction to satisfy the needs of all of our borrowers. Selectors choose titles on the basis of reviews that consider, among other things, the popularity of the author, the appeal of a book for a specific audience, and the writer's skill. Genres collected include mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, horror, inspirational fiction, romance, urban fiction, suspense/thrillers, short stories and graphic novels, to name a few. Our genre titles are interfiled with our general fiction.

Mass market paperbacks selected for the adult collection are added to meet the demand for popular, easily portable, inexpensive reading material. A balanced paperback collection is not a primary goal, and books are frequently weeded. These considerations result in a paperback collection that is constantly changing and useful mainly for browsing.

SELF-PUBLISHED MATERIALS

- Self-published books will be considered for admission into the collection under the following conditions:

The title has received at least one positive review from a trade publication. The following review sources will not be considered: Self-written reviews, Un-sourced reviews, Reviews from friends and family.

- The book has been edited by an editor or professional literary agent

- The selector may also choose to review and evaluate the merit of the book as an addition to the collection.

At any time, the library selector has the right to not add self-published titles to the collection if in his/her opinion the work is of poor quality or has not been edited properly. Self-published titles that are added to the collection that do not circulate for one year will be weeded.

VENDORS / SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Some titles are brought to the attention of selectors during sales visits from publisher's representatives. Because invoicing and back-ordering problems are common among these individual publisher representatives, we do not often purchase from visiting vendors.

PUBLISHER'S CATALOGS

Since the majority of titles published each year are not professionally reviewed, publishers' catalogs are an important source of information. Crucial to buying decisions is the reputation of the publisher in general, and the series or type of book in particular. New catalogs are received by or routed to the appropriate selectors who check the database for holdings of desired titles, and place orders. Publishers' catalogs are particularly useful for new editions of standard titles, and to fill subject needs. New fiction is rarely bought from publishers' catalogs, unless the author is a known quantity and demand is certain.

SUBJECT NEEDS LIST | MISSING TITLES

Members of the Reference staff note subjects that cannot be filled from the library's collection, or standard titles that should be in the collection but are not. The Assistant Director identifies and purchases titles to meet these needs.

RESERVE LISTS / PURCHASE ALERT REPORTS / OTHER REPORTS

All reserves are monitored by the selectors to identify frequently requested materials that are not in the collection in adequate numbers. Purchase alert reports from the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC) are regularly checked to identify heavily reserved titles. Due to limited resources we cannot always purchase enough copies to meet local or consortium demand. Other reports identify possible titles for replacement.

PATRON TITLE REQUESTS | STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

All patron requests are considered for purchase, or referred to interlibrary loan. Patron title requests come in via our online materials suggestion form, reserve slips for titles not in the collection, or interlibrary loan requests that the reference librarian feels should be considered for local purchase.

Staff recommendations follow the same procedures as patron requests, and must meet the same selection criteria as all materials in the collection.

DONATIONS AND GIFTS

The Parker Memorial Library accepts donations of books and other materials. The Library reserves the right to refuse any gift that the Board of Library Trustees, in their sole discretion, deems to be not in the best interest of the Library to accept. The Board of Library Trustees delegates to the Library Director, the right to accept or refuse book donations. All other donations are forwarded to the Board for approval.

Donated materials are not automatically added to the Library's collection. Materials not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library and may be sold in support of the Library.

The Library does not evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes.

YOUNG ADULT MATERIALS

Young Adults have access to the entire collection. Any limitations placed upon the reading materials of the young adult are left to the discretion of parents, guardians, and caregivers.

A Young Adult collection has been developed for the purpose of meeting the recreational reading and informational needs of the middle school and high school age population (grades 6-12). Materials are chosen from reviews in journals or through book lists from established sources. The selector of YA materials also considers patron requests and closely monitors what is currently popular for that age group. The fiction collection consists primarily of young adult fiction. Some adult titles of special interest to young adults are also included. Young Adult nonfiction titles are housed with the adult collection.

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS

Children have access to the entire collection. Any limitations placed upon the reading materials of children are left to the discretion of parents, guardians, and caregivers. Some items may be included that might not be considered appropriate by all adults for all children. While some books are too mature for one child, other children may be ready for them. Only each child and his or her adults can decide what material is suitable for that child to read.

Material selected for the Children's Collection meet similar standards as all other materials selected for the library's collection. The Children's Room strives to provide children from birth through age 12 or grade 6 with the library materials necessary to aid both their educational and personal development.

School libraries serve the curriculum needs of the students. While not duplicating these resources or attempting to follow all the changes in curriculum, the Parker Library does recognize the need to provide a wide variety of cultural and recreational reading matter for students, and to provide some basic curriculum related materials for students seeking to complete their assignments outside school hours.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

To ensure the collection continues to meet the diverse and changing needs of the community, the Parker Memorial Library engages in continual evaluation to maintain a current and relevant collection. A material may be removed based upon the following criteria:

- Material is damaged and cannot be repaired to withstand public use.
- Material is out-of-date or offers inaccurate data.
- Newer, more complete, or authoritative materials are available.
- Multiple copies of a material are no longer needed.
- Use of a material indicates that it no longer needs to be housed locally and access may be obtained through regional or national sources.

The Parker Library disposes of materials that have been withdrawn according to the criteria for withdrawal. Withdrawn materials are given first to the Friends of the Dracut Library (FOL) for sale in their Book Nook or for their Annual Book Sale. Items that are rejected by the FOL are disposed of. All materials remain the library's property until the materials are disposed of.

OBJECTIONS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

The Library collects a variety of materials for all age groups, diverse tastes, and varying viewpoints. The Parker Memorial Library believes that each patron has the right to read, listen, or view any item of their choosing. The Parker Library is a proponent of the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statement (attached).

The Library does not label controversial material, or restrict use in any way. R rated movies are labeled with the letter R for informational purposes only. No other rating labels are applied to library materials.

Evaluation of materials included in the collection must pertain to the entire work, not just individual parts of the work. Language, situations, or subjects which may be offensive to some community members do not disqualify materials which—in their entirety—are judged to be of value.

Materials will not be removed from the collection until the process below is completed.

If a patron whose home library is any of the 36 within the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium wishes to have the material reconsidered, he or she may fill out a "Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. All completed forms will be directed to the Library Director, initiating the review process. A written response will be provided to the patron within thirty (30) working days of receiving the completed form.

An appeal may be made to the Board of Library Trustees — in writing — within ten (10) days of the receipt of the Library Director's decision. Appeals should be sent to:

Parker Memorial Library
28 Arlington Street
Dracut, MA 01826
cc: The Board of Library Trustees

The Chair of the Board will call for a special meeting to review and discuss the submitted "Reconsideration of Library Resources" form. This meeting will be held in conjunction with Open Meeting Law.

The Board will appoint an advisory committee to review, view, or listen to the work which is the subject of the request. The committee shall consist of three (3) members: a librarian on staff, one current Board member, and one local citizen with no library affiliation.

The advisory committee will have four (4) weeks for all members to read, view, or listen to the work in question. The advisory committee will meet and make a formal recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Library Trustees will hold a 2nd special meeting to consider the patron's request and the recommendation of the advisory committee. This meeting will be held in conjunction with Open Meeting Law. The Board will make a final determination to the request.

The Library Director and Board President will convey in writing the Board's decision to the patron's request within ten (10) business days.

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on August 17, 2011
Amended on September 9, 2015, and on September 13, 2017
Amended on July 20, 2022

**Parker Memorial Library
RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS FORM**

Name

Date

Address

City, State, Zip

Email Address

Phone Number

Resource you are commenting on:

Book Newspaper CD Library Program Magazine

DVD Audiobook Other:

Title

Author

Publisher and Date of Publication

What brought this material to your attention? Please comment on the material as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you. Please use the other side of this form or attach a separate statement to this form.

Return to: Director's Office, Parker Memorial Library, 28 Arlington Street, Dracut, MA 01826

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.

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.

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

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