

**POLICY**

**OF THE**

**HAILEY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Adopted by the  
Board of Trustees  
Of the Library  
On March 25, 2008  
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# Hailey Public Library Policy Manual

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The Hailey Public Library accepts as its function that which has been established by tradition, law, and the logic of a free democratic society as the role of the public library in the United States. This function includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the responsibility to assemble, preserve, and make available to all members of the community book and non-book materials including electronic access that will assist individuals to educate themselves, keep pace with progress in all fields of knowledge, become better political and social citizens, grow more capable in their daily occupations, develop their creative capacities, and make such use of leisure time as will promote personal and social well-being. Toward these ends, the Hailey Public Library, in accordance with the Idaho Code, guarantees to all members of the community free and equal access to its resources and collections without regard to race, national origin, age, sex, disability, creed, educational level, economic status, or any other qualifying factor. The library will strive to meet its goal of serving as a community center for information, education, recreation, and enrichment through the active promotion of improved library service locally, regionally, and throughout the State of Idaho.

City or municipal libraries are established and operate under the Idaho Code, Chapter 26, Sections 33-2602 to 33-2611.

## USE OF THE LIBRARY

Since Hailey Public Library is a tax-supported institution, its services and resources are available to those individuals who live or pay taxes within the city limits of Hailey or who pay a non-resident fee for services. The "library legal service area" is that area within the corporate boundaries of the City of Hailey. The library allows browsers and students from all areas to use materials while in the library. Reference assistance is provided to browsers whether or not they are Hailey residents or purchase a non-resident card.

## LIBRARY BORROWER'S CARD (Resident and Non-Resident)

To obtain a resident library card applicant must have photo identification, and another form of documentation proving residency or ownership of property or business within the city limits of Hailey: such as a utility bill, lease agreement or tax notice. A driver's license will not be accepted as proof of residency. A current mailing address is also required (general delivery is not a valid mailing address) before the library borrower's card is issued. All forms of identification used for proof of residency must have name and current physical address listed. Resident borrower's cards will be valid for two years from date of issuance and will be updated bi-annually upon presentation of current identification. If there is a change in address, proof of new residency must be presented before card will be updated.

Minor children (under 18 years of age) shall be issued an individual card, without identification, so long as a parent or legal guardian provides the requisite identification, as described above. Signature of parent acknowledges the responsibility of the signer for loss or damages of library material loaned to the minor child. Parents may access their minor child's account by presenting the child's library card number.

To obtain a non-resident card photo identification and a current mailing address (general delivery is not a valid mailing address) must be presented before the library borrower's card is issued. Non-Resident fees will be \$50.00 for one year, \$27.50 for six months, and \$15.00 for three months. Payment of non-resident fee by an individual allows all persons in that individual's household to obtain a library borrower's card.

Membership fee waiver forms for financial hardship circumstances are available at the front desk and will be presented to the Library Board for consideration at each regular monthly board meeting.

Residents of the designated library service area of another library that maintains a reciprocal borrowing agreement with Hailey Public Library shall be exempt from the non-resident fee subject to the applicable terms of that contract.

Hailey City employees who reside outside the city limits of Hailey or who are not served by existing agreements with other libraries or library districts may qualify for borrowers' cards without paying a non-resident fee. Proof of city employment will be required in the form of a work identification badge, a business card, a paycheck stub, or a letter on department stationery signed by the department head. Such city employees must also supply the usual photo identification and proof of current residence address per the general policy regarding issuance of library cards.

**Your card is for your use only and you must be present when borrowing materials. Do not loan your card.**

## LIMITS ON BORROWING SERVICES

No more than ten 28 day books, six 14 day books, two playaways, and six audio books may be checked out on a borrower card at one time. No more than four (4) items from the video/dvd collection may be checked out by one patron at a time. (two VHS tapes and two DVDs) Patrons may check out a total of two music CDs.

## FINES AND FEES

### Overdue Fines

- Fines for DVD and video cassettes shall be charged at \$1.00 per day, with no grace period. Fines for all other overdue items will be charged at \$.25 per item per day.
- Fines of \$10.00 or more will suspend the use of a patron's library card **until all charges are paid in full**. Any fines or fees, regardless of amount, still outstanding at the time of library card renewal, will prevent the renewal of the patron's library card until all charges are cleared.
- Fines more than three months old must be paid in full or card will be suspended until fines are taken care of.

### Lost or Damaged Items

- If an item is lost or damaged, the patron shall pay the current list price plus an additional fee for processing of the item. If an item is out of print, the charge will be the actual cost of a replacement title plus the processing fee. Loss of or damage to items loaned to other libraries through the interlibrary loan program shall be billed at a cost set by the lending library.
- If lost, damaged, or outstanding fees/charges are not paid in a timely manner the library will send account to collection agency and a fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) shall be added to the account and shall be paid in addition to any other fees/charges for fines, lost/damaged materials, or other charges which have been made to a patron's account. **No refunds or credits will be given on lost items once they are paid for.**
- Replacement of individual audio CD disc is \$10.00.

## Returned Check Charges

The City of Hailey will assess a charge of \$20.00 on checks that, for any reason, are not honored by the bank on which they are written, and which are returned unpaid to the library. Any such dishonored check may be turned over to a collection service as deemed appropriate and necessary to collect funds due and payable to the library, and the patron may be held liable for additional charges assessed for costs of the collection service.

## PROCTORING

Hailey Public Library does not provide proctoring service.

## TUTORING

Tutoring is allowed only if it is done in a manner that doesn't disrupt other library patrons.

## DENIAL OF SERVICES

The use of the library or its services may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return books or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other conduct on library premises conflicting with the general purpose of the library or inhibiting other patrons' enjoyment of the library. In the event of continued or wanton violation of library policies the patron's privileges will be suspended.

Theft or mutilation of library materials or other criminal action involving the library may be referred for prosecutorial action.

All users of the library shall enjoy all privileges and be subject to all restrictions and penalties pertaining to the library as set forth in the Hailey City Ordinances.

## **PATRON RECORDS**

Pursuant to Idaho Code, Section 9-337 through 9-348, Hailey Public Library circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users with specific materials are confidential in nature. All librarians and other library employees are hereby advised that such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or by legislative investigatory power. No library employee may release information about an individual's circulation record to a private individual unless it is the personal record of the individual patron making the request. Any requests for patron records will be referred to the city attorney.

## **SECURITY POLICY**

Patrons are welcome to use the Library, its materials, equipment and facilities, in a manner and to the extent consistent with the Library's policies. Patrons whose conduct is inconsistent with the Library's policies will be requested to conform their behavior or asked to leave the Library. In particular the following conduct is prohibited:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon within the library building. "Dangerous weapon" means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.
- Any criminal activity.
- Theft, destruction or injury to library equipment or property; or, using library equipment in a manner other than that intended by the manufacturer.
- Engaging in behavior which is disturbing to other patrons.
- Bringing an animal into the Library, other than an assistance dog that has been trained as a guide dog for a blind or visually impaired person, a hearing dog for a hearing a service dog for a physically disabled person.
- Using cellular telephones.
- Using radios or other sound-producing devices in a manner capable of being heard by staff or patrons.
- Soliciting, selling items with no direct benefit to the library, or distributing leaflets of any kind.
- Loitering, sleeping or following staff members or other patrons around the building, or otherwise offensive to staff or patrons.
- Consuming food or beverages in the public areas of the Library.
- Impeding the free movement of persons into or out of the Library.
- Smoking in the Library building.
- Bringing into the Library large bundles, packages or personal property which cannot be stored under a study chair or carrel surface.
- Entering the library without wearing shirt and shoes.
- Using roller blades, skateboards, or bringing bicycles inside the library building or on the entry area surrounding the building.

Any library staff member observing a violation of this policy shall report such to Library Director and, when appropriate, call the Police to investigate the matter as a trespass.

## **UNATTENDED CHILD POLICY**

- See appendix A

## **INTERNET USE POLICY**

- See appendix. B

## **MEETING ROOM USE POLICY**

- See appendix C

## **Interlibrary Loans and Delinquent Pickup Policy**

### **Interlibrary loan (ILL) borrowing for Hailey Public Library patrons:**

An ILL request is reviewed first as a “consideration to purchase”. Hailey Public Library resources are checked to see if the information is already available at Hailey Public Library. If the material is not found to be available at Hailey Public Library, or is deemed unavailable to purchase, the request will be treated as an ILL transaction.

1. ILL service is for HPL cardholders only. All Hailey Public Library circulation services policies apply to ILL.
2. The patron’s account must not be in violation of Hailey Public Library policy, before an interlibrary loan request is allowed.
3. Patron request forms are to be filled out with the author and title, patron name and telephone number.
4. Patrons will be notified by telephone when ILL materials have arrived.
5. Hailey Public Library requests only from libraries within the LYNX consortium.
6. ILL service is not available for current year copyright material or books on the bestseller list. Hailey Public Library does not lend or borrow video, audio, CD or DVD materials.
7. Hailey Public Library reserves the right to determine what materials are available to borrowing libraries.
8. A patron may have up to four ILL requests at a given time.
9. Hailey Public Library agrees to abide by all requirements of lending libraries, and requires patrons to abide by the lender’s policies as well as those of Hailey Public Library.
10. Lending periods are assigned by the lending library.
11. Materials obtained for a Hailey Public Library patron but not picked up will be returned to the lending library and \$2.00 per unused item is assessed to the Hailey Public Library patron for non use.
12. ILL items incur overdue fines at the same rate as Hailey Public Library items.
13. One renewal may be requested and will be granted if the item is not on hold. Renewal period is the same length as the original loan. Renewals must be requested by the due date.
14. Renewals are granted by the lending institution and may not be given until confirmation from that institution is granted.
15. In case of lost ILL materials, the replacement cost of the item plus a processing fee is charged.

## **GIFTS AND BEQUESTS**

The Board of Trustees of Hailey Public Library looks with favor upon tenders of gifts in the form of materials and funds to be used for the purchase of materials or other items, subject to its policy of reserving the right to reject any gift that it does not find suitable or because of unrealistic stipulations placed upon the gift. Books and other materials will be accepted on the condition that the Library Director or his/her designate has the authority to make whatever disposition is deemed advisable.

## **MATERIALS FOR POSTING OR DISPLAY**

The Board of Trustees of the Hailey Public Library hereby defines the conditions under which items may be accepted for display or posting in the library:

- The Library Director or a designate may determine the suitability of a given item for display or posting, considering both the facilities available in the building and the objectives of the library.
- No liability for loss of, or damage to, display items is assumed either by the library or by the city of Hailey. Exhibitors are advised to carry their own insurance; such insurance should indemnify exhibitors for the entire value of items to be exhibited at the library.
- In the event that the owner of the display does not reclaim it within 30 days of the ending date for the loan, the library will make every effort to sell and dispose of the property in accordance with applicable Idaho law.

## **DISPLAYS OF ART WORK**

Requests for display of art work should be submitted to the City Arts Commission.

The following requirements must be met by all exhibitors of art work; failure to comply may result in termination of the display:

- All art work will be suitably framed and displays will be suitably mounted. Exhibitors must agree to hang an adequate number of items for most effective use of the exhibit space. The artist may list name, address, and telephone number, but no price information, on the art or displays. The library will not act as agent to sell any item on display. No items may be sold or offered to be sold on the premises.
- The library does not provide special security or supervision for exhibits and is therefore not responsible for non-library property. The exhibitor must expressly assume liability for any injury or damage to the exhibit.

## **TRAVELING EXHIBITS**

The library hosts traveling exhibits of interest to the community. Traveling exhibits differ from displays in size, scope, format, and length of time exhibited. Any grant or other application written by library staff or any other individual or agency to display a traveling exhibit must be approved by the Administration in advance.

## **BULLETIN BOARDS/DISTRIBUTION OF HANDOUTS/PETITIONS/SOLICITATION AND SALES**

The library will post on its bulletin boards, announcements of the cultural activities of the community (those concerned with literature, art, music, drama, and related activities) and public announcements of general interest to the community, subject to the following guidelines:

- Under no circumstances will postings be allowed on the grounds or on the outside of the building.
- Posters, notices, and material shall be submitted to the designated staff member. Nothing may be posted or removed from bulletin boards except by authorized library staff.
- Items to be posted or distributed must be delivered to the library for approval. All items will be removed by authorized library staff members immediately following the event advertised. Posted materials which do not advertise a specific event will be removed 30 days after posting. All items will be discarded upon their removal.
- The library will discard all items not approved for posting or distribution.
- Posters and notices with printed price charges may be accepted, but not those announcing events designed to make a profit for a commercial enterprise.
- Posting of notices and distribution of material does not imply endorsement by the library.
- The Board of Trustees of the Hailey Public Library may amend the provisions of all or any portion of this policy statement at any time.

## **APPENDIX A Unattended Child Policy**

The Hailey Public Library welcomes the use of its facilities by children of all ages. Our services and programs are offered to make the library enticing to children, to encourage them to visit the library and to develop a love of books, reading and libraries.

Busy public buildings are not secure places for children to be left alone. Responsibility for the welfare and the behavior of children using the library rests with the parent or guardian or an assigned chaperone. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for children's safety and comfort when they are unattended.

The Library Board of Trustees asserts that it is the parents' responsibility to provide childcare; the library must not be used for this purpose. If on repeated occasions library staff members have cause to notice unattended children with no observable intent to use library's resources, the children will be identified and a letter explaining the Library Board's position on this matter will be sent to their parents.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and guardians that the Library does not assume responsibility for their children and to provide the guidelines used by staff in the event that a child is left unattended in the library.

### **Levels of supervision required:**

- **Children under the age of three** must always be in close proximity and within sight of the adult responsible for their safety.
- **Children under the age of ten** must be supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver age fourteen or over, at all times while in the library. Parents or caregivers must remain in the library facility. A child may attend a program in the program room by him/herself however the caregiver must be ready to meet that child promptly when the program ends or have made arrangements clear with the child regarding leaving the Library on their own or with a designated caregiver. Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child from a program or the building. The Library does not have a public phone or allow the use of cell phones inside the facility.
- **Children ten and older** may be left unattended, providing they are mature enough to follow library rules and observe proper conduct. Such children are subject to the same rules of behavior as other patrons and the same consequences, **including being asked to leave the library**. Staff does not monitor the arrival or departure of any child from a program or the building. The Library does not have a public phone or allow the use of cell phones inside the facility.
- **Children between the ages of ten and thirteen** years may be left unattended for a maximum of two hours.
- **Children of any age with mental, physical or emotional disabilities** which affect decision-making skills or render supervision necessary, must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.

### **Unattended children at closing:**

- When library staff observes unattended juveniles on library premises at 15 minutes before closing, the staff member will ask the juvenile if prior arrangements have been made with a parent or caregiver.
- If the responsible caregiver has not arrived at closing, local law enforcement will be called.
- Staff will not transport children

# **APPENDIX B Computer and Internet Use Policy**

## **Introduction**

The Hailey Public Library provides public computer access to the Internet as an informational, educational and recreational resource. However, the Internet is currently not subject to any regulation. While the Internet does contain a wealth of such material, it also provides access to sites containing material that some patrons will find offensive and that may be illegal. The Library does not monitor and has no control over materials obtained on the Internet, and cannot be held responsible for its content. The Library cannot control access to materials or protect patrons from materials they may find offensive.

The Hailey Public Library Board of Directors endorses the "American Library Association's Statement on Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights."

<http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/electacc.html>

## **Computer User Policy**

All Library users have access to the Library Internet after signing the Internet Use Sign in Sheet which indicates agreement with the Libraries policies. Computer use is limited to two hours per day per patron. All printing will be charged at 10 cents per sheet.

Patrons who have accounts with fines over \$10.00 or with fines more than 3 months old may not use the public computers until their accounts are taken care of.

The children's computers are available for use with the same time limits as stated above. Internet access is not available on these computers.

## **Staff Assistance**

- The Library staff does not provide Internet training, but will assist patrons as time permits. If patrons have specific questions about the Internet, circulating books and reference books are available. Internet classes are available at various locations throughout the Wood River Valley.

## **User Responsibility**

- The library permits no more than two people at each user station.
- Cell phones are not allowed in the library, this includes the computer area.
- Patrons may not use personal software, or alter or attach equipment other than memory sticks, to the Library's hardware.
- While respecting individual users' rights to privacy, Library staff reserve the right to monitor use of Internet work stations to ensure compliance with this policy. Staff may ask users to remove themselves from Library equipment if they observe any behavior that they judge to be in conflict with this policy.
- The Library does not use filtering software. It is the responsibility of the parent, or legal guardian to determine what is appropriate for children and young adults under the age of 18, subject to the restrictions of this policy. The Library requires written permission for minors to use the Internet.
- The Library urges parents to become familiar with the Internet and discuss with their children what safe and appropriate use of the Internet is.

## **Time Limits**

- Patrons must sign in at the front desk prior to using the Internet stations. Internet stations are available on a first come first served basis. Reservations are not accepted.
- Individual use of the Internet stations will be limited to a period total of two hours per day per patron.
- Use is for the computer signed in on. No switching to a different machine without reregistering.

## **Downloading**

- Patrons may download to a preformatted floppy disk, USB, or thumb drive only. Downloading to the hard drive is restricted.
- Patrons must provide their own disks, USB or thumb drive, or may purchase a diskette/CD from the Library for \$1.00 each.
- The Library is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal disks.
- Users are cautioned to use virus-checking programs.

## **Printing**

- Printers are available for patron use; there is a charge of 10 cents per sheet on all print jobs regardless of whose paper is used.

## **Chat Rooms**

- The Library strongly recommends that children under 18 not use chat; however the Library cannot monitor this use.
- It is the parent's responsibility to supervise what their children access on the Internet.

## **E-Mail**

- The Library does not offer electronic mail accounts.
- Patron may access their e-mail if they can access it via the web.

## **Ethical Use (Both Library owned computers & personal laptops used within the library)**

- Internet computers may only be used for legal purposes. It is the responsibility of the user, not the library, to insure that patron use does not violate state, federal or local laws.
- Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to: harassment of other users; libeling or slandering other users; destruction of or damage to equipment, software, or data belonging to the Library or other users; spamming; disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications; unauthorized copying of copyright-protected material.
- Users are prohibited from using any Library equipment to access material that is obscene, child pornography, or "harmful to minors" (consistent with any applicable state or local law).
- While the Library's role includes the provision of information that supports local businesses and commercial ventures, the Library may not be utilized as a significant base for commercial establishment or specific permanent vendors.

## **Violations and consequences**

The library may deny or restrict use by individuals who violate any part of this policy. No user's access will be permanently revoked without due process will include, but not limited to, a written report of the incident from the director and the user to the library board. The Board, within the time frame of two meetings, will issue a response and/or decision.

These guidelines are subject to change. Adequate notice will be given in writing and prominently displayed.

## **Appendix C Meeting Room Policy Use**

It is the policy of the Hailey Public Library that the conference room at the library is available free of charge to any individual or group of citizens with the following rules.

Approving the use of our meeting rooms does not constitute an endorsement by the Hailey Public Library or Library Board of Trustees of a program or expressed point of view.

1. Library programs are given preference in scheduling. Although scheduling is on a first-come, first-served basis, the Library reserves the right to reschedule or cancel meeting room reservations by members of the public, if the occasion arises, in order to accommodate library programming or other needs.
2. The conference room is available free of charge for public gatherings. The rooms are not available for commercial groups, individuals or for money raising purposes with the exception of the Friends of the Library events. Meetings in the conference room must be open to the public.
3. Groups are responsible for arranging the room as needed for their meeting and clearing and returning the room to its original arrangement at meeting's end.

If refreshments are served, due care and consideration must be given to the library carpet, floors, and other furnishings and equipment. Users serving refreshments must clean the tables, chairs and carpet as necessary afterwards. The room must be cleared of all group or organizational items at the end of the meeting.

Groups serving refreshments must bring their own dishes, cups etc.

A \$50.00 refundable deposit is required if refreshments or beverages are served.

Each organization agrees that it will pay for all damages to library property resulting directly or indirectly from the conduct of any member, officer, employee, agent or guest of the group.

4. Meetings must be scheduled during normal library open hours and must be concluded with room cleaned and vacated by the end of reservation time or 15 minutes prior to library closing.
5. Reservations must be made for using the conference room. The reservation request form must include the name of the organization, time period desired, number of persons expected, name and contact information of the adult responsible, topic or nature of the meeting.
6. The library will not accept reservations for a series of meetings which would designate the library as the regular meeting place for any organization.
7. Alcoholic beverages and smoking are not permitted.
8. All meetings held in the library must be open to the general public, and no admission charge will be allowed. It is understood that legitimate dues and membership fees do not constitute admission fees.
9. Programs may not disrupt the use of the library by others. Persons attending the meetings are subject to all library rules and regulations.
10. All news releases, publicity, or advertisements relating to any program or meeting held in the library's conference room shall clearly state the name of the sponsoring organization or individual and shall not imply that the program or meeting is sponsored by the library.
11. The number of people attending any meeting must not exceed the posted limit as set by the fire marshal. The room capacity is 49.

Approved by Hailey Public Library Board of Trustees  
November 20, 2009

## **APPENDIX D 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 by the ALA Council

Adopted by the Hailey Public Library Board of Trustees, On March 25, 2008

## **APPENDIX E APPENDIX II FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT**

Adopted June 25, 1953 by the ALA Council

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, 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 citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject obscenity. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts of suppression.

We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio, and television. 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. Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression. 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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which 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 men 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 which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which 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 and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated. Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for 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 man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author. A book should be judged as a book. 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 men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. The present laws dealing with obscenity should be vigorously enforced. Beyond that, there is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the tastes 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 literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent serious artists 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others. We deplore the catering to the immature, the retarded, or the maladjusted taste. But those concerned with freedom have the responsibility of seeing to it that each individual book or publication, whatever its contents, price, or method of distribution, is dealt with in accordance with due process of law.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or 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 the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. 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. 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 each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes 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.

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 of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen 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 expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens 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 books. We do so because we believe that they are good, 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.

Endorsed by:  
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
Council, June 25, 1953