

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Baker Free Library

Bow, NH

Purpose Statement

The purposes of this policy are to guide staff in the selection of materials; to fulfill the mission of the library and to inform the public about the scope and nature of the library's current collection, as well as the collecting priorities which will shape the depth and breadth of the library's future collection; to serve as a tool to train new staff, aid in selection, weeding, and evaluating the collection, and as a rationale for budget allocations. This policy will be reviewed and revised by the Baker Free Library Board of Trustees as needed.

Community Profile

Bow is a small but active town of 7,519 people (2010 census) in Merrimack County, New Hampshire, located 5 miles south of Concord, 12 miles north of Manchester, and 68 miles north of Boston. Bow residents enjoy a quiet country lifestyle and close proximity to cultural and recreational activities. There is light industrial and technological industry in town. Many residents travel to Concord, Manchester, or Boston for their employment. As of 2010, the median household income is \$108,781, and 75% of households have an annual income greater than \$75,000. A high school degree or higher is held by 96% of the adult population. The median age for town residents is 39.7 years.¹ With no transfer station or town center, Baker Free Library plays an important role as a central community gathering space for residents.

Library Mission Statement

The Baker Free Library serves the informational, educational, and leisure needs of the residents of Bow. It promotes, develops, and maintains open access to the facilities, resources, and services available locally and through inter-library networks. Baker Free Library assures an environment that stimulates knowledge, culture, and the pure enjoyment of reading.

Intellectual Freedom Statement

In following its mission to serve the "informational, educational, and leisure needs of the residents of Bow," the Baker Free Library fully endorses the principles documented in the [Library Bill of Rights](#) [Appendix I], the [Freedom to Read Statement](#) [Appendix II], and the [Freedom to View Statement](#) [Appendix III] of the American Library Association (ALA). The informational needs of Bow's citizens are varied. The Baker Free Library's collection will reflect those diverse needs, and will uphold the right of the individual to access that information, even though it might be objectionable to others. In addition, Baker Free Library supports the ALA interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights regarding the labeling and rating materials [Appendix IV, [Labeling and Rating Systems Statement](#)].

Access

The Baker Free Library provides equal access to all library materials for all library users. Some materials may not be suitable for all ages, in which case the parent or guardian is responsible for what a child checks out on his or her card.

Selection Authority

The responsibility and authority for selection of all print and non-print material purchased by the Baker Free Library ultimately rests with the Library Director. The Director may delegate the selection and weeding of materials in selected areas to other members of the library staff. Patron requests for specific materials will be considered, but purchasing those materials is ultimately the decision of the Library Director, who will look at the item within the context of the selection criteria outlined in this policy.

¹2010 census data for Bow, NH compiled by the Capital Regional Development Council. This data is available through the Town of Bow web site, www.bow-nh.com.

Selection Criteria - General

The library's goal is to meet the informational needs of Bow's community members as far as budget, space, and staffing allows. Ease of access is also important, resulting in specific collection spaces sometimes being adjusted to reflect changes in the size and depth of a particular subject area.

Library materials are selected on the basis of literary, educational, informational, and recreational value. Selection guidelines consist of a balance between professional reviews and patron interest or requests.

1. The main points considered in the selection of materials are:
 - a. existing library holdings
 - b. current collection development priorities
 - c. individual merit of each item
 - d. popular appeal/demand
 - e. suitability of material to the community
 - f. budget
2. Reviews are a major (but not the sole) source of information about new materials. The primary sources of reviews include but are not limited to: *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Book Page*, *School Library Journal*, and *Horn Book*.
3. The lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be the sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. Consideration is, therefore, given to requests from library patrons and books discussed in public media. Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context.
4. No materials will be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political or social view of the author. The library must maintain a neutral viewpoint to serve the needs of the entire community.
5. The format chosen for new materials is the responsibility of the librarian in charge of selection for that category. The librarian will take into consideration all of the information available regarding patrons' preferences for materials in a specific category.
6. Due to limited budget and space, the library cannot purchase all materials that are requested by patrons. Any materials suggested but not purchased, and published more than six months previously, will be requested as an Inter-Library Loan from another library.
7. Multiple copies and formats of materials will be purchased at the discretion of the Library Director. Criteria for purchasing additional copies of a title include the number of holds on the item, the expected future demand for the item based on reviews and best-seller lists, space available, budget considerations, and other sources available to lend the item.

Selection Criteria – Children's/Young Adult Materials (Print and CD Audio)

Reviews in publications such as *Horn Book*, *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, and *Book Page* are read monthly to help determine which items will be purchased. Attention is also paid to titles that appear in newspapers and magazines, both national and local. In addition, the reading tastes of the Bow community are considered, and regular input from the BFL Teen Advisory Group is solicited. Juvenile and young adult CD audio books, in particular, can be expensive items; additional effort is made to find the best price for titles to add to the collection through vendors that offer competitive pricing, special discounts, or annual sales.

Selection Criteria – Adult Materials (Print and CD Audio)

Reviews in publications such as *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *New York Times Book Review*, and *Book Page* are regularly consulted to help determine which items will be purchased. Attention is given to titles that appear in newspapers and magazines, both national and local. In addition, the reading tastes of the Bow community are considered. Regular input is also solicited from patrons who visit the library and from the monthly BFL Book Talk discussion group. Adult CD audio books are particularly expensive, so additional time and effort is made to find the best price for titles to add through vendors that offer competitive pricing, special discounts, or annual sales.

Selection Criteria – Music CDs

The CD Music collection covers a wide range of genres, including Classical, Christmas, Country, Christian/Gospel, Jazz/Blues/Soul, Pop/Rock, Rap/HipHop, Instrumental, Easy Listening, Soundtrack, and World. Reviews for albums are consulted in magazines (such as *Rolling Stone Magazine*) and online music review sites (such as Billboard and National Public Radio). Specific interests in the Bow community are also considered, such as the annual World Cultures Fair at the Bow High School. Every effort is made to have a well-rounded, current collection yet purchase items for the best price possible. Library staff will not provide any additional rating information/stickers on any CD Music item (see Appendix IV).

Selection Criteria – DVDs

In an attempt to offer a balanced DVD collection, we purchase films in a variety of genres: children's, popular, independent, informative (documentary), foreign, and award-winning. Reviews for DVDs are consulted in magazines (such as *Entertainment Weekly*) and newspapers, as well as through online sources. Any ratings system used for movies will not factor into the decision to purchase DVDs, and ratings stickers will not be placed on DVDs by library staff (see Appendix IV). As with all digital media materials, we make additional efforts to purchase products at the lowest price. Online sources such as Amazon, as well as sales at local stores, are used to add items to the DVD collection. Also, DVD donations from residents are encouraged to augment the collection, particularly of high-use and popular titles.

Selection Criteria – Periodicals

The periodical collection includes both magazines and newspapers. Occasional patron surveys are conducted about newspaper subscriptions to verify that community members continue to desire the accessibility to certain expensive national newspapers (whether in print or online format) such as *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Magazines are reviewed annually for circulation and use, in conjunction with a review of which magazines are available in full-text HTML or PDF format through the NH State Library subscription to Ebsco's Masterfile Premier database (magazine database), which is available online to our patrons 24/7. The number of periodicals we subscribe to in print form has declined due to an increase in the number of magazines available through the Ebsco database in full-text format. Patrons are encouraged to suggest other titles for purchase, or to purchase a year's subscription to favorite periodicals for the library as a donation.

Selection Criteria – Digital Materials

eBooks are purchased for the library's circulating eReaders and for the Advantage program through OverDrive. eBook prices vary widely and are much more expensive than consumer prices (average \$63 library eBook price vs. average \$11.50 consumer eBook price²), which limits the number of eBooks we can purchase. As with the selection of print materials, reviews are heavily consulted and patron request/demand is a factor. With our current print circulation statistics holding steady, purchase of print materials is being maintained while eBook purchasing is slowly growing as funds are either diverted from other collection items (such as periodicals) or allocated in the annual budget.

² Logan, Rochelle and LaRue, James. "A Year of eBook Price Comparisons: Has Anything Changed?" AmericanLibrariesMagazine.org blog post, 8/29/2013.

New Hampshire Downloadable Books Consortium

Baker Free Library was one of the first-round libraries to participate in the creation of a statewide NH Downloadable Books (NHDB) Consortium (OverDrive affiliated) in 2006. Currently, the consortium is comprised of approximately 190 public libraries, each contributing an annual membership fee that is pooled together to purchase downloadable eBooks and audiobooks. The consortium is the most cost-effective method for libraries of our size or smaller to offer eBook and digital audio book content to patrons.

The NHDB collection is comprised of fiction and nonfiction eBooks and audiobooks, and aims to supplement the popular physical collections found in NH public libraries. Digital materials are selected with consideration of patron demand, popularity, availability, and cost. Consortium members select titles to submit to the coordinator of the Consortium for purchase consideration. [from the NH Downloadable Books Blog – About Us page: <http://nhdbooks.blogspot.com/p/about-nhdb.html>]

Given Bow resident interest and high demand, Baker Free Library enrolled in OverDrive's Advantage program in September 2010. The Advantage program allows us to purchase eBooks exclusively for download by Baker Free Library patrons. See the section Selection Criteria – Digital Materials for further information on selection of eBooks for the Advantage program and for circulating eReaders.

Selection Criteria - Local Authors

Every attempt is made to acquire titles by local authors (Bow and Concord area) that are published by mainstream publishers. Titles by local writers that are self-published are not added to the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so, such as valuable/rare local content or high local interest.

Selection Criteria - Self-Published Materials/Vanity Press

Materials that are self-published or published by vanity presses are not regularly added to the collection. These materials are considered on an item-by-item basis, with selection criteria including relevant subject matter, source materials, author reputation, relevance in comparison with current reviewed materials on the same subject matter, etc.

Collections Maintenance - Weeding

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual withdrawal and replacement process. Replacement of worn volumes is dependent upon condition, current demand, usefulness, more recent acquisitions, and availability of newer editions. This ongoing process of weeding is the responsibility of the library Director and Children's Librarian and is authorized by the Board of Trustees. Library assistants and circulation desk staff do initial weeding tasks such as checking circulation records and determining condition. The materials are then set aside for approval from the library director or Children's Librarian. Withdrawn materials will be handled in a similar manner and under the same authority as donated materials. We do not have volunteers involved in tasks corresponding with circulation records due to NH RSA 201-D:11. The entire library collection is weeded on a four-year cycle, with high-use materials such as DVDs, CD Audio Books, and CD Music weeded more frequently due to wear and currency issues.

The Baker Free Library subscribes to the CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding) method when weeding the library collections. The CREW method uses an acronym, MUSTIE, to indicate when an item should be removed. MUSTIE stands for:

- Misleading and/or factually inaccurate
- Ugly (worn out beyond mending or rebinding)
- Superseded by a new edition or a better source
- Trivial (of no discernible literary or scientific merit)
- Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the community
- Elsewhere (the material may be easily borrowed from another source)

Decisions are based on some combination of these criteria – that is, an item will probably not be discarded by meeting only one of these criteria. Other criteria that might also be considered includes age, condition, frequency of use/circulation, and multiple copies. The automated library system provides numerous report options to assist the staff in the weeding process.

All items to be removed from the collection will be stamped “Discard” over ownership marks on front and back covers/pages, and with permanent marker lines drawn over barcode labels. Items in poor condition will be recycled; other items will be offered to the Friends of the Baker Free Library for their book sale, and anything not accepted by the Friends will be donated to other organizations or recycled.

Collections Maintenance – Repair/Replacement

Every effort is made to repair library materials before they are weeded and discarded. At least one Library Assistant receives training in book repair and assesses materials set aside for repair on a monthly basis. For materials that cannot be repaired or have been lost and paid for by a patron, every effort will be made to replace the item. In some cases this cannot occur, if items are no longer in print.

Gifts/Donations of Materials

1. Books and other materials will be accepted on the condition that the library has the authority to make whatever disposition it deems advisable. All materials so acquired must be designated as gifts. The library cannot determine the value of the gift.
2. Gifts of money, and real or personal property will be accepted if conditions attached thereto are acceptable to the Board of Trustees.
3. Personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques and other museum objects will be accepted at the discretion of the Trustees.
4. The library will not store materials which are not outright gifts.

Requests for Reconsideration – Challenged Materials

The Baker Free Public Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy.

The responsibility for a child’s choice of reading materials belongs with the parents and legal guardians of that child. Library material selection will not be determined by the possibility that controversial books may come into the possession of children.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered except to protect it from damage or theft.

Procedures for Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Although materials are carefully selected, differences of opinion can arise regarding suitable materials. Patrons requesting that material be withdrawn from or restricted within the collection may complete a "Request for Reconsideration" form (see Appendix V), which is available in the library and on the library’s web site. The patron will also be given a copy of ALA’s Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, and Labeling and Rating Systems statements, which we have adopted as part of our library policies.

Completed Request for Reconsideration forms shall be reviewed by the Library Director and the material will be evaluated based on the complaint. The Library Director will issue a written decision to the patron, which may be appealed to the Library’s Board of Trustees. In the event of an appeal, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular monthly meeting of the Baker Free Public Library Board of Trustees, as long as the

request for appeal is received seven (7) days or more prior to the scheduled meeting. If the request for appeal is received less than seven (7) days before a scheduled monthly meeting, the request will appear on the agenda for the next monthly meeting, or the Board may decide to hold a special meeting prior to the next regular monthly meeting. The Board will issue a written decision to the patron within seven (7) business days of the meeting. The decision of the Library's Board of Trustees is final.

Approved by the Baker Free Library Board of Trustees on October 10, 2013.

Appendix I: 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 that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

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.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Appendix II: 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

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/freedomreadstatement>

Appendix III: 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 guarantees 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.

<http://www.ala.org/vrt/professionalresources/vrtresources/freedomtoview>

Appendix IV: Labeling and Ratings Systems Statement

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling and rating systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels on library materials may be viewpoint-neutral directional aids designed to save the time of users, or they may be attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to materials. When labeling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes, it is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library materials.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the material, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the material, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the material. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate materials. The materials are housed on open shelves and are equally accessible to all users, who may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

Many organizations use rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public regarding the organizations' opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, Web sites, games, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by a library violates the Library Bill of Rights. When requested, librarians should provide information about rating systems equitably, regardless of viewpoint.

Adopting such systems into law or library policy may be unconstitutional. If labeling or rating systems are mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Libraries sometimes acquire resources that include ratings as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation. In addition, the inclusion of ratings on bibliographic records in library catalogs is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Prejudicial labeling and ratings presuppose the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/labelingrating>

Appendix V: Baker Free Library Request for Reconsideration Form

**BAKER FREE LIBRARY
Request For Reconsideration of Library Materials**

Author: _____

Composer/Performer: _____

Title: _____

Book Periodical Film/DVD Sound Recording Other

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____

Do you represent:

- Yourself
- An Organization (name) _____
- Other group (name) _____

Are you familiar with Baker Free Library's Collection Development Policy, the Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements, and the Library Bill of Rights? (If no, a pdf file is available on the library's web site www.bowbakerfreelibrary.org, on the Library Policies page).

Did you read/hear the entire work? Yes No

If no, what parts have you read/heard? _____

What do you believe is the theme of the material? _____

What critical reviews of the material have you read? _____

What portion of the material do you wish reconsidered? (Please be specific, cite pages, audio track, track number, etc.) _____

Why do you want this material to be reconsidered? _____

What would you like Baker Free Library to do with this material?

- Re-examine/Re-review it
- Restrict its use
- Withdraw it from the collection

Can you recommend material that would convey the same values and perspectives that the Library could consider for purchase? _____

Signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

From the Baker Free Library Collection Development Policy:

Completed Request for Reconsideration forms shall be reviewed by the Library Director and the material will be evaluated based on the complaint. The Library Director will issue a written decision to the patron, which may be appealed to the Library's Board of Trustees. In the event of an appeal, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular monthly meeting of the Baker Free Public Library Board of Trustees, as long as the request for appeal is received seven (7) days or more prior to the scheduled meeting. If the request for appeal is received less than seven (7) days before a scheduled monthly meeting, the request will appear on the agenda for the next monthly meeting, or the Board may decide to hold a special meeting prior to the next regular monthly meeting. The Board will issue a written decision to the patron within seven (7) business days of the meeting. The decision of the Library's Board of Trustees is final.