

GUARDING THE GUARDIANS

ALA Library Bill of Rights

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.

International Federation of Library Associations

Libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity.

To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.

Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.

Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is the right to freedom of thought and of expression of thought. As defined by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is a human right. Article 19 states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers

The Importance of Intellectual Freedom

Marketplace of Ideas: “truth” is discovered only when all ideas are considered.

Government Accountability: an informed citizenry is critical to a functional democracy.

Development of Critical Skills: access to diverse concepts enables formation of analytical criteria.

The Public Library: Citadel of Freedom

Facilitator of unrestricted dialogue by:

- *promotion

- *protection

- *preservation

of the pathway to liberty.

Guarding the Citadel

Who would attack the citadel?

concerned parents

self appointed guardians of traditions

*cultural

*religious

super-patriots

Why would they attack?

FEAR and CONTROL

Constant Vigilance in The War on Freedom

LIBRARIANS are responsible for the tactical defense against attacks.

TRUSTEES are responsible for the strategy of defense.

Accountability is not a threat.
It is a responsibility.

The Library is a part of the
community.

It is not apart from the
community.

Strategic Planning

Censorship is the threat.

Who are the censors?

What might they want?

What are the consequences?

Can harmony be achieved?

Anticipating Censorship

The procedural defense: up to date
selection policies;
access policies;
challenge procedures;
appeal procedures.

Acknowledging the Challenge

Insist on following procedures and

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

Assume good intentions

Identify the specific source of the concern.

Account for that concern.

The Trustees Role

Assure that policies are in place & followed.

Librarians and staff cannot impose values
in contradiction of policy.

Refrain from any comment or involvement
until procedure calls for it.

The Silent Threat: SELF CENSORSHIP

Vague selection policies may permit:

- *avoiding controversial titles
- *anticipating official objections
- *personal objections to language or subject matter

Facing the Crisis

Going beyond routine challenges:

In conjunction with your librarian –

contact NHLA & NHLTA

ALA

If necessary, contact NHCLU