

Ethics: The Library as a Personal Collection or Reflection?



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ALA's Library Bill of Rights—an Excerpt



- **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.**

So How Do You Choose What Goes on the Shelf?



- **What is the purpose of your library?**
- **What do your patrons like?**
 - What do the circ statistics say?
 - What are they requesting?
 - What are they returning?
- **What do your patrons need?**
- **Make sure the collection is balanced.**
- **Experiment**

Donations



- If you don't already have one, adopt a policy.
- Be aware of the pitfalls
 - Poor quality
 - Bias
 - Outdated information
- Don't be afraid to say "no"

Challenges



**WHAT DO YOU DO IF SOMEONE
DISAGREES WITH SOMETHING
IN YOUR COLLECTION?**



Another Excerpt from ALA's Library Bill of Rights.



- **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.**

Top 10 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2008



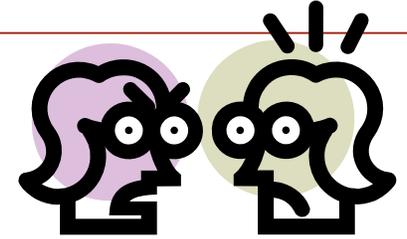
1. *And Tango Makes Three*, by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
Reasons: anti-ethnic, anti-family, homosexuality, religious viewpoint, and unsuited to age group
2. *His Dark Materials* trilogy, by Philip Pullman
Reasons: political viewpoint, religious viewpoint, and violence
3. *TTYL; TTFN; L8R, G8R* (series), by Lauren Myracle
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
4. *Scary Stories* (series), by Alvin Schwartz
Reasons: occult/satanism, religious viewpoint, and violence
5. *Bless Me, Ultima*, by Rudolfo Anaya
Reasons: occult/satanism, offensive language, religious viewpoint, sexually explicit, and violence
6. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky
Reasons: drugs, homosexuality, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit, suicide, and unsuited to age group
7. *Gossip Girl* (series), by Cecily von Ziegesar
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
8. *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*, by Sarah S. Brannen
Reasons: homosexuality and unsuited to age group
9. *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini
Reasons: offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited to age group
10. *Flashcards of My Life*, by Charise Mericle Harper
Reasons: sexually explicit and unsuited to age group

Again With the Policy . . .



- **Make sure you have a policy and procedures in place.**
 - It's good to make the patron read/watch/listen to the entire work.
 - If the patron wants an action or decision, they must challenge the item in writing.
 - If possible, have a committee making decisions, instead of just one person.
- **Your options for reacting to the challenge.**
 - Remove the item
 - Recatalog the item
 - Add a parental advisory to the item
 - Leave the item as is

How to Fight a Challenge



- Find good reviews of the item (preferably from reputable sources).
- Contact ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom
<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/index.cfm>
- Gather anecdotes from patrons who like the book.
- Show examples of how the subject matter is balanced in the collection.
- Contact publishers and/or author.

If I know that something is
going to be controversial, isn't it
better to just not buy it?

Weeding



**HOW DO I FIT MY FAIR AND
BALANCED COLLECTION INTO
MY TINY LIBRARY?!??**

Weeding is Fun!!



- Why do we weed?
- Set some guidelines for yourself before you begin.
- You know I'm going to suggest a policy!
- Always remember to be flexible! Nothing is set in stone.
- How to dispose of weeded books.