

**WASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING AGENDA  
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 – 4:00 PM**

**Meeting via Zoom**

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81070905682>

**Meeting ID:** 810 7090 5682

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Recognition of Visitors and Interested Parties
  - Brenda Fahey
  - Brita Meyer
3. Opportunity to Amend the Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Library Director Reports
6. Old Business

**Old Business**

1. ALA Board Training
2. IGA Review - Two items flagged
  - a. HVAC (Review of the Capital Improvement Plan)
  - b. Maupin and Dufur Computer Support – County ?
3. Dufur Memorandum of Understanding – Tina w/ Report
4. Shared Drive Update

**New Business**

1. Review of 2025 Goals
  - a. Create a more unified district. Diverse population services district wide. Bookmobile and district programming help meet this goal.
  - b. Gather demographics of the district now and future trends.
  - c. Increase district board diversity.
  - d. District wide facility needs assessment

2. Maupin Memorandum of Understanding
3. Budget Report and Discussion– Jeff
  - a. Capital Improvement Plan
4. Storage Shed & Performing Arts Center/Auditorium
5. OLA
6. Financial Report
7. Meeting Adjourned

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at The Dalles

Book Review

Parking Lot from November: Strategic Plan Item:

Possible Programs in Chenoweth

New Parking Lot Future Items

Board Training Topics

November training highlighted diversity on the Board, including Ethnic Diversity, Socio etc., and Diversity of Thought.

January training highlighted Board Meetings, Public Meeting Law, Posting the Meeting Dates, Policy for Media Contact.

February

# Wasco County Library Service District

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2026

**Time:** 4:00

**Location:** The Dalles Public Library

**Board Members Present** Rita Rathkey (Chair), Tina Coleman (Vice Chair), Mary Jo Commerford, Corliss Marsh, Mary Beechler

**Staff Present** Jeff Wavrunek, Valerie Stephenson, Sarah Tierney, Kirsten Wells

### Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Rita Rathkey. A quorum was present.

### Recognition of Visitors and Interested Parties

### Opportunity to Amend the Agenda

### Approval of Minutes

- November 18, 2025 Minutes Approved

### Library Director Reports

- No questions raised

### Old Business

#### ALA Board Training (ALA Video Series)

- Training emphasized state-specific public meeting laws, Robert's Rules of Order, and board governance best practices.
- The Board President serves as chair but does not hold additional authority beyond other trustees.
- New board members should receive approximately two hours of onboarding training.
- The Board acts collectively; individual trustees have no independent authority.
- Policy on public commenting for the District?
- Strong working relationships are essential to board effectiveness.

#### Discussion:

- Mary Jo asked about the District's current onboarding process.
- Jeff noted there is no formal onboarding program; the ALA videos are the first structured training effort.

#### Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Review

- Maupin Computers

- Jeff reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); hardware funding responsibility of the county.
- Mary expressed urgency, noting Maupin cannot wait for computers to fail.
- Valerie suggested Maupin may need to independently arrange technical support.
- Mary asked whether a loaner computer could be provided.
- Jeff will follow up with County IT and report back early next week.

### **Capital Improvement Plan Review**

- Jeff presented an initial capital improvement plan, not yet reviewed with City Manager Matthew Klebes.
- MaryBeechler noted no apparent new additions; Jeff clarified a security cage and performance center would be new projects and the staff room is currently being remodeled.
- Tina and Mary requested clearer goals, timelines, funding targets, annual savings, and project prioritization as well as notation on which projects the city will contribute to and their projected commitment. A clearer document will also provide accountability.
- **Action Item:** Tina requested the revised reporting format be presented at the next board meeting.

### **HVAC Progress**

- Jeff reported the project has not yet begun despite assurances.
- Contract includes a hard deadline of April 1.
- City (Mike) is managing the project.
- Ventilation is included; similar work was completed in the Hermiston maker space.
- Original timeline was five months.
- Tina asked about penalties for missing deadlines; Jeff noted this may involve the City Attorney.

### **Dufur Memorandum of Understanding**

- Current MOU is heavily marked up and not easily readable. Tina requests a new copy.
- Valerie will get Tina a clean copy.
- Tina will meet with Dufur School Administration to start MOU.
- Tina requests this be added to next month's agenda.

### **Vision Statement Review**

- Jeff- strategic planning meeting today with Darci at the State Library. Darci recommends the board author a new vision statement after the staff writes a new mission statement March 4th.
- Darci will help facilitate a meeting with the board to write new Vision Statement in April or May

## **Teen Library Council**

- Rita suggests representatives from the Teen Library Council attend a library board meeting.
- Jeff explains the teen board needs a reboot and he's talked with the teen librarian (Ambrielle) about facilitating this.
- Teens will be invited to participate in the community strategic planning meeting.

## **Library Board Shared Drive for Working Files**

- Darci with the State Library confirmed that we do not need to post working documents for the public but they must be provided if requested through public records.
- Kirsten will follow up on establishing a drive (likely google) for the board to collaborate on working documents.

## **Final Review of Material Selection Policy**

- Board approved Material Selection Policy

## **New Business**

### **Review of 2025 Goals**

- **Goals document and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) need to be added to February board packet.**
- **Board will create goals at Feb meeting.**
- **Items listed from previous discussion:**
  - Create a more unified district. Diverse population services district wide. Bookmobile and district programming help meet this goal.
  - Gather demographics of the district now and future trends.
  - Increase district board diversity.
  - District wide facility needs assessment

## **Budget**

- City Budget deadline Feb 14th
- Board requests funds for tech support and tech equipment be budgeted as needed.
- Jeff clarified tech is in his budget. The question is maupin and dufur. Board to explore whether the county or city of The Dalles will provide support and cost out on an hourly basis?
- Sarah - confirms the school district does NOT service the library computers. 3 computers - 1 supplied by the school. The other two computers and a printer are the library property. Computer she uses for circulation is library property - not school property.
- Note : Jeff will be reporting back to Library Board in February and March on Proposed Budget

## **Financial Review**

- Money left in the budget unused can be rolled into savings for projects like storage and performing arts center.
- \$200,000 currently can be accessed easily through the contingency fund.

- Jeff - we lost \$60,000 in compression (assessed value of real estate vs actual) however tax funds for next year are still going up

**Strategic Planning Update**

- March 4th - staff meeting
- April 6th - community meeting - 1 board member as a listener
- Vision Statement writing workshop guided by Darci - March or April

**OLA**

- April 22-24
- In Portland at Holiday Inn
- Kirsten will send email with reservation information

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at The Dalles

**Wasco County Library Service District, Board of Directors**

Rita Rathkey, Chairman

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Tina Coleman, Vice Chairman

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Corliss Marsh, Board Member

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Mary Beechler, Board Member

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Mary Jo Commerford, Board Member

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## SWC Library Director's Report for January 2026

### **Library Director's Report – January 2026**

Monthly Overview January was a strong month for library engagement, with steady daily use and consistent program participation despite two holiday closure days and a slow down in programs due to myself taking time off to move in our new home. Youth, homeschool, and adult programs continue to drive traffic and strengthen the library's role as a community hub.

### **Usage Statistics**

- Total patron visits: 452
- Reference questions: 78
- Reading room use: 27
- Public computer and iPad use: 23
- Wi-Fi sessions: 33
- New library patrons registered: 4
- Self-directed activities: 28

### **Programming Highlights Youth and Family Programs:**

- Minecraft Club (6 participants)
- Slime Program (5 participants)
- Storytime (7 participants)
- Max's Corner drop-in youth activities (3–7 participants per session)
- After School Program (9 participants)
- 4-H programs (9–16 participants including adults)
- Middle School / High School group (25 participants)
- Homeschool Engagement: Homeschool family visits ranged from 3 to 16 family members per session, continuing a strong partnership and consistent educational support.

### **Adult and Multi-Age Programs:**

- Garden Club (13 participants)
- Knots and Needles (5 participants)

Shelving Location	Circulation ID	Item Owning Library
ASK AT DESK	3	WC-SWCL
AUDIOBOOKS	5	WC-SWCL
BOARD BOOKS	2	WC-SWCL
CHILDREN'S DVDS	8	WC-SWCL
DVDS	80	WC-SWCL
EARLY READERS	9	WC-SWCL
FICTION	163	WC-SWCL
JM NON-FICTION	7	WC-SWCL
JUNIOR FICTION	32	WC-SWCL
JUNIOR GRAPHIC NOVELS	26	WC-SWCL
JUNIOR SERIES	15	WC-SWCL
JUNIOR/CHILDREN'S NON-FICTION	21	WC-SWCL
LARGE PRINT	23	WC-SWCL
LIBRARY OF THINGS	7	WC-SWCL
NON-FICTION	67	WC-SWCL
OBOB	2	WC-SWCL
PICTURE BOOKS	76	WC-SWCL
REFERENCE	1	WC-SWCL
YA GRAPHIC NOVELS	1	WC-SWCL
YOUNG ADULT FICTION	9	WC-SWCL

## **Dufur School and Community Library**

**Sarah Tierney**

### check out stats

Adult	2
Biography	6
DVD	8
E	240
Fiction	213
Non Fiction	280
PreK	34

5 Preschool storytimes average 14 in attendance

34 grade school programs average 20 in attendance

4 fiber guild programs average 7 in attendance

I met with Nicole on February 9th. We had a wonderful discussion about the upcoming summer reading program. She was VERY helpful and has some wonderful ideas for the summer. When Rita left she had two programs scheduled and a couple more she had contacted. We will have 7 programs this year.

The elementary school gardens are gearing up for another season. I have partnered with them and will be participating in their programs for the spring and summer.

Hopefully this will help with advertising the summer reading program.

I have contacted the schools food services about working together this summer for a food site.

The afterschool program partnership is going well. We have been offering reading time in the library and increasing our cultural diversity books with suggestions from the students.

The scholastic book fair will be February 17-20th. The goal is to sell 600 books this year. The profits will go towards library week in April and the summer reading program.

## **The Dalles-Wasco County Library Report**

### **February 2026**

a) Face and Chair Yoga has proven very popular. Shannon Red Cloud, the instructor, will teach a new class, Pilates, at 9 am on Thursdays starting in March.

b) Folks attending the “Panic at the House of Groove,” a 1970s Mystery Party, had a wonderful time wearing some awesome 1970’s fashion garb.

c) The new children’s librarian, Nicole, is doing a Grow Along Storytime. This has the kids excited to participate with an interactive mural project taking place over a few weeks.

d) We are rebooting our Tea Club. It is called Tea Nook and is facilitated by Ashley, who ran the previous tea program a few years ago.

e) “Much Ado About...What Exactly” a Shakespeare Class, has been enthusiastically received by patrons.

f) The University of Portland Pilots basketball team is putting on a Show and Share event at the library on Valentine’s Day. They will be teaching children cool basketball tricks and showing off their skills. Children can ask questions and get inspired.

g) The kids really like the playdough story-times that the new children’s librarian has started.

h) “Dream Study Group: Gifts from our Subconscious” is very popular and is pulling a committed group of participants that show up every week.

i) Julia Middleton, our library page, will be promoted to full-time work. She’s filling a position created by the retirement of Rita Squires. Her first day of full-time employment is anticipated to be Tuesday, February 17. She will focus on cataloging and programming. The library page position will soon be posted.

j) The children’s room has had the bulk of its HVAC upgrade completed during the last two weeks in January and the first week in February. However, there are still a few things that need attending to, such as painting, caulking, and vents. The children’s wing was closed the week of February 2-7 because of toxic odors.

k) The Adult Art Club painted a wood sign of love, and the Book Craft program created heart garland. All Valentine's Day related.

l) Nicole, the children's librarian, is in the process of connecting with Chenoweth Elementary regarding programming.

m) Corina, our staff tap dancing instructor, is sponsoring a "Couples Swing Dance – Valentine's Day Special at 3:30 pm on February 14th. We have been getting good buzz from our patrons!

n) Family Lego Pizza Night is still running strong as one of our most popular and steadfast programs.

o) The city's safety officer resigned and the new one lasted about a week. The very newest safety officer will be starting in about a week. Well, this very newest safety officer is no longer with the city, and the position is posted once again as of the week of February 9th.

# The Dalles Public Library

## Programming Statistics

January 2026

📅 January 2026

**179 programs**

**2863 participants**

### Adult Programs

Number of Programs:53

Attendance:445

### Young Adult Programs

Number of Programs:27

Attendance:339

### School Aged Kids Programs

Number of Programs:18

Attendance:220

### Preschool Aged Kids Programs

Number of Programs:61

Attendance:1130

### General Interest Programs

Number of Programs: 11

Attendance: 443

### Self Directed Programs (Take & Make Kits, Craft Stations, etc.)

Number of Programs: 9

Participants: 286

*Highlights Include:* Prince and Princess Tea Party, Pokémon GO! Club, Family STEAM Night, Craft Store Desert Craft Supply Exchange, Tea & Tranquility: Meditation & Self-Care Circle, The Starlit Storykeepers' Ball, Yoga, Financial Literacy classes, Fun Fridays for Teens, Giggles & Wiggles, Little Learners STEAM Lab

## Bookmobile - January Visits

Antelope Bookmobile Stop	01/15/2026 @ 3:00pm	2
Antelope Bookmobile Stop	01/29/2026 @ 3:00pm	0
Celilo Bookmobile Stop	01/07/2026 @ 4:30pm	0
Celilo Bookmobile Stop	01/21/2026 @ 4:30pm	6
Dufur Bookmobile	01/08/2026 @ 4:30pm	2
Dufur Bookmobile	01/22/2026 @ 4:30pm	3
Pine Hollow Bookmobile Stop	01/14/2026 @ 3:30pm	0
Pine Hollow Bookmobile Stop	01/28/2026 @ 3:30pm	0
Shaniko Bookmobile Stop	01/09/2026 @ 3:30pm	5
Shaniko Bookmobile Stop	01/23/2026 @ 3:30pm	4
Sportsman's Park Bookmobile Stop	01/06/2026 @ 3:30pm	2
Sportsman's Park Bookmobile Stop	01/20/2026 @ 3:30pm	2
Tygh Valley Bookmobile Stop	01/13/2026 @ 3:45pm	3
Tygh Valley Bookmobile Stop	01/27/2026 @ 3:45pm	2
Wamic Bookmobile Stop	01/08/2026 @ 1:00pm	1
Wamic Bookmobile Stop	01/22/2026 @ 1:00pm	2
		<b>34</b>

The Dalles Public Library Circulation Statistics - Jan 2026

STATS for 2025 -2026													
	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Fiscal Total
VISITOR COUNT	11,266	11,113	10,483	11,267	10,300	10,529	11,453						76,411
INTERNET USERS	547	600	556	707	585	555	609						4,159
Library wifi users	665	334	300	422	852	816	888						4,277
Library2Go													
Overdrive Read	505	477	418	396	416	431	461						3,104
Open EPUB ebook	0	0	0	2	0	0	1						3
Kobo Ebook	0	1	0	0	2	2	8						13
OverDrive Magazines	300	299	323	375	341	323	349						2,310
kindle book	247	246	172	205	259	261	235						1,625
adobe EPUB ebook	2	4	1	1	2	3	2						15
Media Do Reader	1	0	3	1	0	1	0						6
overdrive MP3 audio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						0
Open PDF ebook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						0
Pending (ebook)	3	6	2	8	3	14	5						41
Pending (audiobook)	15	18	18	10	18	21	17						117
overdrive Listens	1,583	1,546	1,554	1,557	1,427	1,431	1,585						10,683
Advantage	2,755	2,669	2,675	2,551	2,607	2,594	2,833						18,684
LIBRARY2Go total	5,411	5,266	5,146	5,106	5,075	5,081	5,496						36,601
PATRONS ADDED	70	52	60	67	51	36	71						407
ILL'S SENT	1,133	1,137	1,127	1,202	1,076	1,140	1,365						8,180
ILL'S RECEIVED	617	583	577	502	492	530	705						4,006
MONTHLY CIRC	13,628	12,495	12,754	12,183	10,158	12,537	12,657						86,412
LIBRARY2GO	5,411	5,266	5,146	5,106	5,075	5,081	5,496						36,581
TOTAL CIRC	19,039	17,761	17,900	17,289	15,233	17,618	18,153						122,993

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN Library

FUND	Line Item #	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	PC work stations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	Library furniture	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	Printer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	3D Printers	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	Book/DVD/boardbook shelving units	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	Print Management hardware	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500
Library District	004-2100-000.69-80	Interactive Educational Equipment	\$ 24,000	\$ 24,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Library District	004-2100-000.72-20	Security cameras	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
Library District	004-2100-000.43-10	Landscape Courtyard	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	20000
Library District	004-2100-000.72-20	Fire supression system	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	10000
Library District	004-9500-000.81-36	Children's addition	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library District	004-2100-000.43-10	Prune Trees	\$ 8,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 14,000
Library District	004-2100-000.74-20	Painting	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,000
Library District	004-2100-000.72-20	HVAC (428150)	\$ 110,000	\$ -	\$ 6,575	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library District	004-9500-000-81-36	reshingle library roof (60,000)	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library District	004-9500-000-81-36	HVAC upgrades	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Library District	004-9500-000-81-36	Roof (336,000)	\$ -	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Library District	004-9500-000-81-36	Elevator (250,000)	\$ -	\$ 33,000	\$ 92,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Library District	004-2100-000.72-20	Security cage/backroom lighting	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Library District	004-2100-000.72-20	Ventilation	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 257,000</b>	<b>\$ 230,000</b>	<b>\$ 224,575</b>	<b>\$ 150,000</b>	<b>\$ 146,000</b>	<b>\$ 127,500</b>	<b>\$ 131,500</b>



# WASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE DISTRICT

## MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

Library materials shall be selected to meet the current educational, informational and recreational needs of the community. Requests from patrons for specific titles or subject requests will be considered. Timely materials on current issues will be provided. Reviews in professionally recognized sources will be a primary source for materials selection. Also to be considered will be standard bibliographies, booklists by recognized authorities and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas. A book or other library material with unfavorable review may still be purchased if there is enough demand or interest in that title or subject, and the subject in question is not adequately covered by better materials.

The Library Director shall evaluate and build the library's collection with materials of permanent value. Materials shall be selected to maintain a balanced, up-to-date collection of standard works in all fields of knowledge. The library shall provide many of the classics listed in such sources as the Fiction Catalog and Public Library Catalog.

The Library Board and Library Director believe that the right to read is an important part of the intellectual freedom that is basic to a democracy. The American Library Association's Freedom To Read Statement and Library Bill of Rights with its associated interpretations have been adopted as official library policy.

Specialized materials of limited community interest or materials of high cost will be purchased only on a limited basis. Interlibrary loan shall be used to supply patrons with these materials whenever possible.

General criteria for selecting material include:

- customer interest
- importance of subject matter
- contemporary significance or permanent value
- timeliness of material
- value of maintaining already established collection depth
- prominence of the author
- accuracy
- local emphasis
- suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- critical reception
- award winning

#### Gifts:

Gifts of books or other materials meeting the same standards applied to the acquisition of new materials are encouraged. The library does not evaluate gifts of library materials for tax purposes. Gifts become the library's property upon receipt. Once accepted, they are retained or disposed of at the library's discretion, without obligation to the donor.

ADOPTED by the Wasco County Library Service District Board of Directors on the \_\_\_\_\_  
day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2021

WASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE  
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rita Rathkey, Chairman

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Tina Coleman, Vice Chairman

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Corliss Marsh, Board Member

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Mary Beechler, Board Member

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Mary Jo Commerford, Board Member

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ADOPTED by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners, Governing Body of the Wasco  
County Library Service District, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2021.

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Scott Hege, County Commissioner

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Philip Brad, County Commissioner

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Jeff Justensen, County Commissioner

## THE FREEDOM TO READ

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 of 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 the 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 reader 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; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read committee.

*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

*con't*

National Council of Teachers of English

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Note: The following 8 pages were typed from a copy of a copy originally printed from the ALA website on Interpretations. This was done to give us a more readable copy.



## Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices.

Following are those documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights and background statements detailing the philosophy and history of each. For convenience and easy reference, the documents are presented in alphabetical order. These documents are policies of the American Library Association, having been adopted by the ALA Council.

### Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials

Library collections of nonprint materials raise a number of intellectual freedom issues, especially regarding minors. Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.”

### Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the corollary right to receive information. Libraries and librarians protect and promote these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, retrieving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression regardless of the format or technology.

## Q&A: Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks

Following the initial adoption by the ALA Council of Access to Electronic Information, Services and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights in January, 1996, the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee produced a sample set of questions and answers to clarify this Interpretation's Implications and applications.

## Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender, Identity, or Sexual Orientation

The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

## Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shapes the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs.

## Challenged Materials

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form that reflects the Library Bill of Rights, and that is approved by the appropriate governing authority.

## Diversity in Collection Development

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library service, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

## Economic Barriers to Information Access

A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression, and the corollary right to receive the constitutionally protected expression of others. The publicly supported library provides free, equal, and equitable access to information for all people of the community the library serves. While the roles, goals and objectives of publicly supported libraries may differ, they share this common mission.

## Evaluating Library Collections

The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. In the process, materials may be added and physically deteriorated or obsolete materials may be replaced or removed in accordance with the collection maintenance policy of a given library and the needs of the community it serves. Continued evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of all libraries and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community.

## Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards

Libraries often provide exhibit spaces and bulletin boards. The uses made of these spaces should conform to the Library Bill of Rights: Article I states, "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." Article II states, "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Article VI maintains that exhibit space should be made available "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

## Expurgation of Library Materials

Expurgation of Library Materials: Expurgating library materials is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights. Expurgation as defined by this interpretation includes any deletion, excision, alteration, editing, or obliteration of any part(s) of books or other library resources by the library, its agent, or its parent institution (if any).

## Free Access to Libraries for Minors

Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources available to other users violate the Library bill of Rights. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

## Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries

A strong intellectual freedom perspective is critical to the development of academic library collections and services that dispassionately meet the education and research needs of a college or university community. The purpose of this statement is to outline how and where intellectual freedom principles fit into an academic library setting, thereby raising consciousness of the intellectual freedom context within which academic librarians work.

## Labels and Rating Systems

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, the ability for library users to access electronic information using library computers does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library.

## Questions and Answers on Labels and Rating Systems

The ALA Intellectual freedom Committee developed this Q&A to work in conjunction with Labels and Rating Systems, adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005. Like Questions and Answers on Privacy and Confidentiality and Questions and Answers: Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks, this document will be revised as appropriate.

## Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource

Library-initiated programs support the mission of the library by providing users with additional opportunities for information, education, and recreation.

## Meeting Rooms

Many libraries provide meeting rooms for individuals and groups as part of a program of service. Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights states that such facilities should be made available to the public served by the given library “on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.”

## Privacy

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. See also Questions and Answers on Privacy and Confidentiality.

## Questions and Answers on Privacy and Confidentiality

Complements Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.

## Restricted Access to Library Materials

Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights.

## The Universal Right to Free Expression

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