

Mission Statement:

“The Lewistown Public Library provides free and equal access to quality materials and services, which fulfill the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community.”

1:33 PM Call to Order – Roll call – Regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees was called to order by Jean Collins. Present: Jean Collins, Andrea Payne, Mariah Shammel. Excused: Mary Callahan Baumstark, Arlene Mari, Gayle Doney. Director: Alissa Wolenetz. Library Staff: Drew Kettering.

Appoint Recorder of Minutes: Drew Kettering.

Reading of the Mission Statement: Andrea.

Revisions to the Agenda:

- None.

Disposition of Minutes:

- Andrea moved to approve August 17 regular meeting minutes; Mariah 2nd. All in favor

Comments for the Good of the Library:

- None.

Financial Reports:

- Alissa’s request for a current financial breakdown for staff was denied by the City due to a need to double-check their accuracy. Adjustments may occur on the budget. Alissa suggested that if Dani Buehler becomes a City Commissioner, perhaps she can be a liaison for the Library in these situations because of her previous experience with establishing a City-Library MOU.
- Alissa noted spending has restarted since the budget has been approved, and that there have been several large repair expenses, including recent lighting repairs.
- Alissa noted the Central Montana Endowments are doing well and we have had a recent donation of \$2,000.
- Mariah moved to approve the August claims, Andrea 2nd. All in favor.

Director's Report (Alissa Wolenetz, included in full):

Admin

ALA: Accessible Rural and Small Communities Grant | We are preparing our interim report and will begin purchasing after submission.

Disaster Planning | Sackett and I met with DES earlier this week to review evacuation plan details.

Board CE | Each Trustee will need to complete 3 hours of CE by June 30, 2024. I would like to schedule a time for a training with MSU-Extension's local government center. This would meet all requirements for CE. I have that on the agenda. Please let me know if you have topics you would like to review.

Annual Plans | We are discussing programming ideas and will have a proposal for you once we have a new Youth Services Librarian. Our annual Banned Books Week Q&A is on the agenda.

Technology Updates | The Library is in need of tech upgrades to staff computers, public printers, and phone systems. We would also like to provide a dedicated quiet space for people who need to attend virtual meetings or telehealth appointments. Drew and I are considering applying for a grant to fund these needs.

Programming

Unsolved Murders in Fergus County | Drew and I are working with the News-Argus to formulate an education-based series about several unsolved murders in Fergus County. We will keep you updated as we learn more.

Misty's Mystery Club | Misty is starting a book club focused on mystery, true crime, and paranormal events. It has been wildly popular, and we are looking forward to seeing it grow.

Color of the Month Challenges | Due to popular demand, these will return in November of this year.

Building updates

Tour with Architectural Firm | The building tour with MOSAIC helped us refine our RFP and identify additional points of interest for the PAR.

Community Development Block Grant | Cathy and I are meeting later this month to draft a CDBG application and review questions with an Outreach Specialist from the Montana

Department of Commerce (the parent organization for the CDBG). Please let me know if you would like to provide a letter of support for this grant.

Staffing

We are currently operating at 52 open hours a week. This will leave us with significant wage savings. I would like your advice on developing a reporting system for these savings with the City Office.

My plan is to fill our Youth Services Librarian position (32-40 hours) first, then fill whatever hours remain (12-20) with either a vocational educational student (12 hours) or a permanent part-time employee (20 hours).

Communications

Friends of the Library:

- Arlene was not present, but Alissa and Drew reported on the last FOL meeting.
- FOL gave Brittney a \$500 gift card to express appreciation for her service to the LPL.
- Book Sales happened at the beginning and middle of September, but no numbers were reported.
- New chairs have arrived and are classy and comfortable.
- Mariah has a project that requires children's books and will coordinate with Andrea about how the FOL can help.
- *Additional note:* The Board would like to show appreciation for Brittney's library service as well, but nothing was decided at this time.

Commissioner's Report:

- Gayle was not present to give a report, but Alissa commented that the City budget was approved. She also mentioned there will soon be a vote on chicken and a parking survey, and that feedback is open for the City's growth plan update.
- Jean speculated on whether parking would be an issue for library patrons that need to spend more than the allotted 2-hour limit in the LPL.
- Alissa mentioned that the Book Station parking lot is available to patrons, and Mariah suggested signage to clarify that the lot is for patrons only.

Discussion with Public

- Ray Pryor criticized the inclusion of the book *Heartstopper* in the collection and claimed that he believed the updating of the Collection Management policy was due to the controversy surrounding the book. He also criticized the ALA's use of the phrase "Bill of Rights" to describe their guiding principles of policy. He was also concerned about the "inclusive" language in the ALA's Bill of Rights and found it to be contradictory. He

commented that he believes there should be restrictions on what books people can check out and implied that some books should have age limits.

- Alissa explained that the Library's policy update has been scheduled for April 2023 since April 2020, when all policies were last updated in bulk. She consulted with the City Attorney this spring about how best to conduct this process. The City Attorney recommended prioritizing policies for updates and considering those on a rolling basis rather than in a single bulk review. The Board moved to extend the policy period in April 2023 and prioritized policy sections for review in June.
- Alissa further explained that the Statement of Concern policy was prioritized for revision due to a specific need to address the possibility of book challenges via books borrowed using the Partners system, a program that the library hopes to be a part of in the future. This was due to suggestions from libraries who currently use the Partners system. The LPL was considering joining Partners this fall, but have recently tabled that decision because of staffing concerns.
- Alissa also noted that written comment from Glynn Wolar will be attached to this month's minutes. She commented that while both Mr. Wolar and Mr. Pryor's comments focused on the ALA's Bill of Rights and its interpretations, the inclusion of these in the LPL's policies is nothing new: the LPL has adopted these documents since at least 2020, when the policies were last revised.

Continuing Business:

- A decision on the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan for LPL was tabled until next meeting due to the number of Board members absent. Mariah moved, Andrea 2nd, all in favor.
- Mariah moved for the library to observe Banned Books Week, but that the Q&A panel discussion be tabled until next year due to staff shortage. Andrea 2nd, all in favor.
- Jean nominated Mary for the Chili Bowl committee but said she will help if needed, and Andrea volunteered as either a member of the Board or the FOL. Ultimately Jean moved for decisions to be tabled until the next Board meeting.

New Business:

- Mariah moved to approve the scheduling of a LPL Board Training with MSU-Extension's Local Government Center to conduct training personalized to the Library Board. Andrea 2nd. All in favor.
- Andrea moved to approve on scheduling the Director's evaluation for Thursday, October 19th after the regular Board Meeting in executive session. Mariah 2nd. All in favor.
- Mariah moved to approve scheduling policy reviews for October (Governance 1-4) and November (Collection Management 1-13). Andrea 2nd. All in favor.

Trustee Minute

- Mariah started reading the Shetland series. Andrea is reading *Blind Your Ponies*.

- Mr. Pryor mentioned that Olive Edwards, a long-time Lewistown Public Library librarian, had recently passed.

(3:00 PM Mariah moved to adjourn. Andrea 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.)

NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 1:30 PM at the Library. Respectfully Submitted: Drew Kettering, Librarian, and Alissa Wolenetz, Library Director.

September 19, 2023

To the Lewistown Public Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director:


My enclosed analysis of the American Library Association's "An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" is a direct response to the Lewistown Library's utilization of the "Heartstopper" book for minor readers during a summer reading program. It is also a response to the possible adoption of said American Library Association (ALA) documents at a future Board Meeting.

Apparently, the ALA adopted a 2019 amendment to their self-styled "Library Bill of Rights", negating the use of age restrictions for any work initiated by the library. Hence, it would appear that any restriction placed upon the use of library material based upon the age of the user, including parental/guardian approval of such, is no longer deemed appropriate by the ALA. The ALA's unquestioned acceptance of the "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" agenda appears to be a foundational underpinning for allowing ready access to minors of questionable material.

While it is clear that the current Library Director and Board of Trustees authorized the use of this work for minors, it has also been stated by the Library Director that the minor students "voted" for the work's inclusion, based upon a reading list provided by the library itself. I personally inquired about the origin of this particular reading list, and it was explained that the list was internally generated via a statistics program issuing "lists of top-circulating titles" of various titles for minors. [See, as well, the June 15, 2023, Minutes to the Board of Trustees Meeting]

Curiously, minors do not have the constitutional right to vote on any matters of public policy, and one wonders why any adult member of a city/county library system would engage in such quasi-democratic exercises with minors. Minors are generally a curious group; so any shift of responsibility by adult leaders to minors, via a voting process, is questionable when community moral values are at stake.

It is an open question whether homosexual matters ought to be off limits to minors in a public library arena, and the constitutional issue of local community control of such comes into play.



Please be reminded that the Montana State Library Commission recently dissociated from the ALA, and a rather weak subsequent opposition to such Montana State Library Commission action by the Montana Library Association was forthcoming. Interestingly, the current Bylaws of the Lewistown Public Library Board of Trustees states, in Art. IX, Sec. 2, that the Board of Trustees "...shall be governed by the policies, guidelines and laws of the State of Montana and the Montana State Library." [See: M.C.A. 22-1-707 (2)(d), re: Bylaws creation by Board] Clearly, it is at least questionable whether this Board ought to be using the ALA documents under scrutiny herein, given the recent action by the Montana State Library Commission.

M.C.A. 22-1-302, articulating the purposes of a library within the State of Montana, states that libraries are "...to give the people of Montana the fullest opportunity to enrich and inform themselves through reading." The state law is obviously broad, but the Montana State Library Commission has apparent oversight on the notion of what it means to "enrich and inform" Montana citizens.

Opposition to the ALA's "E.D.I." agenda, and opposition to the manner by which the "Heartstopper" item was placed before minors, is not equivalent to a pro-censorship position. Such false equivalence may be a part of the ALA position, but that is not my position. Maintaining a book of that nature within the library inventory is of no relevance to me. It has been purchased, it is available to any library patron, and that is quite appropriate. The issue before us, however, is whether the library reflects any reasonable community standards for the protection of minors when encouraging the use of such questionable material.

There appears to be quite a discussion taking place in the public sphere, and the following newspaper article from Bozeman tends to see the issue as one between extreme political positions. [See: https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/education/reading-between-the-front-lines-from-gender-queer-to-marxism-montana-s-libraries-are-emerging/article_836d007a-37c7-11ee-bf1c-779fc8a382a3.html] I am not particularly amused by assumptions being made concerning the political orientation of folks on either side of the issue. My concern is the balance between (1) freedom of expression and (2) the morality of placing questionable material in the hands of minors. For instance, I am a member of no religious denomination, sect, or church/temple. Yet, articles such as this indicate that opponents of the "E.D.I." agenda are likely to be pro-censorship and members of extreme (whatever that is supposed to imply) religious perspectives. In fact, many opponents simply despise *coerced* ideological agendas.

A minor may be guided by parents in particular moral matters, but parents probably assume that library personnel share certain moral values with the parents when minors are allowed to participate in library-sponsored programs. It can be quite astonishing to a family when confronted by a library program for minors that projects homosexual relationships as a normative value. At this point in time, we probably cannot know what the average individual, applying contemporary community standards, might think of "Heartstopper" as a work of art or as a work reflecting obscenity, and therefore unprotected under the First Amendment. [See: Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)] But, given the likelihood of a rather conservative moral environment in the Fergus County region, historically, it behooves the leadership of the public library to refrain from directly challenging that moral orientation – a moral consciousness that is clearly predicated upon Judeo-Christian moral values that have thousands of years of cultural acknowledgment.

The ALA appears to have an absolutist position on obscenity and censorship – a position that I share with that organization. As consistently articulated by Justice William O. Douglas, I do not think it wise to attempt to ban any form of expression. Yet, there are several constitutional limitations placed upon free expression, and the U.S. Supreme Court, in Miller, *supra*, has a more restrictive approach on the issue in the context of obscenity.

During the winter months, the Montana state legislature considered HB 234 [potentially amending M.C.A. 45-8-206, re: obscenity]. Lobbying efforts on behalf of state librarians effectively preserved a library exemption from the law's grasp, re: disbursement of obscene materials. Implementing a summer reading program for minors that took full advantage of the library exemption granted by the legislature, shortly after the law was settled, was probably not a wise course of action.

Bullet point #7, under the library's Strategic Plan, "Deliver Quality Services...", part #2, states that the library will "listen to patron requests and be aware of transformations within the community. Adapt and promote change when needed." The use of the term "transformation" has taken an institutional and bureaucratic life of its own, throughout the nation, and it is never clear what is precisely meant by the use of the term. However, the key terms in this part of the Strategic Plan are "adapt (sp?) and promote change *when needed*." (my italics) Presumably, the decision was made to use the "Heartstopper" volume as the promotion of a necessary change. Upon what, precisely, is that "change" predicated upon within the community? Why does the public library believe itself to be the spearhead of such change?

Under "Library Policies: Governance and Organization Structure", Gov 3 states, as its mission statement, that the library is to offer "...access to *quality* materials and services which fulfill the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community." (my italics) I certainly would have difficulty accepting "Heartstopper" as a literary item of "quality", but that is an arguable point of contention. I am unsure whether that book meets any of the criteria noted by Gov 3; although, once again, those terms ("educational, informational..." etc.) are rather broad and generalized. However, Gov 4 states that "The Library's goals are: 1. To be *progressive* and *forward* thinking to support the mission statement." The two terms italicized are of great interest, and superficially maintain an attractiveness to any reader. However, *who* determines that which reflects a "progressive" and "forward" thinking mindset? Is the adult leadership of the library assuming that *it* makes such determinations – exclusive of the community it serves? Is the adult leadership under the assumption that the community needs an elitist group to guide them to a more "progressive" and "forward" thinking orientation? This appears to be indicative of a potentially arrogant position for the library leadership to take. What does it mean to be "progressive" in such public matters? Could that which the public library deems "progressive" actually be deemed "regressive" by various members of the community at large?

The Bylaws of the Lewistown Public Library Board of Trustees states, in Art. III, Sec. 1(e), that it sets "policy and goals for the library." Given that reality, I would encourage the Board to reject the ALA's so-called "Bill of Rights", as well as the ALA's "interpretation" of such, as a matter of Lewistown Public Library policy. Alternatively, the Board of Trustees is encouraged to reject that portion of the "Bill of Rights", as well as the "interpretation" of such, that directly pertains to the "E.D.I." agenda.

It is appropriate to comment upon the relationship between the city/county library and the K-12 schools – public or private. The library is not a de facto extension of the policies of any school system, and any such assumption along those lines of thought needs to be rejected. The library

certainly engages in servicing its minor population as an information provider; but, it need not adopt any perspective that a school system believes to be relevant at a given moment in time.

One more item of note is the recently pending IFSOC X – Statement of Concern provision. Point # 4 states that: “The Review Committee shall consist of the following:

- a. Chair of the Board of Trustees
- b. One other Trustee
- c. The Library Director
- d. One staff member
- e. One community member”

It is my position that maintaining 80% of the Review Committee as members of the library leadership is not conducive to ascertaining reasonable community standards, re: possible rejection of an item within the library. I fail to see why “b” and “d” are listed, as one member of the Board is already noted [“a”], and a staff member of the library would appear to be quite unnecessary for such reviews. What qualifies a staff member in such instances for duty on this committee? Is mere employment at the facility sufficient qualification? The staff member probably should be replaced by another community member. The same could be said for the Board member listed in “b”. Three community members listed, along with two library members, would cultivate a more open and transparent atmosphere for the library, instead of the current situation by which the library appears to be discouraging challenges to the judgment of the library’s leadership. As currently proposed, the library will be perceived as fostering an elitist internal culture that may inhibit its ability to discern community values it is supposed to reflect. Does anybody truly believe that one staff member will vote distinctly from that of the Library Director and/or Trustee member(s)?

While the current Library Director is responsible for implementation of the immediate issues at hand (“Heartstopper” promotion to minors, proposed “E.D.I.” policy of the ALA “Bill of Rights”, and proposed Review Committee recommendation), it is important that the Library Board understands that any and all criticism within my writing is purely philosophical in nature. Therefore, any criticism of library policy is not directly, or indirectly, intended as a personal criticism of the current Library Director. No insult, embarrassment, or humiliation of the Library Director is intended by my criticisms.

It is unfortunate that we live in a society in which a disagreement in philosophical perspectives can easily be assumed to underscore personal animus. Such is most assuredly not the case in this instance.

In consideration of the preceding paragraph, and as a gesture of good faith due to the sensitive nature of the issues and individuals involved herein, I propose the following action by the Board of Trustees. Normally, writing such as this is entered into the Board Minutes upon request by the writer; but, my position is that the Board of Trustees make such entry into the Board Minutes an option by the Board of Trustees – not a request by the writer. Since that which has been

articulated herein includes matters of a delicate nature, I think much can be learned without the necessity of entering these statements into the Board Minutes for future public perusal. If the Board of Trustees considers it appropriate to enter these statements into the Board Minutes, it has my consent to do so. If not, I will not oppose the decision. If the Board of Trustees desires to include a brief summary of these comments within the Board Minutes, it has my consent to do so. Contrarily, if the Board of Trustees withholds all mention of these written perspectives from the Board Minutes, in the form of a brief summary, it has my consent to do so.

Library guidelines indicate that: "All prepared statements shall become part of the official public record." Such statements are to be registered with the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, presumably the Library Director. This writing is a "prepared statement" and likely must "become part of the official public record." The presumed Secretary of the Board of Trustees has been included in this email. Nevertheless, my proposal is reflective of my intention, regardless of that which the Board of Trustees decides to do in this instance.

Glynn G. Wolar, Ph.D./J.D.

PUBLIC COMMENT

September 19, 2023

“Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights” – ALA

- The writing, below, is a critique of the above document. All italics within this synopsis are my own. Bold type is also my own.

“The American Library Association affirms that equity, diversity, and inclusion are *central* to the promotion and practice of intellectual freedom.”

In fact, intellectual freedom has no relation to “equity, diversity, and inclusion” – all of which are part of a politicized agenda.

Shortly thereafter, it is stated that: “... libraries and library workers *should* embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in everything that they do.” **Why *should* anyone embrace a politicized agenda? What has the fostering of “equity, diversity, and inclusion” to do with providing the public with the means to acquire information?**

The ALA defines “Equity” by stating that it takes “difference into account (**How? When weren’t Americans different from one another?**) to ensure a fair process (**What is a “fair process”?** We have laws to ensure such processes.), and ultimately a “fair outcome”.

The term “outcome” is often used by socialistic or communistic philosophical perspectives, without indicating specifically how such is to be achieved.

“Equity recognizes (**Equity recognizes nothing, as it is not an individual, group, or an institution.**) that *some groups* were (and are) *disadvantaged* in accessing educational and employment opportunities (**Specifically which group(s) is/are so “disadvantaged”?** “**Disadvantaged**” in what way?) and are, therefore, *underrepresented or marginalized* in many (the ALA needs to specifically name one “underrepresented or marginalized” people) organizations and institutions (**again, the ALA needs to specifically identify at least one organization and/or institution.**)” If “equity” is defined as a sense of fairness or impartiality, the entire legal system struggles with that concept on a daily basis. Therefore, there can be no need for a sense of “equity” to “recognize” anything of a particular nature not already being considered within the legal arena.

The ALA is making statements on the assumption that such statements are factually substantiated. Yet, it is quite apparent that their statements are not factual, but mere assertions of opinion. Opinions do not become established facts simply due to an organization maintaining numerous individuals sharing identical opinions.

Once again, one wonders what the terms “underrepresented and marginalized” are intended to mean in a nation that has wide and very flexible voting rights (as an obvious example) for any *individual* citizen. We are a nation of individuals, not groups, and if anyone is actually “underrepresented and marginalized”, we have a court system that will remedy any actual “underrepresentation and marginalization” under federal and state constitutions. Individuals have constitutional rights, one of which is to freely associate with other individuals within the confines of various like-minded groups. Groups have no constitutional rights attending them as collections of individuals.

Then, the following ALA statement is made: “Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.”

Again, what has “increasing diversity” (whatever “diversity” is meant to imply) to do with “ameliorating” a condition of a so-called “disadvantaged” group? One is hard pressed to comprehend, with any specificity, what all of this means – short of an indirect call for a fascistic dictatorship of “true believers” to enforce a particular set of dystopian notions upon an unsuspecting public. None of these conceptualizations has anything to do with the role of a library in the community. The community library provides information. Its role has nothing to do with educating the public in a particular manner. Thus, a community library is not an extension of the K-12 school system, nor is it a liaison to a collegiate educational institution. The public library is certainly not a vehicle for a social engineering experiment, such as the implementation of an “E.D.I” agenda. Are we to infer that all individuals within a particular group are “disadvantaged”? In what way(s)?

The ALA “diversity” definition is almost too silly to take seriously. It “...*can* be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both *alike and different*.” There is absolutely nothing novel about this statement. Continuing on, it is stated that: “When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the *uniqueness* of each individual.”

This “diversity” statement is wrongheaded and bizarre. Stating “buzzwords” is not a substitute for clearly defined terms, or clearly reasoned arguments. “Buzzwords” are not equivalent to a substantive analysis of the history, legal development, and societal realities of Americana. It would appear that the proponents of this coerced ideology are incapable of producing a reasoned argument in support of their assertions. What does it mean to “embrace” an ideological perspective? Doesn’t the notion of an “individual” include the “uniqueness” of individuality? Redundancy is not persuasive.

As for the ALA “inclusion” statement, it is quite shallow and uninspiring, by encouraging the establishment of “an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have *equal* access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization’s success.” Curiously, the ALA uses the term “individuals”, instead of “groups”, in this instance. Use of the term “fairly” is generally reflective of a subjective judgment, and one can have no idea what the ALA means while using the term “respectfully” in this context. In a sense, it can be

inferred that the ALA is supporting the notion that meritorious conduct is of importance. Yet, meritorious conduct has always been of importance in the American cultural and societal milieu.

Specifically, what do any of the above comments, re: “inclusion”, mean? What is “equal” access to resources/opportunities? Who, specifically, is being denied equal access to resources/opportunities? Has anyone filed suit in a court of law over the issue of being denied access to library resources/opportunities? What does it mean to contribute “fully” to success? What would an inclusive “environment” look like? What does it mean for a library institution to “value” an individual for his/her particular talent?

Later, under part II, it is stated that: “A *full* commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion *requires* that library collections and programming reflect the broad range of viewpoints and cultures that exist in our world. Socially excluded, *marginalized*, and *underrepresented* people, not just *mainstream majority*, should be able to see themselves reflected in the resources and programs that libraries offer.”

What is encapsulated in a “full commitment” to equity, etc.? Why does such full commitment require particular programming? Who, precisely, is the “mainstream majority”? Shouldn’t a majority of the people served by a community determine the nature of any public policy in a democratically oriented constitutional republic?

More of the same silliness pertains to part III, by statements such as: “Fears and biases *may* suppress *diverse* voices in collections, programming, and all aspects of library services. Libraries *should* counter censorship by *practicing inclusion*!”

The business of practicing inclusion indicates that a religious orientation is being implemented by the ALA. How does one practice inclusion? It would appear to be akin to practicing Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. It would appear to be a call for the practice of a new secularized religious orientation. What has “practicing inclusion” to do with countering censorship attempts? We have a court system that directly confronts attempts at censorship – if/when an individual actually displays the courage to take such constitutional affronts to a judge and/or jury for adjudication.

Part IV incorporates a blatant lie: “Any attempt to limit free expression or restrict access to ideas threatens the *core American values of equity, diversity, and inclusion*. ”

Those notions have NEVER been part of any “core American value” system. Furthermore, neither equity, diversity, nor inclusion can be legitimately termed “values” as realized in academic ethics circles. Those three terms are more akin to politicized notions of manipulation, control, and coerced conformity. A dictionary definition of “value” is as follows: “That which is worthy of esteem for its own sake; that which has intrinsic worth.” (See: The Oxford Universal Dictionary, 1955, p. 2332.). Another definition is as follows: “...that which is desirable or worthy of esteem for its own sake; thing or quality having intrinsic worth.” (See: Webster’s New 20th Century Dictionary – 2nd edition – 1983, p. 2018.). Finally, a legal definition of “intrinsic” is as follows: “Belonging to a thing by its

very nature; not dependent upon external circumstances; not inherent; essential.” (See: Black’s Law Dictionary – 7th edition – 1999, p. 828.).

There is nothing “intrinsic” about the three terms under discussion. Attempts to limit free expression, or to restrict access to ideas, are violations of the core American constitutional value of freedom of expression under the First Amendment. Historically, it is a value of intrinsic worth.

Later, it is stated: “Libraries *should* establish and maintain strong ties to organizations that advocate for the rights of *socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented* people.

Why should a library advocate for any position, other than advocating for the values intrinsic to the First Amendment? As for the “organizations” stated therein, one can imagine that there might be intense pressure placed upon a library to “maintain strong ties” to particular organizations underscoring adherence to an ideological agenda. It is also an encouragement to avoid the law-making and justice-seeking bodies of the nation, institutions that might be concerned with the so-called “socially excluded, marginalized, and underrepresented people” of a community.

Libraries *should* act in *solidarity* with all *groups* or individuals resisting attempts to abridge the rights of free expression and free access to ideas.”

The term “solidarity” is typical of the type of term utilized in socialistic/communistic literature. Why should libraries act in solidarity with any group or individual? Libraries have no legal or moral obligation to assert ANY politicized position when serving the public.

Part V states that: “In the Library Bill of Rights”...the principle of *inclusion* is *clear and unambiguous*.”

Actually, as stated herein, it is utterly lacking in clarity and is completely ambiguous. Additionally, it is to be noted that the so-called “Library Bill of Rights” is not a legally sanctioned opinion that carries any legal authority.

Then, it is noted that: “Libraries *should* regularly review their policies with the goal of advancing *equity* of access to the library’s collections and services. Identification requirements, overdue charges and fees, or deposits for services are examples of *traditional approaches* that *may* exclude *some* members of the community.”

It would appear that any demand for accountability by a library is deemed a “traditional approach” that “may” exclude “some” members of the community. In fact, that “traditional approach” of *accountability* is precisely what is intended by such policies. And, pragmatically, such “traditional approaches” appear to have worked splendidly. This is truly an amazing call for anarchic policies within the library system, i.e., an admonishment to refrain from demanding accountability for infractions to library standards that are of assistance to the community at large.

The identical nonsensical adherence to the politicized agenda of “equity, diversity, and inclusion” is underscored in Part VI, while the Conclusion merely tells the world that the agenda is now the de facto “lord of libraries”.

The ALA is certainly free to express its professional opinion, in attempting to influence library policies throughout the nation, but the questions raised by this analysis indicate that it is becoming an intellectual and moral midget among professional associations.

No library ought to be involved in the promotion of *any* politicized agenda – not “E.D.I.”, not religious orientations, not economic systems, not political systems, not social agendas, etc. Nothing. The fundamental objective of any library is to provide information to the public it serves. Period. A library adheres to First Amendment constitutional approaches as outlined, exclusively, by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The “E.D.I.” agenda has never been incorporated within any U.S. Supreme Court legal opinion, and has very rarely been legislated as a reflection of the majority perspective of any citizenry. Nearly all prior pieces of state and federal legislation, as well as prior federal executive orders, concern constitutionally *discriminatory* treatment of individual citizens. None of them encourage, or coerce, the citizenry to *think* or *believe* any perspective in a focused manner – as is the case herein.

There is no room for the propagation of agendas that should be placed, more appropriately, before a legislative unit that represents the will of the citizenry. The so-called “Library Bill of Rights” is merely an opinion of a professional association and nothing more. The “Interpretation” of this document is also nothing more than an opinion of a group of individuals within the ALA. It does not reflect constitutional law, it does not reflect the “will of the people” on any level, and it may not reflect the majority perspective of an educated elite that the ALA purports to represent.

There are a variety of possibilities available to groups or institutions who seek to reinvent a nation based on their shared ideologies; and, at the moment, the “E.D.I.” mantra has captured the imagination of many groups/institutions. However, this type of ideological indoctrination is NOT what was intended and established by the American constitutional system of governance. Since the “E.D.I.” politicized agenda is replete throughout American organizations, making American organizations reflections of “group think” attitudes, our library systems need to avoid all aspects of “E.D.I.” and encourage the citizen to intellectually grow as appropriate to the unfettered mind of the individual.

If I were to support, say, “Religion, Morality, and Truth”, as a proposed agenda for the nation, I would be appalled that such might become a coerced ideology within an organization whose membership I shared. Obviously, I would have an ethical obligation to clearly define the terms and place them within a reasonable historical context before thrusting the ideological perspective upon others. But, it is not the role of any library to foster an ideological perspective in an attempt to educate the public that it serves. Such doctrinaire positions can only be coerced via authoritarian governmental structures.

It would be of assistance to view the following websites:

<https://thehill.com/opinion/education/3718803-what-do-we-really-mean-by-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbby7yFrIxM>

<https://thehill.com/homenews/education/4182853-california-community-college-professors-sue-over-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-rules/>

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/dei-hiring-practices-k-12-schools-require-teachers-show-commitment-left-wing-ideology-watchdog>

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