

OCTOBER MINUTES

Topic: Great Barrington Libraries Trustees Meeting

Time: October 13, 2022 5:30 pm

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's July 16, 2022 Revised Order extending remote participation by all members in any meeting of a public body, this meeting of the Great Barrington Libraries Board of Trustees will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on town's website, at www.townofgb.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: See instructions at the top of the agenda. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means.

Great Barrington Libraries Board of Trustees October 13, 2022 5:30 pm Meeting via Zoom only

I. Call to Order

Roll Call

G. Patrick Hollenbeck (PH) x

Carol McGlinchey (CM)x

Lauren Clark (LC) x

Ruby Chang (RC) x

Christopher Tucci (CT)absent,
submitting minutes via Zoom recording

Margaret Heilbrun (MH) x

Approve September Minutes – The town did not provide a recording of the September meeting of the Board of Library Trustees. There are no minutes for approval.

Friends Report

Holly Hamer- Welcome party was a success. Friends exploring alternatives to movie night to highlight social aspect of shared media experience.

Lauren Clark highlighted that large public events are occurring in the library and that the Trustees are still meeting exclusively on Zoom.

Ruby Chang provided suggestions on policies in the future regarding COVID.

Holly Hamer reiterated that the purpose is more social interaction and recent programs suggest patrons prefer this focus.

She also shared that the outdoor book sales/giveaways are still popular. The Friends also received donations to support future book purchases.

She also shared that she and Ed Abrahams, as a Friends of the Library member, endorse the collections policy.

Library Director's Report
SEE ATTACHED

Samara Klein reviewed the written Director's Report-

The library is in process for the approved "hotspots" and they expect them to be available in November.

A new HVAC has been purchased for Mason. A new boiler has been purchased for Ramsdell.

Monthly library staff meetings have begun. All staff have

Fran Hernandez has also taken on the role of Marketing Manager. She has a degree in graphic design.

Food for Funds begins soon and collect non-perishable food in lieu of fines.

Youth programs continue to be well attended.

Discussion and vote on Mason display case exhibit- "Reading the Waves" art piece proposed in display case during month of November. Samara shared that there is a display policy. Lauren Clark moved to take the application from the artist, seconded by MH.

G. Patrick Hollenbeck (PH) x

Carol McGlinchey (CM)x

Lauren Clark (LC) x

Ruby Chang (RC) x

Christopher Tucci (CT)absent

Margaret Heilbrun (MH) x

Motion passed.

Discussion and Vote on Taylor Collection proposal to return artifacts- SEE ATTACHED- The Library would like to create a digital archive and return them to the tribe from which they came.

MH motion, LH seconded.

LC mentioned that she approves of the digital archive.

CM was appreciative of the approach.

RC asked if future displays could be requested and MH suggested it is not a part of the repatriation process.

Movement to begin the process of offering the tribal materials back to their creators following national guidelines.

G. Patrick Hollenbeck (PH) x

Carol McGlinchey (CM)x

Lauren Clark (LC) x

Ruby Chang (RC) x

Christopher Tucci (CT)absent

Margaret Heilbrun (MH) x

Motion Passes.

Draft Collection Development Policy- SEE ATTACHED - All major library organizations nationally and within Massachusetts suggest the development of a Collection Development Policy. This creates a codified process for requests for additions or removals. Designed for accessibility.

CM strongly approved of the draft.

MH wondered about the absence of mentioning specific departments. SK suggests there is a benefit to not naming policy specific to departments as they may miss one. The staff hoped to design a policy that broadly covers all departments, which extends beyond category of books but additionally the media type (DVD, audiobook, etc.).

Discussion regarding the comparison of the Friends collections versus the Library collection occurred.

MH suggested a survey of patrons regarding their collection preferences.

SK shared that the policy will be available online and at the libraries.

PH suggested tabling the discussion until November.

RC shared her support of the policy and suggested approving the policy.

SK shared that the documents are fluid and more will come for discussion.

CM moved to approve the policy as written, RC seconded.

G. Patrick Hollenbeck (PH) x

Carol McGlinchey (CM)x

Lauren Clark (LC) x

Ruby Chang (RC) x

Christopher Tucci (CT) absent

Margaret Heilbrun (MH) x

II. Treasurers Report (delayed until November meeting)

Building and Grounds- covered in Director's report.

LC shared that the artist RFP for the DuBois sculpture has been created and will be broadly shared before the November meeting.

SK shared that the DuBois donation from a patron will be catalogued prior to any acceptance of all or some of the collection.

III. Citizens Speak- No requests were made to speak.

IV. Board Speak

V. Adjournment

Pursuant to MGL. 7c. 30A sec. 20 (f), after notifying the chair of the public body, any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting of a public body, or may transmit the meeting through any medium. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair shall inform other attendees of any such recordings. Any member of the public wishing to speak at the meeting must receive permission of the chair. The listings of agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted

Fine Free

- In September of 2022, the CWMARS Users Council voted to go fine free as a network. GB Libraries were grandfathered in to continue charging fines.
- 131 out of 157 libraries in CWMARS are fine free.
- All libraries surrounding Great Barrington are fine free: Adams, North Adams, Pittsfield, Lenox, Stockbridge, Sheffield, Egremont, New Marlborough, Monterey ...
- See: American Library Association's Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity

-
- Fines are a barrier to access.
 - Fines punish those who need the library the most.
 - Fines create a shameful and unwelcoming experience.
 - Removing fines relieves stress between staff and patrons.
 - Eliminating fines alleviates inequity: a few dollars can make the difference between having gas for work or a meal.
 - Once the stigma of library fines is gone, some communities have found that the removal and forgiveness of fines also leads to the return of patrons, along with the return of long overdue library materials.

-
- In Macedon, NY, where the removal of late fees applies to every patron, library director Stacey Wicksall said the change has created a community of goodwill. "We've noticed that donations coming into the library have increased," she said. "But more importantly what we've noticed is, people don't have obstacles to using the library."
 - When New York's public library systems announced last October that they would be eliminating all late fines, the goal was to get books and people back to the more than 200 branches, as well as research centers, across the city after a year and a half of limited hours and access. The goal was achieved: A wave of returned overdue materials came crashing in,

accompanied by a healthy increase (between 9 and 15 percent, depending on the borough) of returning visitors.

- In Albany, NY, going fine free “has improved our relationship with the people we serve. We have seen a significant drop in patron complaints about customer service and incident reports related to circulation. We saw patrons come back to the library for the first time in years, and also experienced simple gratitude from the public.”
- From San Diego to Chicago to Boston, public libraries that have analyzed the effects of late fees on their cardholders have found that they disproportionately deter low-income residents and children.
- The Chicago public library system reported a 240% increase in returned late books within the first month of becoming fine free. Many other libraries have noted similar results.

Current Borrowing Policies & Fines at GB Libraries:

- Books: borrow for 3 weeks, automatic renewal for 3 weeks, then fines (\$0.10/day) begin to incur until \$3.00/book where it is capped.
- DVDs: borrow for 1 week, automatic renewal for 1 week, then fines (\$1/day) begin to incur until \$5.00/DVD where it is capped.
 - Library of Things: borrow 1 item for 3 weeks, without renewal; item is marked lost when not returned on time; fine is expunged if/when returned.
 - Museum Passes: borrow for 4 days, without renewal; \$10/day fine.
 - Hotspots: borrow for 2 weeks, automatic renewal for 2 weeks; currently no late fines because previously made available through grant.
- When a patron has \$10 in fines, their account is blocked.
- If, after 28 days, an item is still overdue, it is considered lost and you are billed for the full item PLUS all fines (you can pay by check or via your CWMARS account, or you can simply replace the item).

Proposal:

- Eliminate all fines for books & DVDs, but keep fines for Museum Passes and Library of Things, and add fine to HotSpots when available.
- Use Amnesty Mode for transition period.
- If an item is lost, patron must still pay for it or replace it.

Process:

- Present to Select Board.
- Update Borrowing Policy and CWMARS.
- Communicate to staff and to community by way of marketing and a press release.



Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity

Whereas monetary fines present an economic barrier to access of library materials and services;

Whereas there is mounting evidence that indicates eliminating fines increases library card adoption and library usage;

Whereas monetary fines create a barrier in public relations, and absorb valuable staff time applying, collecting, and managing dues;

Whereas the first policy objective listed in ALA Policy B.8.10 (Library Services to the Poor) as approved by ALA Council on January 28, 2019, states that the American Library Association shall implement these objectives by "Promoting the removal of barriers to library and information services, particularly fees, and overdue charges";

Whereas ALA Policy B.4.2 (Free Access to Information) "asserts that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services";

Whereas in Economic Barriers to Information Access, An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, ALA states "All library policies and procedures, particularly those involving fines, fees, or other user charges, should be scrutinized for potential barriers to access;

Whereas libraries will need to take determined and pragmatic action to dismantle practices of collecting monetary fines

Whereas libraries of all types are responsive to bodies, be they school districts, boards of trustees, college and university administration, or government entities and therefore need to be able to make the case to those bodies about eliminating fines; and

Whereas monetary fines ultimately do not serve the core mission of the modern library; now, therefore, be it



Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members

1. adds a statement to the Policy Manual that establishes that "The American Library Association asserts that imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to the provision of library and information services.";
2. urges libraries to scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them; and
3. urges governing bodies of libraries to strengthen funding support for libraries so they are not dependent on monetary fines as a necessary source of revenue.
4. establish a working group to develop information resources, including strategies and tips, for libraries interested in abolishing fines, with a report due to Council at the 2019 Annual Conference

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Monday, January 28, 2019, in Seattle, WA

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mary W. Ghikas", is positioned above the printed name.

Mary W. Ghikas, Executive Director
and Secretary of the ALA Council

Great Barrington Libraries Gift Policy

Great Barrington Libraries welcome gifts of money; materials; real, intellectual or personal property; works of art for public display; and gifts in kind.

Gifts made unconditionally and without restriction are preferred. Gifts with conditions requested by the donor shall be approved on a case-by-case by the Library Director and the Board of Trustees.

Financial gifts to the Libraries are treated as revenue over and above the operating budget, and shall be used solely for the enhancement of basic library services, programs, materials, or facilities.

Financial gifts will be received by the Friends of the Great Barrington Libraries, a 501(c)3, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to support the Libraries' objectives, programs, and services through fundraising and advocacy. The Friends will follow non-profit laws and regulations regarding acknowledgement of all gifts. If expenses are incurred in receiving a financial gift, those expenses will be taken from the gift.

The Libraries retain the right to refuse any gifts, and to make all decisions regarding the use, display, access, storage, retention, sale, donation or disposition thereof.

The value of a gift cannot be determined by the Libraries. The donor is responsible for obtaining an estimate or appraisal of the donated material(s).

Ownership of gifts resides with the Libraries unless otherwise specified in a conditional agreement. Copyright ownership of any gift donated shall be transferred to the Libraries so that the Libraries may make unrestricted use of the material(s).

Gift acceptance will be based on consideration of criteria including:

- Conditions placed on gift acceptance
- Long-term maintenance obligation
- Correlation with Collection Development Policy (for materials)
- Available space

Gift material not added to the collection cannot be returned to the donor, but will be given consideration as book-sale items.

Deed of Gift

Donor's Name:

Donor's Address:

This Deed of Gift is a standard archival practice for verifying that donations are outright and unconditional gifts.

I hereby give, grant and convey the property described on the attached inventory list to the Great Barrington Libraries as an unconditional gift. I hereby relinquish and transfer to the Great Barrington Libraries all of my rights, title, and interest in and to the below property, including any literary rights and all transferred copyright, trademark, and related interest to the property. I agree that the future use, display, access, storage, retention, sale, donation or disposition of this property shall be at the sole, unrestricted discretion of the Great Barrington Libraries.

Donor

Date

Accepted for the Great Barrington Libraries by:

Date

Date

Application for Use of Library Exhibit/Display Space


Exhibitor Information

*
please
see
attached

Name: Le Petit Musée of Free Art
Contact Person, if a Group: Sherry Steiner
Address: POB 75 HOUSATONIC MA 01236
Telephone: 413 329-4141

Exhibit Information

Title/Subject: Le Petit Musée of Free Art
Medium: tiny pieces of art - various mediums
Space Requirements: TBD on space at both libraries

Number of Pieces: TBD
Preferred Dates: ONGOING to _____
Signature and Date:  10/18/22

LIBRARY USE ONLY

Approved Dates: _____ to _____
Authorized Signature: _____

From: indearts@aol.com,
To: sklein@townofgb.org,
Subject: An Arts Offering for the Libraries
Date: Mon, Oct 10, 2022 12:59 pm

Hi

Welcome to your new position as Library Director!

Years ago I ran and operated Le Petit Musee first in Housatonic and then later in Great Barrington and Pittsfield. It had the distinction of being the world's smallest gallery as noted by Ripley's Believe It Or Not! See link below.
<http://sherrysteiner.com/le-petit-musee/>

I am wondering if you be interested in having a very very very tiny gallery (as in a small bookcase) in the library where the premise would be that anyone can put in a tiny piece of their original art that would be for free for anyone who would like to have a piece of art. Multiple people can put in their art at the same time. Tiny being not bigger than perhaps 3" x 5".

It would be a wonderful opportunity for folks to be able to display their art as well as for folks to obtain a piece of original art all year round.

The project could be easily set-up and ideally should be in both Mason and Ramsdell.

I would happily volunteer to oversee this - collecting the art/setting it all up/making sure it is stocked etc.

Would love to hear your thoughts!

Sherry Steiner
indearts@aol.com
413.329.4141
www.sherrysteiner.com

The History of Le Petit Musee

Le Petit Musee was conceived by Sherry Steiner of Housatonic MA & originally located in Housatonic opening in 1992 in a very small space measuring 7 feet by 10 feet displaying both contemporary and vintage art from floor to ceiling. The gallery became a tourist attraction with feature stories in newspapers including The Boston Globe as well as being listed in

'Ripley's Believe It Or Not'.

– 1994 after two years of no heat and sweltering temperatures & a leaking floor I decided it was time to expand to a space a few feet down the street measuring 8 feet by 18 feet (with heat).

It felt like a palace!

– 1996 Le Petit Musee began an association with The Red Door in Great Barrington.

– 1998 Le Petit Musee closed the gallery in Housatonic & joined Barnum's Antiques.

-2006 to 2007 Le Petit Musee shared a roof at Wild Sage in Pittsfield MA

presenting eclectic works of art. The space was about 7 feet by 18 feet with a 4 foot by 6 foot adjoining room for solo shows.

– 2008/09 Le Petit Musee once again makes history when it re-opened in Housatonic in a former ironing board closet that measured 11 inches wide by 74" long by 4" deep presenting the most unusual displays of art. Le Petit Musee was located within ARTsModerne at 151 Front Street who itself is quite small (9.5 feet x 11.5 feet) where contemporary and vintage art is shown.

-2012 to 2013 Le Petit Musee presented solo shows of local art at Wild Sage in Pittsfield MA

-2015 Le Petit Musee at The Emporium in Great Barrington MA presenting exhibitions of contemporary art.

Where will Le Petit Musee show up next???

For more info:

Sherry Steiner: indearts@aol.com

www.sherrysteiner.com

Application for Use of Library Exhibit/Display Space

Exhibitor Information

Name: Stephen Dale Maye

Contact Person, if a Group: _____

Address: 95 waterfarm Rd Sheffield, Mass

dayamaye
@ aol.com

Telephone: 413-717-8361

Exhibit Information

Title/Subject: Reading the Waves

Medium: mixed media: sand, string, paper, calligraphy

Space Requirements: Display Case

Number of Pieces: ENVISIONED AS evolving imagery

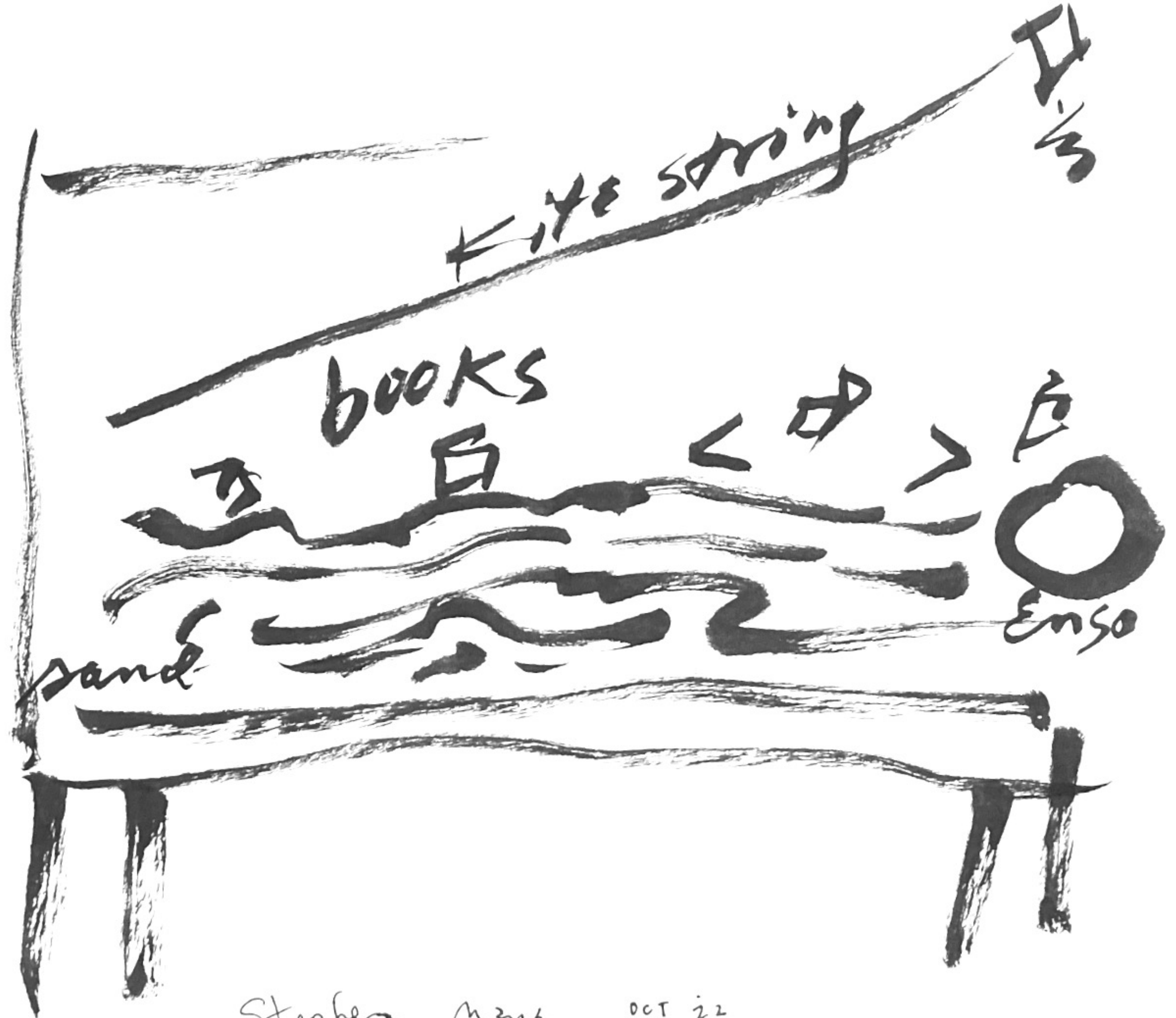
Preferred Dates: _____ to _____ as available

Signature and Date: Stephen Dale Maye

LIBRARY USE ONLY

Approved Dates: _____ to _____

Authorized Signature: _____



Stephen Mzyk

OCT 22

TO: Trustees of the Great Barrington Libraries

FROM: Samara Klein, Library Director
Talya Leodari, Assistant Director

RE.: Charles J. Taylor Collection of Indigenous Artefacts

DATE: October 13, 2022

The Mason Library was the recipient of many books and papers of the local historian Charles J. Taylor (1824-1904), including a collection of local indigenous artefacts he amassed while working on his history of Great Barrington in 1879. A small portion of this collection is on display on the main floor of the Mason Library, with the bulk of it in storage in the basement.

We would like to approach Bonney Hartley, the Tribal Historic Preservation Manager of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, and discuss the return of these artefacts to the tribe. Our hope is to create a digital photographic archive of the collection and then return the physical items, but we would like to discuss the process with Ms. Hartley before we take any steps, to avoid any missteps or cultural insensitivity.

It is our hope that the Trustees will approve this proposal, so that we may proceed with this in the coming months.



Collection Development Policy

The Great Barrington Libraries' collections are a principle means by which the libraries fulfill their **MISSION** to serve all members of our evolving community in a welcoming manner.

The **PURPOSE** of the Great Barrington Libraries Collection Development Policy is to guide librarians and to inform the public about the objectives and criteria upon which materials and resource selection and deselection are made.

The Library Director is **RESPONSIBLE** for the selection of library materials and resources. She/he/they shall delegate this responsibility to appropriately trained and skilled staff members, who will be guided by this policy, literary standards, selection tools, the interests of library patrons, and the needs of the community.

The Great Barrington Libraries' **COLLECTION** of books and other media provides a wide range of literary, cultural, educational, informational, and recreational materials for people of all ages in a variety of a formats, such as: print (books, magazines, newspapers), audiovisual media (videos on DVD and Blu-ray, books on CD and digital audio players), electronic media (software, databases, electronic books, downloadable audiobooks, videos; the libraries also provide access to the internet), and other formats (microfilm, library of things).

The Great Barrington Libraries' **OBJECTIVES** are to strive to provide materials and resources that enrich, entertain, and serve the varied interests of the community, that provide the community with reliable information sources, and that reflect the diverse religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of our community, as well as all ages and gender identities.

The following **CRITERIA** are used as they apply in selecting materials for the Great Barrington Libraries:

- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment; accuracy, authenticity, and clarity; artistic quality and/or literary style as established by reviews in standard selection sources
- Permanence, current relevance, or social significance of the content

- Reputation, authority and/or competence of author, creator or publisher
- Contribution to diversity of viewpoints
- Suitability of the physical format for library use
- Local public demand, interest or need

To assure the acquisition of resources desired by library users, patron **RECOMMENDATIONS** are always considered for their addition to the collection. Patrons can request that specific items be purchased by filling out a **Recommendation for Addition to the Collection** form.

To **MAINTAIN** the collection, the library regularly withdraws materials that are out of date, no longer of interest, duplicated, worn, or mutilated. Deselection serves three purposes. First, it keeps the collection useful to library patrons by withdrawing those materials that are too dated or damaged to be useful. Second, it makes it easier for patrons to use the collection by eliminating the necessity of sorting through those items that are no longer of interest or use. Third, it maintains the libraries' collections at sizes appropriate to the libraries' facilities. Frequency of circulation, community interest and needs, and the availability of newer and more useful works are the primary considerations when making decisions to withdraw library materials. It is the responsibility of the staff to assess the need for replacing materials that are damaged, destroyed or lost.

The Great Barrington Libraries recognize that some materials are controversial and that at any given time an item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made based on approval or disapproval but solely on the principles stated in this Collection Development Policy. 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 injury or theft.

The Great Barrington Libraries adhere to and support the **Library Bill of Rights** (Appendix A) and the **Freedom to Read Statement** (Appendix B), which state that censorship is purely an individual matter. While anyone is free to reject books and other materials he/she/they does not approve of for him/her/them-self an individual cannot exercise this right of censorship and restrict the freedom of other persons to read or use library materials.

While selection criteria for children, teen, and adult materials differ, any patron may access and/or borrow from the entire collection. Responsibility for supervising children's use of the library and library materials rests with parents or legal guardians. At no time will the library staff act in the role of censor for any age level, material type, or subject matter.

When a patron has a question or an objection concerning the presence of a book or other item in the collection, library staff will listen to the question or objection, and inform the patron of the library's Collection Development Policy. If this discussion does not satisfy the patron and the patron would like the inclusion of the item in the library's collection to be reconsidered, the patron will be given the **Request for Reconsideration of Library Material** form. These are the steps in the reconsideration process; during this process, the library material remains in the library collection:

- The form should be completed as fully as possible and returned to the Library Director.
- The Library Director will convene a Materials Evaluation Committee consisting of the manager of the department where the concern originated, the staff person responsible for selection in this area, one other member of the staff, and the Library Director. All members of the Committee will read, view, or listen to and evaluate the material in question. Review sources will also be examined.
- The Committee will then meet to discuss and evaluate the material, and the Library Director will prepare a report summarizing the Committee's evaluation. A copy of this report will be sent to the patron who submitted the "Request for Re-evaluation of Library Material" form no more than thirty (30) business days from the date of the initial written request for reconsideration.
- If the patron is not satisfied with the Materials Evaluation Committee's report, they may appeal the decision to the Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees. An appeal must be made in writing and delivered to the Library Director.
- Upon receipt of the written appeal, discussion of the appeal will be scheduled on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Library Board of Trustees. Their decision will be final.

Recommendation for Addition to the Collection

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher _____

Date of publication _____

ISBN _____

Format _____

Audience (children, teens, adult) _____

Subject _____

Please explain why you are recommending the above item for inclusion in the collection:

Request initiated by _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Library card # _____

Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher _____

Format _____

Request initiated by _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Library card # _____

1. Have you read or viewed the item in its entirety?
2. What is your concern regarding this item?
3. Please review the library's Collection Development Policy. How do you believe this item violates the policy?
4. Do you have any suggestions for proposed action to be taken by library staff?
5. Do you have suggestions for additions to the collection that would complement or balance this item?

Appendix A: 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 which 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.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

"Library Bill of Rights", American Library Association, June 30, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill> (Accessed September 9, 2022)

Document ID: 669fd6a3-8939-3e54-7577-996a0a3f8952

Appendix B: The 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 for Free Expression

The Association of American University Presses

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

"The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed September 9, 2022)

Document ID: aaac95d4-2988-0024-6573-10a5ce6b21b2

September Library Report
Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, October 13, 2022

September Statistics

- Libby/OverDrive: 1,832
- Mason circulation (everything): 7,377
- Ramsdell circulation (everything): 742
- Mason in person visitors: 3,363 (please note: the front door counter is currently not working)
- Ramsdell in person visitors: 272

Updates

- The ARIS State Aid report was completed and submitted by Assistant Director, Talya Leodari.
- 10 HotSpots have been ordered from Mobile Beacon.
- Buildings & Grounds:
 - Mason: a new HVAC unit has been ordered; it will be delivered by May 2023, and installed no later than June 15, 2023.
 - Ramsdell: a new boiler has been ordered; it will be delivered and installed in the spring of 2023.
- Staff:
 - Monthly staff meeting have been established; the next one is taking place on Wednesday, October 12.
 - In addition to being the Operations & Youth Services Coordinator at the Ramsdell Library, Fran Hernandez will be taking on the role of Marketing Manager, responsible for the libraries' newsletter, social media presence, flyers & notices, marketing materials, and website updates. Fran holds a degree in graphic design, has a fabulous eye, and a great sense of marketing. We are thrilled that she will be spearheading and responsible for the libraries' marketing efforts.
- Events:
 - On Friday, October 7, the Friends of the Great Barrington Libraries and the Great Barrington Libraries Board of Trustees hosted a meet & greet. Thank you!
 - Food for Fines is running from Saturday, October 1 through Wednesday, November 9. The libraries will accept non-perishable items in lieu of fines. All items will be donated to The People's Pantry.

- On Friday, September 23 & 30 an Alien Mask Making workshop with M.A.P.S. was a highly attended in the Mason children's department.
- On Friday, October 7 & 14, M.A.P.S. is holding another workshop on Dinosaur Puppet Making.

Display Space application: please see attached application and sketch

Charles J. Taylor Collection of Indigenous Artefacts: please see attached memo

Collection Development Policy: please see attached policy

Book banning is the most widespread form of censorship in the United States; it occurs when individuals, government officials, or organizations attempt to remove books from libraries' shelves because they object to the content, ideas or themes in the books. Over the past two years, book banning has accelerated and escalated like never before. Children's and young adult literature with LGBTQ characters, and children's and young adult literature that deal with race and racism are often the primary targets. For an overview of the current situation, please read, [“Attempts to Ban Books Are Accelerating and Becoming More Divisive”](#) by Alexandra Alter & Elizabeth A. Harris, published in the *New York Times* on September 16, 2022.

The American Library Association (ALA), the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), and the Massachusetts Public Library Trustees Handbook all strongly recommend a Collection Development Policy in order for libraries to be prepared for any potential book challenges that may occur. Collection development policies also guide librarians and inform the public about the objectives and criteria upon which materials and resources selection and deselection are made.

Attached please find a Collection Development Policy, including a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form and a codified process to follow if a library material is challenged, as well as a Recommendation for Addition to the Collection form, which allows patrons to recommend materials and resources for the library. This Collection Development Policy was initially drafted by Youth Services Supervisor, Laurie Harrison, further worked on by me, and reviewed by Assistant Director, Talya Leodari.

Please review the policy and let us know your thoughts. We hope that the policy will be adopted by the Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees, so that the Great Barrington Libraries are prepared for any potential future challenges.