

00:00:09:04 - 00:00:37:03

Speaker 1

I'm Jordan Hornstein, president of the Sales Board of Trustees. And I want to thank you for joining us here for a 64th annual meeting. And we are grateful to have representatives from the sales board and staff as well as many of our member libraries on the call today. Isn't it wonderful to attend a large meeting and still feel at home on the agenda for today's meeting.

00:00:37:04 - 00:01:14:06

Speaker 1

Locked in 2021 statistical summary and year in review highlights documents are provided to you via email This information is also available on the sales website, along with the annual sales treasurers report and the Central Library report. From Kathy Naftali, Director at Crandell Public Library I want to welcome Member Library Trustees, and I'm going to now ask Janet Lindner to do the roll call of member libraries and the number of trustees represented at the meeting.

00:01:15:20 - 00:01:41:22

Speaker 3

Thank you, Jordan. Can everyone hear me? And I when I call off the name of your library, please let me know how many people are representing your library. Argyll Free Library. I am a sales trustee, but I am not an Argyle trustee. But I am the only person here from Argyll tonight because there was another large meeting in Argyll.

00:01:42:00 - 00:01:45:03

Speaker 3

And so I am here, but I'm.

00:01:45:03 - 00:01:45:24

Speaker 4

Not an official.

00:01:45:24 - 00:01:56:17

Speaker 3

Trustee. Sorry. Thank you. Carol, Boston's Bob Public Library. Hi. It is me, Andrea Simmons, and one trustee.

00:01:57:16 - 00:02:04:21

Speaker 2

Thank you so All right. I don't know if I need to let you know. And Laurie Parsons, Boston Public Library Trustee.

00:02:05:15 - 00:02:15:06

Speaker 3

OK. Bolton Free Library Hurricane Free Library.

00:02:19:04 - 00:02:23:22

Speaker 3

Town of Boston Community Library and Burn Hills. Hi.

00:02:26:07 - 00:02:33:15

Speaker 3

One staff member, two trustees Thank you. Cambridge Public Library.

00:02:35:16 - 00:02:41:08

Speaker 3

Hi. I myself and I believe Bob is here.

00:02:41:23 - 00:02:44:03

Speaker 4

And Sue Sawyer was joining us, but I'm.

00:02:44:03 - 00:02:45:24

Speaker 3

Not sure if she was.

00:02:45:24 - 00:02:50:18

Speaker 2

Able to. And Christina, Ken's here. Oh, hi, Ken.

00:02:50:18 - 00:03:03:06

Speaker 3

I didn't see on there and can. OK, so that's three right yeah.

Essentially for town of Chester Public Library Corinth Free Library.

00:03:04:20 - 00:03:13:06

Speaker 4

Hi, this is Becky Boswell. My board president was supposed to be on, but it's quarter past that he does not have any power, so.

00:03:13:11 - 00:03:16:15

Speaker 2

My doing either. OK, good. Franklin.

00:03:17:20 - 00:03:22:00

Speaker 3

Okay. Clifton Park. Half Moon Public Library.

00:03:22:16 - 00:03:26:22

Speaker 5

Hi. We have four trustees on from Clifton Park and six staff members.

00:03:28:02 - 00:03:31:10

Speaker 3

Great. Thanks. Eastern Public Library.

00:03:35:21 - 00:03:36:12

Speaker 2

Hmm.

00:03:36:23 - 00:03:40:06

Speaker 3

Linda, are you east in and is your microphone off?

00:03:43:06 - 00:03:45:03

Speaker 2

This is Jennifer. I'm the director.

00:03:45:03 - 00:03:46:09

Speaker 3

Of Houston Library.

00:03:46:19 - 00:03:47:10

Speaker 2

I think.

00:03:47:10 - 00:03:48:06

Speaker 3

Linda.

00:03:48:06 - 00:03:49:14

Speaker 2

I saw her on.

00:03:50:04 - 00:04:09:07

Speaker 3

Yeah, she her mouth was moving so I thought maybe it was mine. As far as I know, we have a director and three trustees. I keep scrolling the list, and I'm not sure it's changing. Okay. Thank you for it, Edward. Free library. One trustee and one director.

00:04:12:09 - 00:04:18:12

Speaker 3

Okay. Galloway Public Library. I believe there are three of us.

00:04:19:00 - 00:04:19:16

Speaker 2

Okay.

00:04:21:07 - 00:04:25:10

Speaker 3

Crandell Public Library, one director and one trustee.

00:04:28:01 - 00:04:35:18

Speaker 3

Thank you. Pember Library. Museum Great. Green Witch Free Library.

00:04:38:17 - 00:04:40:15

Speaker 3

Hudson Falls Free Library.

00:04:43:12 - 00:05:37:21

Speaker 3

Town of Inlet Public Library. Town of Indian Lake Public Library. Town of Johns Burg. Library CV Whitney Long Lake Public Library. Caldwell Lake George Library Town of Lake Pleasant Public Library Rockwell Falls Public Library Mechanicsville District Public Library. Mechanicsville has one director and two trustees and you work at Lake Free Library Round Lake

Library Round Lake has one director and three trustees Saratoga Springs Public Library.

00:05:38:20 - 00:05:41:23

Speaker 2

I see two staff members and four trustees.

00:05:45:24 - 00:05:55:17

Speaker 3

Bancroft Public Library Stillwater Free Library. One Trustee, one director.

00:05:58:19 - 00:06:00:15

Speaker 3

Stoney Creek Free Library.

00:06:02:18 - 00:06:04:18

Speaker 3

Skyler Ville Public Library.

00:06:07:02 - 00:06:16:02

Speaker 3

Richards Library. Waterford Public Library. And Whitehall Free Library.

00:06:16:10 - 00:06:18:08

Speaker 2

Waterford Seer was the director.

00:06:18:16 - 00:06:29:07

Speaker 3

Thank you Hudson. Sorry. Lake Pleasant is here. I'm a Lake Pleasant Trustee as well as a sales trustee. OK.

00:06:30:07 - 00:06:33:01

Speaker 4

Sorry. My other phone was ringing. Yeah.

00:06:34:11 - 00:06:47:06

Speaker 1

And Janet, there are also a couple of messages in the chat from Hudson Falls and I'm not sure which other library.

00:06:47:15 - 00:06:49:11

Speaker 3

Where is Vicki blood from?

00:06:50:04 - 00:06:50:20

Speaker 1

That's what.

00:06:51:00 - 00:06:59:04

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah, I'm from Florida. Edward. OK, thank you. Good. OK, thank you all very much.

00:07:00:08 - 00:07:09:16

Speaker 2

Anyway, he's the one from Whitehall. The director is here from Whitehall, but. Well, OK, computer problems. Attendees here thanks.

00:07:10:08 - 00:07:11:14

Speaker 3

I'm here. Can you hear me?

00:07:11:20 - 00:07:13:17

Speaker 2

Yes, yes. OK.

00:07:15:03 - 00:07:17:07

Speaker 3

OK, one staff member and one director.

00:07:19:11 - 00:07:23:18

Speaker 3

All right. OK, to you, Jordan.

00:07:24:02 - 00:07:35:14

Speaker 1

Thank you, Janet. And I'm going to pass the baton to Linda Borden to acknowledge sales staff award you're muted. I'm sorry.

00:07:42:15 - 00:08:13:18

Speaker 3

Sorry. I keep telling myself. So you don't hear background noise so I'm very pleased to recognize two of their staff this year. I do wish we were in person because I really like to offer our congratulations to them. I'd like to recognize Jill Ryder, who this year has been with sales for 15 years, and I'd also like to recognize Michelle Large, though, who this year has been with sales for 30 years.

00:08:14:07 - 00:08:26:13

Speaker 3

So thank you so much Jill and Michelle. We appreciate your service and all that you do to keep sales running so smoothly and how I wish we were there to actually give you an award in person.

00:08:26:13 - 00:09:02:22

Speaker 1

So thank thank you, Linda. And now we move on to the election of trustees to fill the vacancies for Washington and Hamilton counties all very well notified of the search process with trustees from Washington County for a term specified memos sent to each member library board president. The notice of annual biannual business meeting sent in on April 15th and every member, the library trustee of the candidates.

00:09:03:11 - 00:09:43:19

Speaker 1

The following a candidates who have agreed to serve if nominated and who these terms require in May 2027 are for Washington County. Laura Goodman for her first five year term and Hamilton County Nancy Stevens for her second five year term. There was brief biographical information about these people which was provided in the April 15th notice. Are there any other nominations from the floor we'll pause for a minute to allow for nominations from the floor.

00:09:43:19 - 00:10:42:03

Speaker 1

These can be submitted by unmute yourself and your nomination or if you logged into the meeting by computer, you can enter a nomination and the chat as well. And we'll just pause for a minute to see if there are any other nominations oh, I'm all right. And I don't see any in the chat. And I did not hear any so receiving no nominations from the floor.

00:10:42:03 - 00:11:24:18

Speaker 1

I instruct the secretary as one ballot for the people nominated by the Trustee Nominating Committee, who are hereby elected by acclamation by the trustees of the member libraries of the Adirondack Library System. Congratulations I would like to present the resolution to Mr. Robert Bob Desk, and I would like to recognize Bob, who this year is completing his term and retiring from the Board of Trustees.

00:11:24:24 - 00:12:01:12

Speaker 1

And I'd like to read that resolution now to Bob and for the rest of you to hear. Whereas the Board of Trustees of the Southern Adirondack Library System honoring Robert Odets upon his retirement as board member of ten years. And. Whereas, Mr. Best served in leadership role on numerous committees and standing committees in Finance, Library Services, Central Library and Services and County Aid Coordinator representing Washington County.

00:12:01:21 - 00:12:34:08

Speaker 1

And. Whereas, Mr. Odets was always supportive of sound services and commitments to its membership and. Whereas, Mr. Odets was unstinting in supporting his time and in applying his experience, wisdom, and intelligence for improved public library services in the social service area. And. Whereas, it is fitting that we recognize Mr. Odets dedicated years of service to the Board of Trustees, members and staff of the Southern Adirondack Library System.

00:12:34:23 - 00:13:04:12

Speaker 1

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the trustees, membership and staff of the Southern Adirondack is the system paused. Recognize and applaud Mr. Odessa's commitment and integrity, vision and hard work, and be it further resolved that a copy of the resolution of appreciation be presented Mr. Robert Bach, along with our best wishes for a happy retirement. Thank you, Bob.

00:13:13:09 - 00:13:20:11

Speaker 1

I will now introduce Sarah Dallas, who will say words Thank you.

00:13:20:18 - 00:13:21:23

Speaker 6

Thank you very much.

00:13:24:13 - 00:13:53:07

Speaker 6

Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for attending the sales annual meeting. The weather was a bit challenging and technology and COVID. So we really, really appreciate you being here with us right now. I think everyone in this room could agree that libraries are essential. We all have invested a great deal of time to libraries and libraries services over the past year.

00:13:54:08 - 00:14:29:02

Speaker 6

To all the trustees here tonight, kudos. 2021 has been a difficult year, to say the least. Transitioning back to providing face to face service and the challenges of reopening to all of the library staff and volunteers. Congratulations on navigating the trials of reinstating library services to augment your virtual services. Unfortunately, there is no book entitled The Beginner's Guide to Navigating Library Services through a Pandemic.

00:14:29:20 - 00:14:37:00

Speaker 6

But we worked together and helped each other get through the worst of times. So thank you for all of that.

00:14:42:11 - 00:15:08:00

Speaker 6

Many of you know that I believe the sales and joint automation staffs are the most important of all of the sales resources. They are dedicated to providing the best services and assistance to all member libraries, staff and trustees So I want to thank the sales and J staff for your dedication and your many accomplishments and your terrific senses of humor.

00:15:09:00 - 00:15:38:22

Speaker 6

We saw some turnover in staff in 20, 20, 20, 21, and I was Sharon Shine, Mary Hanley, Cindy Mira and Diane Winter. Much success in their new adventures. We welcome Jim Baker, Johanna Hall, Colleen Smith and Pamela Del Signora to our staff. And I believe many of you have met them and know they are smart, caring, and talented.

00:15:39:21 - 00:16:18:00

Speaker 6

And special kudos to Pamela and Colleen. And helping everybody navigate the wonderful estate annual reports. I'm sure you've spoken to them a lot over that time. The sales board of trustees. You are champions in our advocates. The sales board guided us through all of the challenges thrown

at us and set our policy and then approved our member driven plan of service Our board president, Jordan Hornstein, will be stepping down as president.

00:16:18:06 - 00:16:50:04

Speaker 6

Thank you, Jordan, for the countless hours that you shared with sales and the sales staff. Due to the outstanding work being done by our libraries, we are supported very well by our elected officials. The increase in state aid will allow sales to continue to provide support to the member libraries. The increased state aid for library construction will result in improved and more accessible library buildings.

00:16:51:12 - 00:17:26:08

Speaker 6

We know libraries are essential, and we believe libraries are essential. Studies have shown that libraries are among the most trusted institutions in our country. Libraries took a leading role in providing accurate information to communities throughout the pandemic. Ala declared that universal access to broadband is a fundamental human right, and our libraries provided 24 seven Internet access to people logging on outside their buildings, even when the building was closed.

00:17:27:12 - 00:18:07:10

Speaker 6

Many of our libraries extended their wide size signals beyond the parking lot to parks and community centers to enable library users access to the network. Thank you for that. We took part in strong advocacy efforts locally, statewide and nationally, which led to federal and state funding to improve rural area access to faster bandwidth. Not necessarily electricity at all times, but when it's their extended bandwidth and faster bandwidth our libraries and cells offer formal or informal digital literacy programing.

00:18:08:05 - 00:18:46:00

Speaker 6

Many of our libraries have dedicated digital literacy and technology programs and trained staff. Our libraries are providing classes or informational help related to coding computer programing, robotics, or 3D 3D printing. And each and every one of you are building your communities by purchasing books that reach across boundaries and build connections between readers. Encouraging reading books that extend beyond our own experiences to expand our worldwide view.

00:18:46:24 - 00:19:31:08

Speaker 6

Ala President Patty Wong wrote diverse books Create a Better Lens through which all children can see themselves in library collections. And I firmly believe Central Strip divides us and creates barriers. So that brings me to the point in our program to introduce our evening presenter, Deborah Caldwell Stone. Deborah is the director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom. She also serves as the executive director for the Freedom to Read Foundation and Allied Organization that participates in freedom of speech and freedom of all the press litigation.



00:19:32:04 - 00:20:06:18

Speaker 6

Deborah works closely with librarians, teachers and library trustees on a wide range of intellectual freedom issues. Including censorship of library resources, book challenges, internet filtering and meeting room policies. She's pretty much like my brush with greatness. She's usually quoted in newspapers, radio, television as both an expert and advocate for intellect material freedom and censorship. So I'd like to introduce Deborah from Chicago.

00:20:10:15 - 00:20:32:18

Speaker 4

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for having me here tonight. It's really a privilege to be able to speak to you at your annual meeting. I did have some slides, and I'm looking for permission to share those slides from the host. I have my desktop designated, if that can be done.

00:20:36:17 - 00:20:45:19

Speaker 3

I think Jack's plan was to make you co-host so that you should she could share Jack.

00:20:47:14 - 00:20:50:04

Speaker 2

Etc. I think you should be able to share now, hopefully.

00:20:50:22 - 00:21:00:06

Speaker 4

OK, now I need it for my desktop access. It says DC Stone Desktop. I'm on twice.

00:21:00:15 - 00:21:01:19

Speaker 2

OK, gotcha.

00:21:09:18 - 00:21:12:15

Speaker 4

Pardon the technical glitch.

00:21:16:02 - 00:21:19:14

Speaker 2

Hey Pamela, I think you're going to have to do it. I don't have the I don't have the power.

00:21:21:05 - 00:21:23:10

Speaker 4

So I need to make that.

00:21:23:19 - 00:21:25:16

Speaker 2

Yeah, but DC Stone Desktop.

00:21:28:17 - 00:21:29:19

Speaker 3  
You do it from here.

00:21:33:13 - 00:21:37:00

Speaker 3  
I'm trying to find it among our 63 attendees. Hold on.

00:21:38:14 - 00:21:46:03

Speaker 6  
Just to let people know we usually use go to meeting and we just switched over to Zoom, so we're still learning.

00:21:47:01 - 00:21:48:23

Speaker 4  
It should be under desks.

00:21:49:22 - 00:21:55:14

Speaker 3  
I see it I've made it a co-host. Does that work?

00:21:56:04 - 00:22:47:19

Speaker 4  
Networks OK, so thank you for your patience. Again, I like to start tonight with a little bit of reflection. During the pandemic year, I was offered a very unique opportunity to write a brief but comprehensive introduction to intellectual freedom for a textbook intended for students beginning their studies in library and information science. And it was an opportunity to think more deeply about the values that underlie library service and what it means to defend intellectual freedom.

00:22:48:11 - 00:23:21:03

Speaker 4  
And I started here with the core values of librarianship as adopted by the American Library Associations members, and that includes its trustee members, as well as its library professionals. And I wanted to unpack this idea of intellectual freedom. What does this mean, intellectual freedom? It's so abstract. And so I did finally find a really great definition offered by allies.

00:23:21:04 - 00:23:52:22

Speaker 4  
Eliza Dresang, who was a library professor at the University of Florida, and she said that intellectual freedom means the ability to freedom to think or believe what one will, the freedom to express one thought one's thoughts and beliefs in an unrestricted manner and an unrestricted means, and the freedom to access information and ideas regardless of the content or viewpoint of the author or the age, background or beliefs of the receiver or the reader.

00:23:54:03 - 00:24:25:23

Speaker 4  
Not describes intellectual freedom in the library, but it didn't tell me why, and I had to think a little more deeply about that. And what I finally decided was that you had to think about the individual and so

more than the liberty to think, the liberty to speak without reprisal. Intellectual freedom encompasses a respect for the dignity and autonomy of the individual and their right to think independently and form their own ideas and opinions through free and open inquiry.

00:24:26:05 - 00:24:57:13

Speaker 4

Something that public libraries make real every day when they open their doors and offer the wealth of information on their shelves to light, to their users and their communities. I will say, though, that intellectual freedom has had an enormous challenge and 20, 21 and 2021. We saw an unprecedented and remarkable increase in the number of demands to remove books from the shelves of school libraries and public libraries across the United States.

00:24:58:19 - 00:25:40:14

Speaker 4

I've been working for the Office of Intellectual Freedom since the year 2000, and I honestly cannot recall a time like this when individuals, advocacy groups and even elected officials are supporting the use of official government censorship as a means of limiting what young people can read. The numbers here tell the story and 2019 which is the last year that we had libraries and schools opened without any pandemic concerns we received 377 challenges to 566 challenges this is a little high but it's about average at least average for the years preceding this.

00:25:41:06 - 00:26:12:12

Speaker 4

And of course during the pandemic year we saw a real reduction in numbers because schools and libraries were closed. But in 20, 21 we saw a near tripling of our challenged numbers and an enormous number of books challenged, something that we've just never witnessed. Each week we would receive more and more challenges Usually it was two or three challenges a week we get reports of in our office and now on a regular basis.

00:26:12:13 - 00:26:21:20

Speaker 4

Kristen Pecol are wonderful assistant director who manages our database, gets anywhere from three to five challenges recorded on a daily basis.

00:26:25:13 - 00:27:00:24

Speaker 4

Now, there are many reasons that people ask for books to be removed from the shelves of the library, but we're seeing a number of themes emerge as the most important are the most frequent reasons for challenging books. And one of them is the availability of LGBT materials in the library. Parents often who are not prepared to discuss diverse sexual orientation or gender identity with their children, are going to libraries and asking them to tailor the library's collections and displays to their families.

00:27:00:24 - 00:27:29:14

Speaker 4

Unique needs without thinking about the fact that that would deny other families and other individuals the right to learn about or read those

books. There are also claims that books addressing the lived experience of LGBTQ persons and families don't reflect the values of a particular community. Again, asking that those voices be silenced from the shelves of that particular library.

00:27:31:00 - 00:28:16:20

Speaker 4

And similarly, we're seeing requests to remove books that represent the experiences of black persons or that reflect African American perspectives on US history under the claim that they somehow represent the academic discipline called critical race theory and are somehow un-American or Marxist claims that are unsupported and untrue. And we're also seeing a great deal of disinformation spread by anti-pornography and anti-LGBT LGBTQ advocacy groups that deliberately frame materials dealing with LGBTQ persons as inherently pornographic or harmful to minors.

00:28:17:04 - 00:29:00:16

Speaker 4

They claim that any book or any program depicting or discussing diverse gender identity or sexual orientation is sex or sexual in nature and thus unsuitable for any minor, including adolescents. They make these claims even when the book is intended for children and age in developmentally appropriate books like *Mother Has Two Mommies* or *and Tango Makes Three*. And so what we're seeing overall is a well-organized and well-funded campaign conducted by advocacy groups who are engaged in an effort to censor books.

00:29:01:03 - 00:29:31:01

Speaker 4

And that deal with diverse identities, targeting books written by black officers, books that reflect the lives and experiences of black persons, indigenous persons and persons of color. Or demanding the removal of books that center the lives and concerns of gay, queer and transgender persons. They've been appearing during public comment periods at board meetings focused on drawing attention to a paragraph or an image in a particular book that they object to.

00:29:31:22 - 00:30:01:01

Speaker 4

They've been remarkably successful at exploiting the divisions and fears that run through our society right now, raising moral panics that have caused some library boards to order the immediate removal of a book in violation of policy, sometimes ordering the removal of hundreds of books based solely on a single person's unverified claim that books are pornography or promote critical race theory, or somehow un-American or Marxist indoctrination.

00:30:01:19 - 00:30:40:10

Speaker 4

And social media is doing nothing more than amplifying these demands for censorship. What's worse for me is that a number of groups and individuals have actually filed criminal complaints against libraries and librarians urging local prosecutors to put librarians on trial for pandering obscenities to minors. They claim without any foundation that

by providing books to children and adolescents that deal with gender identity, sexual orientation, puberty, human reproduction, somehow the librarians are violating state laws intended to prevent the distribution of obscene materials to minors.

00:30:41:03 - 00:30:53:16

Speaker 4

Fortunately, prosecutors are dismissing these criminal complaints as having no basis as a law, but it's certainly having a chilling effect on the libraries and librarians who are being targeted for these complaints.

00:30:56:06 - 00:31:21:04

Speaker 4

Now, to think about this, let's look at how the courts have dealt with library censorship in the past. The First Amendment generally protects citizens from government restrictions that place a burden on the right to speak. The right to publish, the right to hold or not hold a belief. And as we've noted before, this includes a right to receive information in the library context.

00:31:21:09 - 00:31:42:16

Speaker 4

It is the right to receive information that's protected under the First Amendment. And courts have recognized public libraries as designated limited public forums for the right to receive information. The bottom line is, as a government agency, the library is subject to the provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and must operate in compliance with the First Amendment.

00:31:43:09 - 00:32:09:15

Speaker 4

This includes protecting the right to receive information and the right to access the public library. Now, restrictions on receiving information from the library are unconstitutional. If they place an outright ban on receiving information or impermissibly burdened the ability of a person to receive information in the library This can include the relocation of books already in the collection to another area of the library.

00:32:09:23 - 00:32:41:19

Speaker 4

If it's done to prevent the intended user from seeing or powering the book. This includes moving books from the children's collection to the adult collection. No government entity, including a public library, may restrict or censor materials because of the viewpoint expressed by the author or the ideas expressed in the book. And if a public library does remove a book because it disapproves of its content, the library must show that it is doing so under a legal test called strict scrutiny.

00:32:42:12 - 00:33:17:13

Speaker 4

This is a very difficult test to meet. No one ever meets it. Supreme Court has almost never found a library or other government agency has to have met this test when they have censored material based on the ideas or opinions stated in the work Now, in addition, if materials are removed in

violation of a library's written policies, not following that written policy is a major indicator to a court of law that there's substantial evidence that there's an unconstitutional motivation for the removal of the book.

00:33:18:05 - 00:33:39:05

Speaker 4

That means that the decision to not follow policy itself can result in a legal decision against the library board or the library staff. And finally, courts have already also set aside laws removing a restricting access to books if the evidence shows that the restriction on access was done to further racial discrimination.

00:33:39:09 - 00:33:40:05

Speaker 2

Oh, come on.

00:33:44:11 - 00:33:50:06

Speaker 4

It's discrimination against a group or done for political reasons.

00:33:56:10 - 00:34:28:14

Speaker 4

Now, protecting the freedom to read and access information in the library requires an ongoing commitment to implementing policies, practices and procedures that are consistently applied to libraries, provision of books, information and programs. The best tool for defending the right to read and access materials in the library is written policy. Written policies make principles concrete. They encourage stability and continuity in the library's operations, while reducing any ambiguity or confusion about the library's ongoing practices and procedures.

00:34:29:15 - 00:34:51:14

Speaker 4

They also inform the community about the library's mission and goals and how the library intends to achieve them. They also provide the community with the means to evaluate the library's performance and show that the library is willing to be held accountable for its decisions. They serve as evidence of the library's normal practices and the fact the library's practices especially its collection.

00:34:51:14 - 00:35:26:21

Speaker 4

Development practices, are based on research and careful planning and sound judgment. Well-crafted written policies ensure that the library legally fulfills its mission of providing access to information for members of the community, while also ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for library users and libraries. Staff While the governing bodies of libraries can adopt a detailed range of policies concerning the library's operations, there are five policies that are essential for the defense of the library users right to receive information.

00:35:27:12 - 00:35:59:22

Speaker 4

These include the collection development policy, the reconsideration policy, and Internet use policy, and a policy establishing the rules for use of the library or the code of conduct. And there should be at least two privacy policies. One addressing the privacy of library users, personal information, and another for addressing the protection of library records. There should be at least also essentialism, mission statements and adoption of statements that support the fundamental core values of librarianship.

00:36:00:05 - 00:36:31:05

Speaker 4

Statements like the Library Bill of Rights, the Code of Ethics, the freedom to read statements and other statements that support good library service for the entire community and the present moment. With this effort to censor books, a sound collection development policy is one of the most essential policies to have. Well done. Collection. Development policy can be an important tool for responding to challenges, to books and other library resources.

00:36:32:01 - 00:37:02:19

Speaker 4

They can show that the library is following professional practices and is committed to protecting its users right to freely access the books and resources provided by the library. It can also be a vehicle for establishing the criteria that ensure that a wide range of materials are chosen for the collection, and that the particular information needs of all the groups that live in the community are prioritized by the library selection policies that include specific language in support of serving.

00:37:02:19 - 00:37:28:18

Speaker 4

Diverse needs are necessary for building collections that are fair, equitable, and inclusive. And aligned with library standards and core values. Now, there should be a policy provision that addresses controversial materials that explain that the represents portion of an idea, opinion or school of thought within the library's collection does not in any fashion constitute endorsement by the library, its staff or its trustees.

00:37:30:06 - 00:37:55:15

Speaker 4

This supports the inclusion of these controversial materials and makes it clear that providing information is not an endorsement of those ideas. And a necessary complement to the collection. Development policy is a written policy for the reconsideration of resources. We, of course, support the right of anyone to raise concerns about a library book or a library resource. It's part of the First Amendment, the right to petition the government.

00:37:56:12 - 00:38:26:02

Speaker 4

And so a collection develop a reconsideration policy when in place, can supply a means for library staff to provide a fair and equitable means for considering the complaint while offering an opportunity for fair and

deliberative processes that barely consider the issues raised by the person raising the concern about the book. It also prevents the immediate censorship of a book or display without deliberative thought or consideration.

00:38:26:18 - 00:39:01:07

Speaker 4

It provides an opportunity for everyone in the community to be informed about the challenge, to participate in the conversation about the challenge, and to reach a decision that considers the work as a whole. It's important to make sure that reconsideration practices take place in a fair and transparent manner that gives notice to the community about the demand for censorship and provides an equal voice for everyone in the community so that when a decision is made, everyone is informed, and everyone feels that they've had a right to participate in that decision.

00:39:05:22 - 00:39:49:19

Speaker 4

So here are the hallmarks of a comprehensive, well written policy. It's legal because it complies with the law, which should include the legal precedents addressing the user's right to receive information. It should address and prioritize the community's unique information needs and detailed areas of special concern or special emphasis. It should be accessible to the public, and it should be written in plain language that can be understood by most of the adults living in the community, and should also be written to be objective and nondiscriminatory in its application and provide staff with sufficient guidance to apply these policies consistently in the same way for every library user, and also should provide for something called due process

00:39:49:23 - 00:40:30:15

Speaker 4

that is fair notice and transparent see about the library's policies and procedures, establishing practices that allow for deliberation and public input into decision making about the library's operations and practices. It should also provide an opportunity to revisit or review a decision that a person believes is incorrect, unfair, or a misinterpretation of library policy. And finally, it should be reviewed by the library's attorney to make sure that it is, in fact, in compliance with all laws In the end, adopting these policies, putting them into practice, is a foundation for the essential values of library service.

00:40:32:07 - 00:40:59:04

Speaker 4

At the best, libraries place the highest value and respecting diverse perspectives and offering materials to accommodate the varied tastes and needs of all readers. Why? We understand that some titles in the library's collection may be outside the scope of what some library users are parents might recommend or care to check out We should understand that as a shared community resource, libraries acquire some materials that we like and some we do not.

00:40:59:13 - 00:41:22:14

Speaker 4



But all the materials in the library because someone in the community needs or wants the information in those books. Libraries should be committed to the mission of meeting the information needs of all the diverse individuals who live in the community, providing access to a variety of books that appeal to a breadth of interests and offer a collection that ensures there is something of interest available to everyone.

00:41:22:22 - 00:41:48:09

Speaker 4

Of every background, belief and identity or written policies should support each person's freedom to choose what they want to read without anyone exercising censorship or restricting the user's right to select the books they want to read. Libraries do understand that parents may wish to guide their children or students reading or restrict their children's access to materials they don't believe their child is ready to read.

00:41:49:11 - 00:42:19:04

Speaker 4

Library supported parents choices and even help that parent identify resources that match the family's interests and values. But as public institutions, libraries must also provide the same respect for the reading choices of individuals and families who make different decisions about what they want to read by buying the role of libraries, not to be the final arbiter of what people should read or limit the library's collection to only books that meet the approval of a person or group of persons.

00:42:19:17 - 00:42:26:12

Speaker 4

Rather, the role of the library is to serve all persons, students, and families of all backgrounds and interests in a fair and equal manner.

00:42:32:00 - 00:42:35:02

Speaker 4

And go the wrong way. I did. I'm sorry.

00:42:37:05 - 00:43:01:15

Speaker 4

Now, I want to talk to you very briefly about a new initiative put together by the airline to respond to this wave of censorship that we've seen in the last year. It's called Unite Against Book Bans, and it's a public facing national campaign intended to empower individuals to fight censorship in their communities. It's not just for libraries, library trustees or library workers.

00:43:01:17 - 00:43:22:01

Speaker 4

It's for the public to use as a whole. It's intended to support local initiatives and state initiatives to fight censorship, uphold our values. And but then in the end, it's intended to provide tools and resources to individuals who want to protect the freedom to read in their community.

00:43:24:12 - 00:43:49:22

Speaker 4

You can visit the website at [Unite Against Book Barnes dot org](http://UniteAgainstBookBans.org), where you can see the the campaign and its toolkit and discover that as we did, that the vast majority of individuals do not support censorship in our schools and libraries. And this is a bipartisan result. It didn't matter what political party anyone belonged to, what their background was.

00:43:50:01 - 00:44:14:14

Speaker 4

The vast majority of adults, including parents, oppose censorship as a tool for controlling what young people can read and what people as a whole can read. I invite you to visit [Unite Against Book Ban said. Org.](http://UniteAgainstBookBan.org) And join the Campaign Against Censorship. And finally, I want to share some of the resources we have at [L.A. Should your library or library staff be dealing with a challenge?](http://L.A.ShouldYourLibraryOrLibraryStaffBeDealingWithAChallenge.org)

00:44:15:03 - 00:44:53:04

Speaker 4

We do provide one on one confidential support to library staff and library trustees for addressing a challenge which can range from talking about book reviews to examining policy and offering suggestions for policy development. We also have particular support for library workers who are dealing with censorship challenge through the Merit Humanitarian Fund and the Freedom to Read Foundation. An important part of our work is data collection and analysis that supports our advocacy to end the fight against censorship.

00:44:54:07 - 00:45:24:00

Speaker 4

This supports our most challenged book list work during Banned Books Week. So we invite you to report censorship to ALA, even if you already have some policies in place and that you've successfully dealt with a challenge in your community already. Sorry. So this is how you can reach us. You we can be reached at up at [L.A. dot org](http://L.A.dot.org) or at our toll free number.

00:45:24:07 - 00:45:43:05

Speaker 4

And we have a wealth of resources to deal with challenges to intellectual freedom and books at our web page and if you have any questions, I really you don't feel comfortable asking them here. Please feel free to write us. Oh, I like that blog and I'll be happy to answer your questions.

00:45:48:03 - 00:46:03:03

Speaker 4

So that concludes my little talk. I would love to answer any questions or discuss any of the issues that I raised during my presentation. Deborah, this is Sarah. Yes.

00:46:03:21 - 00:46:10:17

Speaker 6

We got one message in the chat. I don't know if you can open up the chat.

00:46:11:14 - 00:46:12:19

Speaker 4

I can see that.

00:46:17:20 - 00:46:47:22

Speaker 2

And this is can it's not really a question. It's just a concern. I agree with everything legally and all of the rules and everything. But so much that's going on today is just based on emotion. And if we just give people these legal easy answers, not only do they not accept, it just backs them into a corner. So if it's not a library issue, it's a society.

00:46:49:00 - 00:47:17:20

Speaker 4

Yeah. And actually, I agree with you. I think that we should treat every concern about a library resource, every challenge as an opportunity to engage in a deep discussion with the individual about the library's mission. And goals and how the library is there to meet their needs. It's not just a legal answer. You know, the legal issues provide a foundation for the written policies, but it's an opportunity for customer service.

00:47:18:09 - 00:47:57:06

Speaker 4

You know, I'm sorry that you're not happy with this resource, but what can we do to meet your needs? Please understand that we also have to meet the needs of other families in the community who do have an interest in these materials. So not to take away from you but how can we help you? And I'm trying to build an understanding of the library as a shared community resource that by necessity has a wealth of information, not all of which will suit everyone's needs, but because it is a shared resource, we understand and step back and look to the library to meet that particular information needs.

00:47:58:16 - 00:48:41:13

Speaker 4

It's not an easy conversation, but certainly it's a conversation to be had. I actually work with library professionals on having that conversation, what it means to listen with empathy and respect and to understand the concerns of the individual and then to pivot to meet their needs and to take action on their concerns. It's an important aspect that I usually talk about with library students and library professionals, but it's certainly not anything I want to give the impression that we neglect when we talk about this work of the Office for Intellectual Freedom.

00:48:44:22 - 00:48:46:19

Speaker 1

There is another question in the chat.

00:48:52:10 - 00:49:07:20

Speaker 4

This is if I had the question is, in your view, the era of increased censorship efforts compare with other area areas in history that experience a surge in censorship efforts? And are we dealing with it differently this time?

00:49:14:05 - 00:49:47:01

Speaker 4

I think it's fair to say that we've always seen censorship of books, particularly books intended for young people and that we have had periods in our history where there has been a reaction. We could look at the time when McCarthyism was rampant and there was we actually saw efforts to burn comic books and things I think that what's different about the current era of censorship is a number of things.

00:49:48:00 - 00:50:12:17

Speaker 4

In the past, it was local issue. It was a local issue only, but now we have social media. And so one person's concern about a book, one person's complaint about a book, can go viral via social media. And so we're now seeing complaints go right just take place across the country based on a person's complaint in one community.

00:50:13:23 - 00:50:41:15

Speaker 4

So we're seeing an amplification of censorship. But I also think that we're in a period where we're seeing censorship used as a political tool and sometimes cynically as a political tool. And so we're seeing elected officials actually endorse the idea of censorship as a means for controlling young people access to information, particularly information that some advocacy groups don't approve of.

00:50:43:02 - 00:51:25:19

Speaker 4

Unite Against Book Bans is actually our response to that. We have done research. We have engaged reputable polling companies in Washington D.C. to do scientifically based polling. And that is the research that is reflected on the United Against Book Bans website that 71% of all adults over the age of 18 who are polled oppose censorship. And this is a polling of a diverse community that included both Republicans and Democrats, independents, parents, grandparents, persons with no children at all.

00:51:26:20 - 00:51:50:14

Speaker 4

But the polling shows that people disagree. Believe in our democracy, believe in our individual liberties, and oppose censorship as a tool for controlling access to information. But I think what the difference is is that there hasn't been a place for them to come together, to mobilize and to make their voices heard. And that's what Unite Against Book Bans is all about.

00:51:50:22 - 00:52:17:21

Speaker 4

And we're deliberately providing it without a lot of framing from the allies so that people are free to use it and make use of it in their communities to organize and defend the freedom to read when there are demands to engage in censorship in their communities. Are there other questions or other topics you'd like to have addressed?

00:52:25:13 - 00:52:41:19

Speaker 1

And that we're not considering at this moment the effect of censorship on the the creators themselves, the artists, the writers. And then that has a very dampening effect as well, don't you think?

00:52:42:09 - 00:53:11:13

Speaker 4

Oh, absolutely. And I have to say, it's such a big issue. We work in coalition with organization of the Authors Guild, PEN, America, the National Coalition of Teachers of English, the National Coalition Against Censorship, because we can't grasp the whole thing on our own as as the American Library Association, we have to focus our circle of concern on libraries.

00:53:11:19 - 00:53:48:19

Speaker 4

The Library Workers, Library Trustees, and support their efforts. And when we can provide vehicles for individuals who love libraries to give voice to their support for libraries and the freedom to read. But we do also amplify and support the voices of other organizations like the Authors Guild Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, PEN America, who are there to support the creators who write the books we read, who create the films we watch, who write the poetry, and we work in concert.

00:53:48:19 - 00:54:14:23

Speaker 4

We come together for Banned Books Week every year. We're now coming together on Unite Against Book Bans. I will point out that NCIC, Pen, America Authors Guild and a number of other creators and publisher cards are now part of the United Against Book Bans campaign. We're hoping that by creating this coalition that will have an overwhelming response to censorship that will defeat it in the long run.

00:54:16:07 - 00:54:16:19

Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:54:19:11 - 00:54:20:19

Speaker 1

Thank you. Are there any.

00:54:20:19 - 00:54:52:11

Speaker 2

I was just just just a comment as much as a question tomorrow. Many of the school boards in our service area here in cells will be electing new board members And what's unusual, just as the number of censorship attempts have gone up, we now have, you know, boards that have two or three openings and that have anywhere from five to ten candidates running.

00:54:52:11 - 00:55:20:10

Speaker 2

Some of these candidates are espousing just the exact type of thing that you've been talking about. So I guess the question part is the strategies that you encourage trustees and library staff to use in terms of explaining about how information should be opened all. Are these good strategies also possibly for people that are running for school boards or for that matter, public library boards.

00:55:21:13 - 00:55:55:22

Speaker 4

I think so. And in fact, our division, United for Libraries, which is the division for library trustees, is offering a number of webinars and resources for library trustees on this very issue. I think that as the research has shown, the vast majority of people are against censorship or support fairness and free access to information And I think that those messages are can be successful.

00:55:57:09 - 00:56:36:12

Speaker 4

We actually I offer the same information to school librarians as well in the context of school libraries. But I think school boards could also make use of these kinds of messages and of course, it has to be tailored for that particular use. You know, our when our our under we do we always understand that all politics are local, that we have local library boards, local school boards that actually put policies in place that are the bulwarks against censorship and protect and are the defense for the freedom to read.

00:56:37:11 - 00:57:15:00

Speaker 4

And so part of our messaging, if you go to unite against book bans, is to talk about local elections to boards and to encourage everyone to participate in those elections. To even stand for elections and to make sure that they understand who they're voting for and what the person they're voting for stands for. As they as they participate as citizens in the election to make sure that that person as express is in support of the values that the voter supports Thank you.

00:57:15:18 - 00:57:25:17

Speaker 1

And comments or questions. Thank you. Deborah Caldwell Stone for all that valuable information and insight. We appreciate it.

00:57:26:05 - 00:57:32:22

Speaker 4

Thank you very much for having me and spending part of your evening with me. I know it's scarce time and I appreciate the opportunity.

00:57:34:05 - 00:57:55:18

Speaker 1

Thank you. Are there any other comments or thoughts before we end this meeting? Then? If not, I'm going to say good evening and and hope that next year we can meet in person. And thank you to everyone for attending. Good night.