

DATE: March 8, 2021

TO: Canby Mayor Brian Hodson
City Administrator Scott Archer
Library Director Danny Smith
City Attorney Joseph Lindsay
City Recorder Melissa Bisset

Council President Tracy Hensley
Councilor Chris Bangs
Councilor Greg Parker
Councilor Sarah Spoon
Councilor Jordan Tibbals
Councilor Shawn Varwig

FR: Kathleen Mulligan & Gayle Elizabeth

RE: Library Resources, Censorship and Public Comment

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the possible discontinuation of *BookPage* from the Library. Many community members find this publication valuable for choosing materials based on their individual interests and preferences; we can move beyond the advertisements. We believe the loss of *BookPage* violates First Amendment protections of free speech and free press.

BookPage is a resource magazine for adults who are looking for reading material. It provides new book options in all genres from mysteries and romance to non-fiction. It is not read by children; nor is it provided to children by the Library staff.

The objection, that resulted in the consideration of discontinuing *BookPage*, was not to the publication itself, but about an advertisement. The editorial content has never been called into question. Cancelling *BookPage* because of its advertising sponsors is overreaction, and cancelling the subscription is a punishment that does not fit the crime.

Our Library staff are professionals who uphold the Library Bill of Rights. They do not endorse or promote any information to children, teens or adults. Each staff member is a “. . . neutral provider of information from all points of view . . .” We applaud and praise them for offering us the freedom of personal choice and not dictating any ideology. They should receive more support and appreciation for their dedication to all patrons of the Canby Public Library.

Attached is an abridged copy of the American Library Association Bill of Rights from www.ala.org . For quick review, we highlighted sections pertaining to the Library’s responsibility to prevent censorship and to allow intellectual freedom for its patrons. These are very relevant topics considering the recent City Council discussion of removing *BookPage* from the Canby Public Library without public comment. Before any decision is made, please look at all ramifications of the topics presented here.

We appreciate those who take the time to see the big picture for everyone in our community.

CC: Library Staff

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.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

What is Censorship?

Censorship is the suppression of ideas and information that certain persons — individuals, groups, or government officials — find objectionable or dangerous. It is no more complicated than someone saying, "Don't let anyone read this book, or buy that magazine, or view that film, because I object to it!" Censors try to use the power of the state to impose their view of what is truthful and appropriate, or offensive and objectionable, on everyone else. Censors pressure public institutions, like libraries, to suppress and remove information they judge inappropriate or dangerous from public access, so that no one else has the chance to read or view the material and make up their own minds about it. The censor wants to prejudge materials for everyone.

"Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment." — Article 3, [Library Bill of Rights](#)

Guidelines

[Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities](#) (2005)

Guidelines for librarians, governing authorities, and other library staff and library users on how constitutional principles apply to libraries in the United States.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q & A

[What is Intellectual Freedom?](#) | [Why is Intellectual Freedom Important?](#) | [What is Censorship?](#)

[How Does Censorship Happen?](#) | [Who Attempts Censorship?](#)

[What is the Relationship Between Censorship and Intellectual Freedom?](#)

[How Do Censors Justify Their Demands that Information Be Suppressed?](#)

[What Are the Most Frequently Censored Materials?](#) | [Aren't There Some Kinds of Expression that Really Should Be Censored?](#)

[What Is Obscenity?](#) | [What about Protecting Children from Pornography, Whether or Not It Is Legally Obscene?](#)

[How Do You Guide Children When You Can't Be with Them 24 Hours A Day?](#)

[Don't Librarians Censor Everything They Choose Not to Buy for the Library?](#)

[What If I Can't Find Something in My Library that Represents My Point of View?](#)

[If Materials are on a Library Shelf, Doesn't That Mean the Library Approves of Those Materials?](#)

[What Can I Do to Fight Censorship?](#)

What Is Intellectual Freedom?

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

Why Is Intellectual Freedom Important?

Intellectual freedom is the basis for our democratic system. We expect our people to be self-governors. But to do so responsibly, our citizenry must be well-informed. Libraries provide the ideas and information, in a variety of formats, to allow people to inform themselves.

Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas.

What Is Censorship?

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If Materials Are On A Library Shelf, Doesn't That Mean The Library Approves Of Those Materials?

The presence of any particular materials in a library collection does not imply endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply doing its job as a neutral provider of information from all points of view—if the library “endorses” anything, it is your right to have access to a broad selection of materials. If you don’t find materials to your liking, ask your librarian to help you!

What Can I Do To Fight Censorship?

Stay informed. Know what is happening in your state legislature, local school and library boards, and city councils. Write letters expressing your view to your mayor, and your state and federal representatives and senators. Attend your local school and library board meetings.