



Ferndale
AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY



FADL

What's All This Then?

How To Talk About Censorship
(and a lot more*) with your Patrons

**Such as...*

Privacy Rights

Intellectual Freedom

Collection Development

& just what it IS that we DO ALL DAY

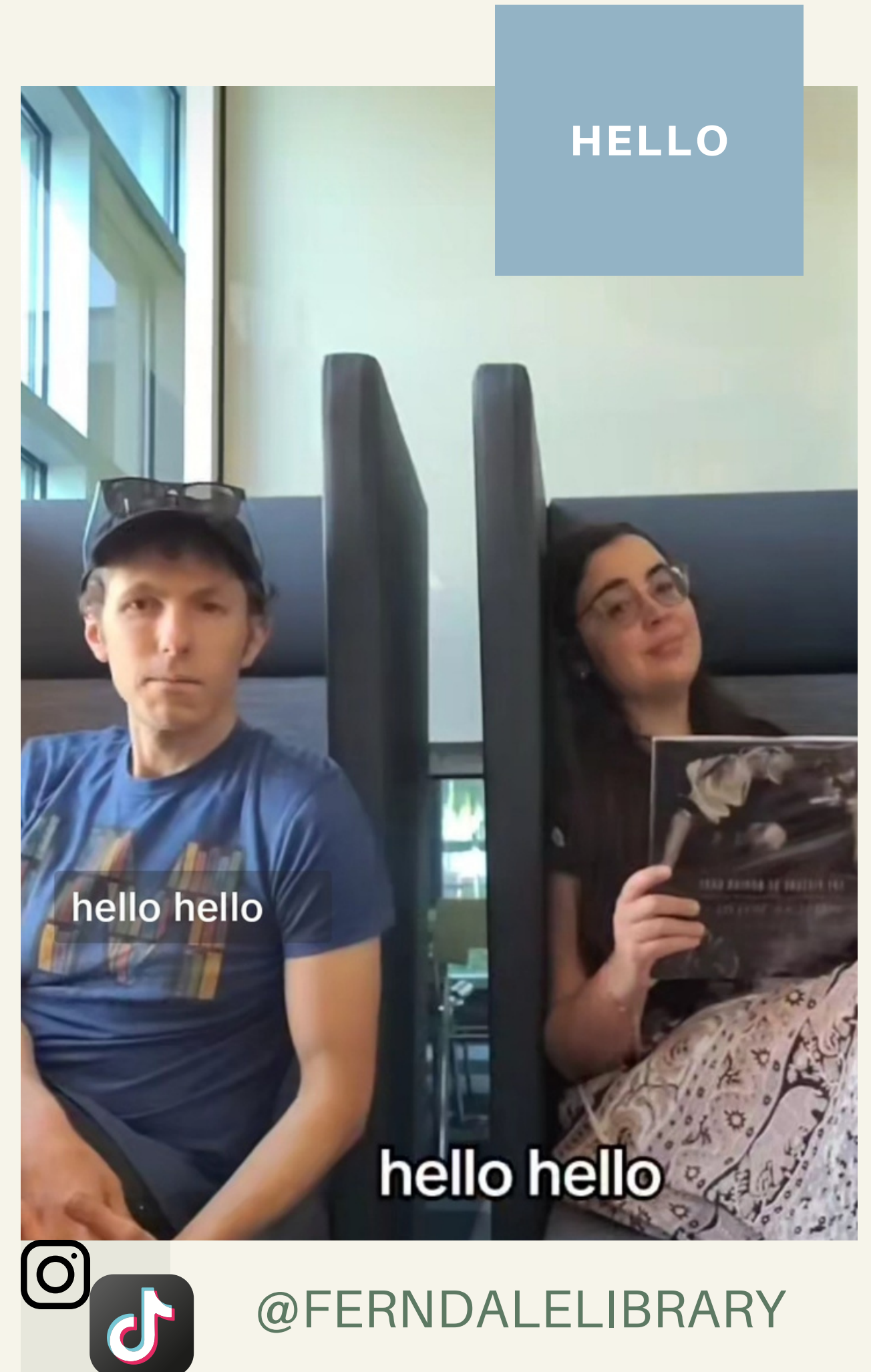
Who Even ARE We?

Mary Grahame Hunter

- Youth services librarian
- Occasional podcast co-host
- Privacy rights enthusiast of Ron Swanson-level proportions
- New cat owner

Jeff Milo

- Marketing Coordinator
- Professional Silly Person on Social Media
- Pun Bandit
- Podcaster
- Experienced Cat Owner



Glossary

...two words you'll hear a lot during this presentation...

1 CENSORSHIP

RESTRICTING OR REMOVING ACCESS TO MATERIALS BASED ON A GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL'S DISAPPROVAL OF THE CONTENT

2 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

ACQUIRING AND WITHDRAWING MATERIALS ACCORDING TO ESTABLISHED/APPROVED LIBRARY POLICY AND BASED ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS



Did you
know?

So there's this Censorship Wave sweeping the country

We know it

Our patrons have *at least probably* heard of it

BUT

...do they know that this goes way beyond the **caution tape** they usually see on displays during Banned Books Week?

How can we tell them that?



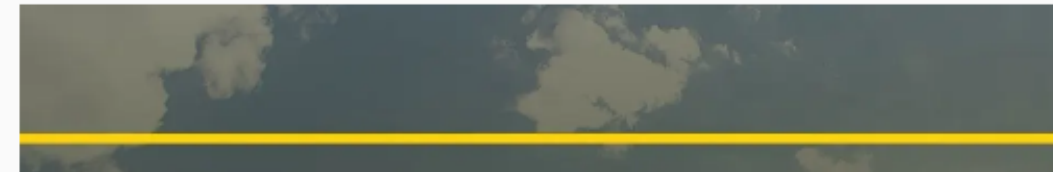
Fort Worth, TX, Schools Remove 118 Books After Review; Tennessee County Proposes Change to Library Cards for Minors | Censorship News

by SLJ Staff
Aug 31, 2023 | Filed in [News & Features](#)



Safeguarding Intellectual Freedom: How to Counter Censorship and the Criminalization of Librarianship in America

Tue Aug 29 3:00pm - 4:30pm Online



LOCAL

Letter to the Editor: Defending access to diverse literature in Muskingum County

Zanesville Times Recorder
Published 5:05 a.m. ET Aug. 27, 2023



Residents and library system fights censorship

Ohioans are fighting back against bans. Citizen acted at a meeting of the Muskingum County Library System Board of Trustees on Aug. 17.

After a recent push by a Zanesville resident to restrict access to LGBTQ+ children's books, the true spirit of Muskingum County's citizens emerged, resolutely standing

IN A WORLD...

where our patrons may only be reading the headlines...

CENSORSHIP

WESTMINSTER, MARYLAND, SCHOOL DISTRICT REMOVES 50 CHALLENGED BOOKS

[Previous](#)



Tags

- 1st Amer
- Academic
- Art Censc
- Arts & C
- Banned E
- Banned E
- Book Cen
- Censorsh
- Facebook

US library defunded after refusing to censor LGBTQ authors: 'We will not ban the books'

Residents of Jamestown, Michigan, voted this week to shut down town's library rather than tolerate certain LGBTQ books



News

MI Library Association launches campaign to counter book bans

Michigan Radio | By Sarah Cwiek
Published August 2, 2023 at 12:33 PM EDT



The tricky part is
finding a balance between
these two disparate vibes





**ENSORSHIP is a massive bummer,
but it can also be an educational
starting point**

- Look for opportunities to better inform your patrons
- And then expand the conversation to include “how libraries work”

We'll detail a few of the approaches we've taken in later slides.





WHAT'S
ALL THIS,
THEN?

Our patrons have probably heard:

- the words “censorship” and “libraries” uttered in the same sentence
- that “libraries” are involved in what’s being described as a “fight”
- that library staff are being accused/targeted as “peddling pornography”

This sure does sound like an opportunity for some good ol’ fashioned Information Literacy



**BUT WAIT A
MINUTE...**

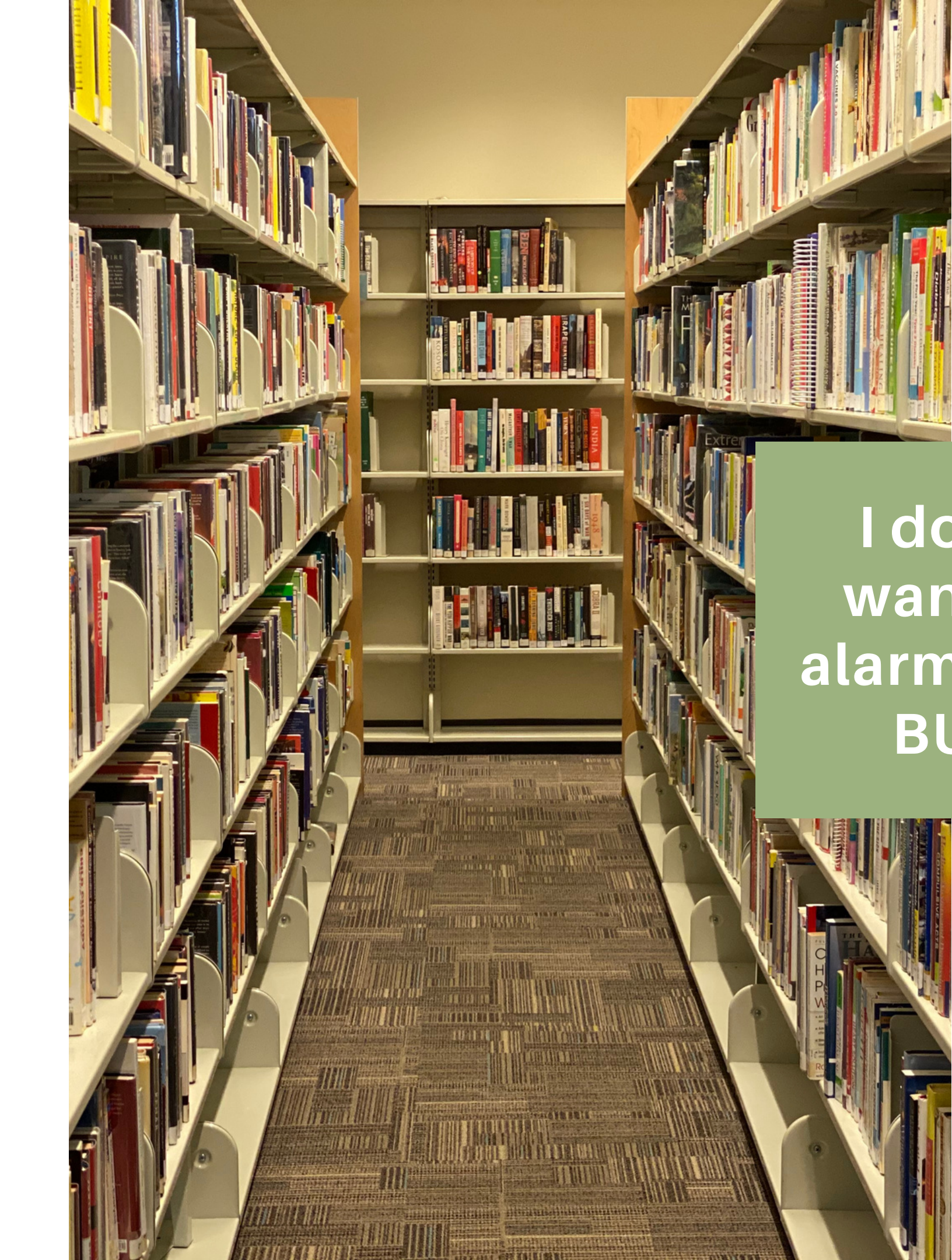
While we're at it
might this also be
an opportunity to expand
our patrons'
understandings of....



THE PRINCIPLE UNDERPINNINGS OF LIBRARIES!

**(and the daily work that's done by the
humans who work inside them)**





I don't
want to
alarm you,
BUT

Censorship does (and *should*) CONCERN YOU

We're "fighting" on behalf of our patrons

- Your library cares very much about YOUR Freedoms. Especially your *intellectual freedoms*.
- Oh? Intellectual Freedoms, you say? Is that a phrase you perhaps read in a headline somewhere?
- Well, then let's TALK ABOUT IT.

Perception:

Librarians are “fighting” back against censorship because they want to protect THEIR collections

Well..., yes and no

Plus, this is about protecting more than just physical materials....



**WE'VE GOTTA FIGHT
MONSTERS *AND*
CENSORSHIP?**

**BUILD
SHELF
AWARENESS**



Reality:

**Librarians are “fighting” back against censorship
because they want to protect YOUR ACCESS**

**Put another way:
“what if I told you...”
these books don’t belong to the library, nor the
librarians. They BELONG to EVERYONE.**

**We want our patrons to know that protecting everyone’s
rights means protecting EVERYONE’S rights.**

**That means we have a chance to tell our patrons that they
have a stake in this “fight,” too.**

Tone is everything



While on the podcast/Social Media

- The Direct Address:
You, Your, Yours, Our
- Speaking to a general audience
- Inviting everyone in

And when addressing gloomy topics, the key is:

- Weary, yet resolute
- Playful, yet sincere
- Urgent, yet composed

...While In-Person



YOUR FRIENDLY
NEIGHBORHOOD
LIBRARIAN

The charm offensives



HEAR THEM OUT

Take every challenge seriously



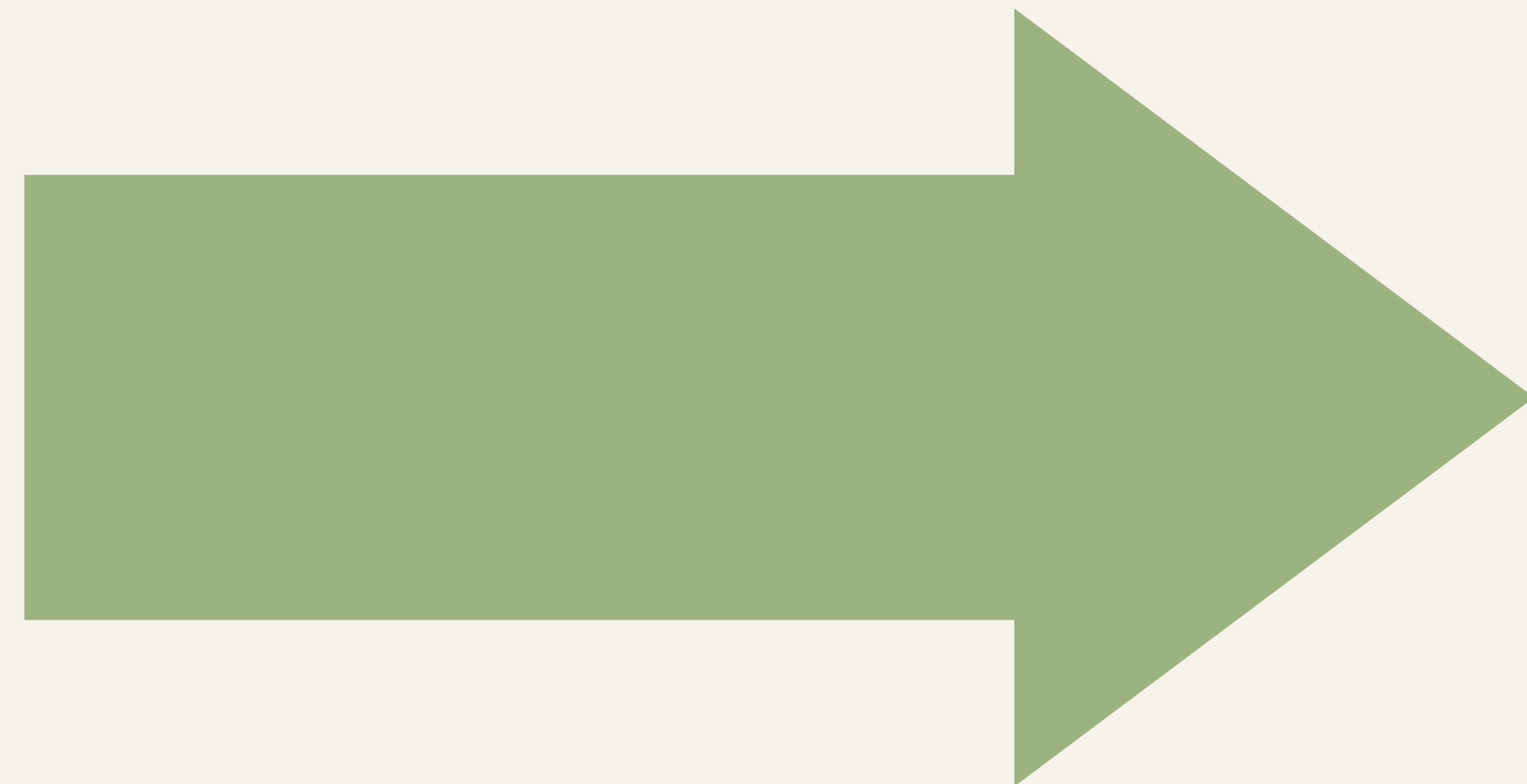
SAFEGUARDS AGAINST
CENSORSHIP

Request for Reconsideration Form

But why stop there?

There might be even MORE things we can tell our patrons, especially when it comes to the library and why they should value it...

**...we just have to start the conversation...
both in-person & online**





CAN WE TALK?

Patrons ask us stuff all the time, but that can be a two way street...



Start the Conversations

We find ourselves asking our patrons:
"...DID YOU KNOW...?"

And it's often along the lines of:
Did you know that you can check out
MORE THAN JUST BOOKS?



But we can find ways to go beyond
selling the library to give patrons a
sense of investment and responsibility!

The library is here for you!

(whether you like it or not!)



*This bad boy can fit
so many interpersonal community relationships in it*

**The books are (obviously) here for YOU
The programming is here for YOU**

But also....

**The physical space is here for YOU
& the staff are also here for YOU**

But, how often has a patron
started a reference
question with
"Sorry to bother you"?

*...Do they know we are
here to be "bothered"?*

Excuse Me? 🙄💧

**THIS IS
LITERALLY
MY JOB**



Whether it's in-person, via social media, or on our podcast, we've tried to curate something of a *Car Talk Vibe*

Let's show them what's under the hood.

If we show them how it works, patrons will gain a greater appreciation for each component

And we get be in-person *Car Talk* hosts, but for libraries instead of cars (probably. Maybe your specialty is talking to patrons about cars. I don't know your life.)



But, how can a classic NPR car advice show help guide us through such perilous times?

**Problem-solving
Empowerment
Ownership
Confidence
Humor
Approachability**



Sure does feel like libraries are under attack nationwide lately!

We are understandably very tired but we're gonna keep going!

So, here are some steps to go:

BEYOND MARKETING

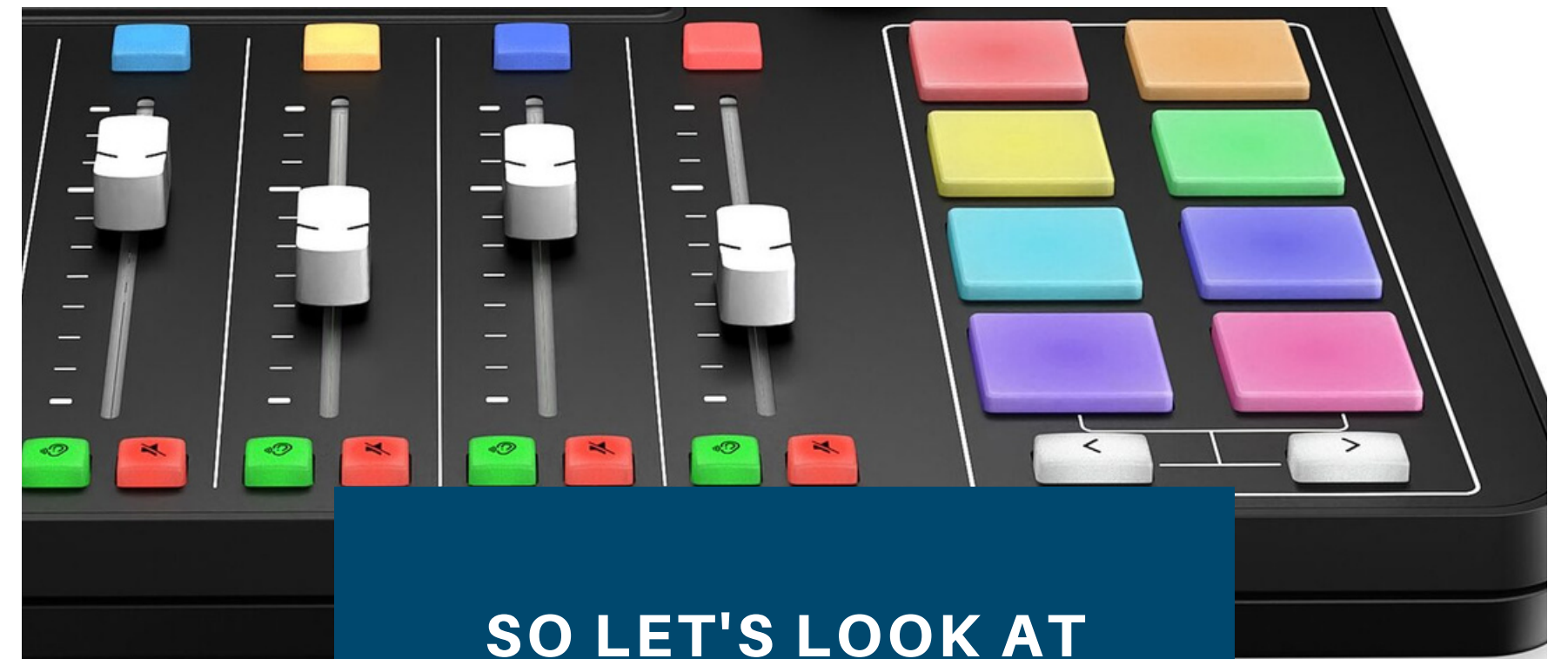
Once more unto the breach, dear friends

Hold on: that sounds like self-advocacy.

Self-advocacy makes me tired.

We get it.

That's why we're going to talk about HOW to make this FUN, or at least how to making talking about unpleasant topics not such a bummer.



SO LET'S LOOK AT OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH OUR PATRONS



Conversations with patrons

Stats are great indicators of foot traffic and card usage, but we also want to forge a sense of connection to the library's people and its purpose.



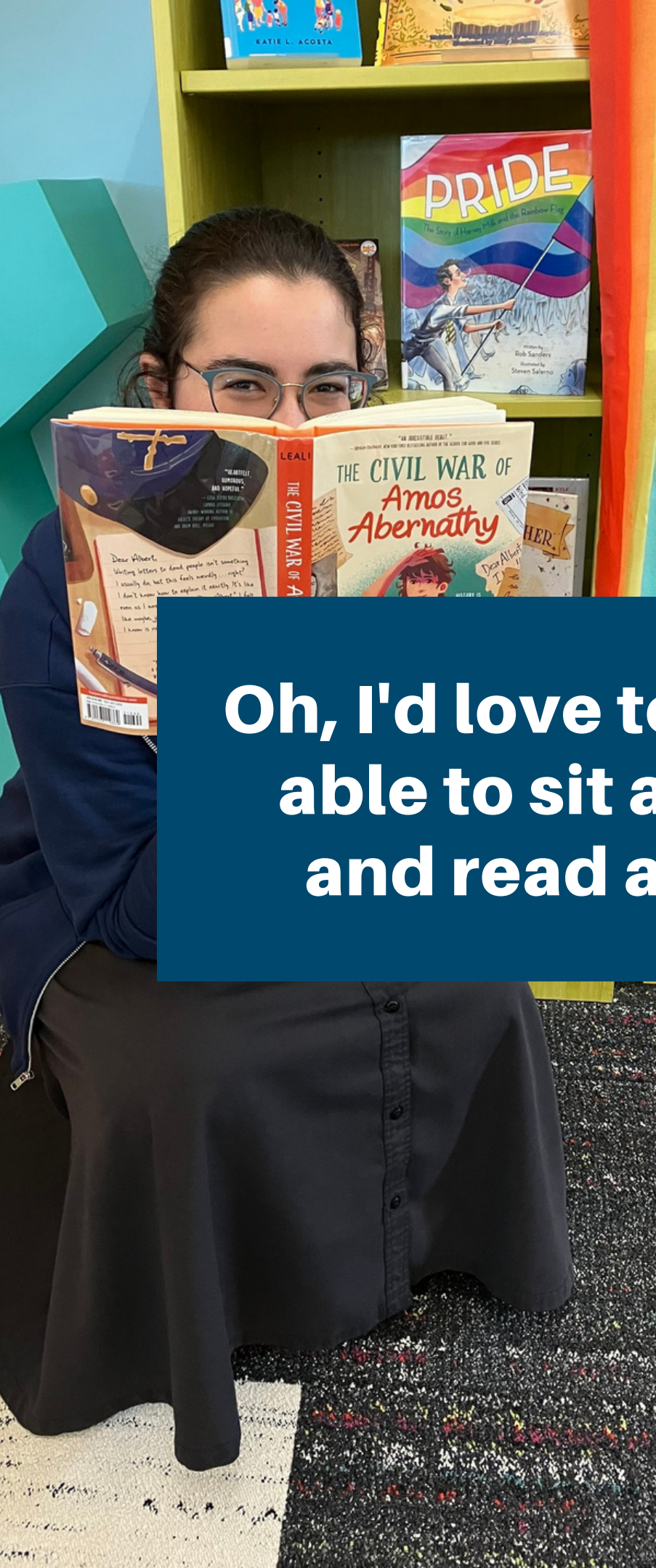
PODCAST /
NEWSLETTERS /
SOCIAL MEDIA



BOOK DISPLAYS /
POSTERS /
BOOKMARKS



TALKING TO PEOPLE



Oh, I'd love to just be able to sit around and read all day

FIND AND UTILIZE OPPORTUNITIES TO INVITE PEOPLE INTO "WHAT IT IS WE DO ALL DAY"

Examples include: "Fighting" censorship

BOOK DISPLAYS, BOOKMARKS, AND NEWSLETTERS CAN ELABORATE UPON SOME OF THE ISSUES FACING LIBRARIES & LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Examples include: ameliorating misinformation

AND PODCASTS ARE A CHANCE FOR PATRONS TO HEAR DIRECTLY FROM STAFF

Informally and candidly

But the biggest thing we've tried to drive home for our patrons is...



**...that
protecting patrons'
intellectual freedoms
is part of our job.**

It's as much our responsibility as collection development and being on the reference desk.

Librarians are out here librarianing for YOU, and that includes keeping folks out of your business.

So, what ELSE is "part of our job"





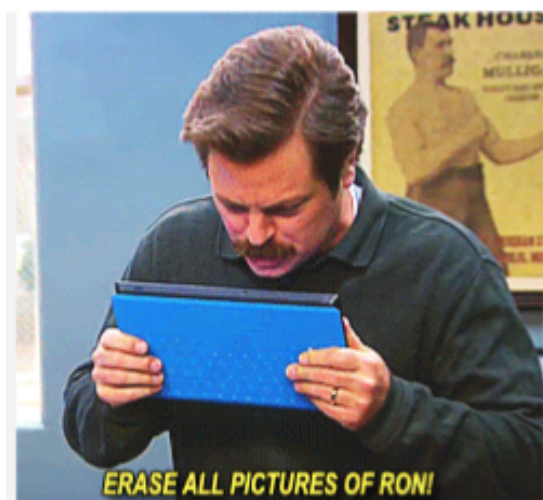
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Because we DO buy the books. And the DVDs. And the Library of Things things.



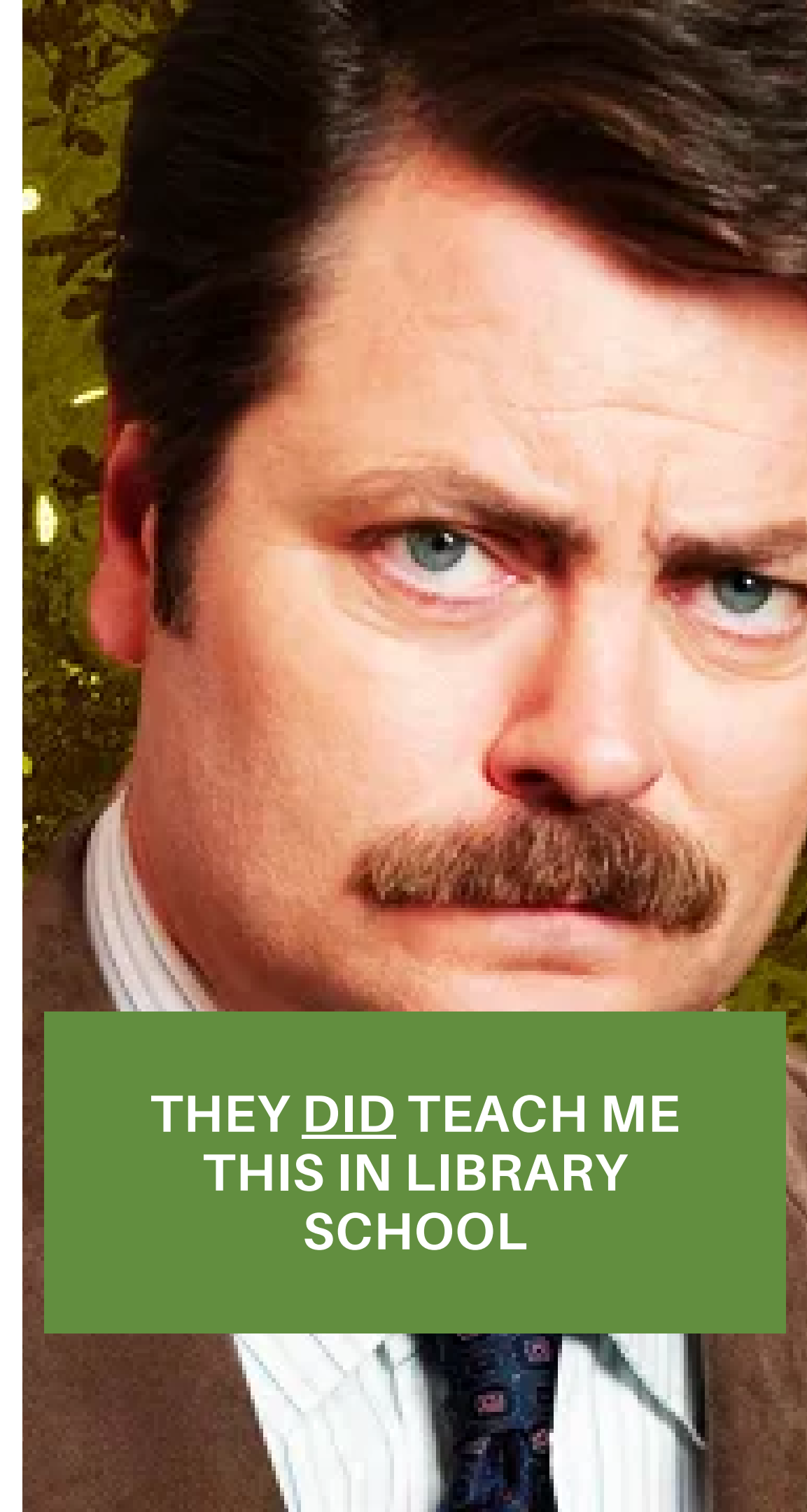
PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

There's this fun piece of the Bill of Rights called the First Amendment!



PROTECTING PRIVACY

Ron Swanson voice: I'm getting off the grid.



THEY DID TEACH ME
THIS IN LIBRARY
SCHOOL



**The pitch:
Doom & Gloom
...but make it
funny**

A BIT OF LEVITY HELPS

Be bold but tactful.

NOT TRIVIALIZING


but lowering the activation energy to
engage with the subject...

THIS IS NOT GALLOWS HUMOR

Because it's not fatalistic, nor nihilistic, nor
defeatist

A MORE "POSITIVE" TONE CAN
EMPHASIZE AGENCY

From "Banned Books" to "Freedom to
Read 'em"



“A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone.”

-Jo Godwin

A perfectly fine quote that many of us in this room have no doubt memorized by now...

But a more positive twist could make it a little less incendiary and a lot more empowering

Instead, how about:

“Everything at the library isn't for everyone, but there is something for everyone at the library!”

--Diana Stimpson, Jackson District Library



Benefits

PATRONS DEVELOP A SENSE OF
OWNERSHIP / PRIDE / CONNECTION

“I love MY library”

WHICH COULD BODE WELL FOR
WHEN THE MILLAGE COMES AROUND

Fun/cool programs generate fondness

Effective advocacy communicates stakes

HUMANS OF LIBRARIES

People with feelings work here!

In addition to having feelings they also have
talent, imagination, passion, and they're
really funny!

Connecting

with the people we
work for and the
principles of our
profession can be
one of the best
feelings



It's such a good
feeling

Shelf Preservation

- One-on-One Interactions
- Displays
- Flyers
- Bookmarks
- Social Media
- Podcasts

Friendly tones, tactful messaging,
and just the right amount of humor goes a long way....

...a long way towards better informing your patrons
about the perils of censorship...

This is THEIR library

These are THEIR books

Censorship should very much concern them



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jeff@fadl.org

  [@ferndalelibrary](#)



Lucy



Matilda

SO, YOU WANT TO PODCAST?

sweetwater.com | guitarcenter.com

\$275-290

NEW Focusrite Scarlett Solo 4th Gen USB Audio Interface and Audio Streaming/Podcasting Kit
2-in/2-out USB-C Audio Interface with 1 Mic Preamp, Hitmaker Expansion Software Bundle, AT2020 Condenser Mic, ATH-M20x Headphones, Boom Arm, and XLR Cable
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Podcasting Bundle with Rodecaster Pro II and PodMic Cardioid Dynamic Microphone, Headphones, 10' XLR Cable, 128GB SD Card, Boom Arm, and XLR Cable
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