



## FOML Officers

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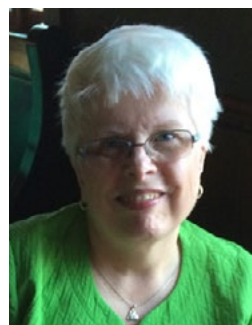
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Connect with FOML online! Be sure to like and follow Friends of Michigan Libraries, FOML, on Facebook.

You can get the latest news about other Library Friend groups around the state and helpful reminders of resources useful for your own group.

[www.facebook.com/FOMLLibraries](http://www.facebook.com/FOMLLibraries)



## Hello FOML Family,

2022 has seen a number of public libraries across the United States face strong challenges to books available to youth and adult patrons. Challenges are happening in Michigan. Voters in Jamestown Township voted to defund their only library, due to complaints that some books were pornographic, and library staff was indoctrinating children. Other communities are seeing candidates for library board positions campaign specifically to challenge item selection.

What options are available for Friends to support our public libraries, during these challenging times? An understanding of how librarians select books is very helpful. Collection Development Policies, written by librarians and adopted by the local library board, are available for any patron to read. Becoming familiar with your library's Policy is an excellent beginning step.

The Michigan Library Association offers an extensive online guide to Intellectual Freedom and the Right to Read. At [www.milibraries.org](http://www.milibraries.org) you can find sample Collection Development policies, as well as practical ways to advocate for your library.

*(continued on page 2)*





*(President's Letter continued from page 1)*

Consult your Library Director for specific ways the Friends may support the library as advocates, during these challenging times.

Such challenges are not new to libraries. During the late 1980s, more than one library was accused of indoctrinating children to witchcraft. With the support of their communities, such challenges were successfully resolved. As in those challenges, well-informed citizens stepping forward to advocate for their libraries will have a powerful, successful response to the challenge of the day.

FOML will present a Connect with Friends program September 27th on this topic, to share information and resources on the Right to Read. We invite all members to join us.

**Pat Orr**  
**FOML President**

### FOML Harriet Larson Founders Grant

FOML awards up to two grants annually to help new or reorganizing Friends groups in their efforts to support, enhance and showcase their local library. Each grant is worth up to \$400. The deadline for Harriet Larson Founders Grant applications is September 30. Submissions will be considered at the October FOML Board meeting.

For more information visit  
<https://foml.org/harriet-larson-founders-grant-2/>



**Join Us for the Upcoming Connect  
with Friends Virtual Series on  
Thursday, Sept. 27th at 10am or 6pm**

**"Mi Right to Read: Intellectual Freedom and  
Resources for Friends Groups."**

Since March of 2022, the Michigan Library Association's (MLA) Intellectual Freedom Task Force has been hard at work developing the Mi Right to Read Coalition.

Mi Right to Read provides direct support, an intellectual freedom toolkit, and the strength of a statewide coalition in their efforts to thwart censorship attempts at Michigan libraries. In this Connect with Friends event, MLA's Intellectual Freedom Task Force Chair, Dillon Geshel, will summarize the resources available through Mi Right to Read.

Geshel and MLA's Executive Director, Debbie Mikula, will also discuss how Friends of the Library groups can take action to support libraries and the freedom to read in Michigan.

This is a free event for FOML members only. If you are a current member, click on a link to register for the session of your choice.

**Thursday, September 27, 2022, 10am:**  
<https://fomlevents.org/?p=8708>

**Thursday, September 27, 2022, 6 pm:**  
<https://fomlevents.org/?p=8707>





### Why Freedom to Read Matters

The Freedom to Read Foundation is an American non-profit anti-censorship organization, established in 1969 by the American Library Association (ALA). The organization has been active in First Amendment-based challenges to book removals from libraries, and in anti-surveillance work. The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. **We, as citizens 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 people understand that the First Amendment gives them a right to speak on any subject, free from censorship by government officials. Probably fewer people realize that **the U.S. Constitution implicitly grants the freedom to read what they choose and protects their right to read in privacy.**

Freedom to read is closely aligned with intellectual freedom which encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas. Intellectual Freedom is important because **it is essential for a democratic system of governance.** To govern themselves responsibly, people must be well-informed.

According to the ALA Library Bill of Rights (adopted in 1948) "there should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view" and "censorship of books ....must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment through the printed word." Each of us wants to enjoy the freedom to access the library and the materials it contains and we value the freedom to read what we choose to read without a restrictive imposition of censorship.

Friends of the library can play a vital role in support of freedom to read and intellectual freedom by supporting these principles whenever there are challenges to access to library materials. Read the ALA Library Bill of Rights and there will be statements in that document that you can use to verify the value of reading in our democratic society.



Mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

- September - Library Card Sign-up Month
- Sept. 18-24 - [Banned Books Week](#)
- Sept. 27, 10 am & 6 pm - FOML Connect with Friends
- Sept. 28 - [Rainbow Connections: Celebrating LGBTQ+ Kids and Allies in Your Community and Beyond](#)
- Oct. 16-22 - [National Friends of Libraries Week](#)

### Share Your Stories

If you have a story for the Focus on Friends bulletin you would like to share with Friends, please email it to [friendsofmichiganlibraries@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmichiganlibraries@gmail.com)

### Thank You!

Thanks for reading this issue of Focus on Friends and thanks for being an FOML member. We appreciate you and hope to provide you with helpful services and events.

