

Librarian Shadow Banning of Books and Periodicals, Part II

Read Part 1 [here](#).

Questioning and Challenging What the Journalists Fail to Question and Challenge

by [G. Tod Slone](#) (May 2023)



Self Portrait, Francis Bacon, 1969

In almost all the 45 libraries studied here, and probably hundreds and hundreds more across the country, we have failed our professional duty to seek out diverse political views. [...] These books are not expensive. Their absence from our libraries makes a mockery of ALA's vaunted 'freedom to read.' But we do not even notice that we are censoring our collections. Complacently, we watch our new automated systems stuff the shelves with Henry Kissinger's memoirs. –Charles Willett, Founding Editor, Counterpoise,

and retired librarian (remarks presented at the Fifth National Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries).

When I write about libraries, how not to quote retired librarian Charles Willet? Indeed, his words are not only reasonable, but certainly encompass my experience dealing with most librarians. Of course, I could also quote George Orwell who learned from personal experience, in particular, when trying to get *Animal Farm* published:

Anyone who challenges the prevailing orthodoxy finds himself silenced with surprising effectiveness. A genuinely unfashionable opinion is almost never given a fair hearing, either in the popular press or in the highbrow periodicals.

In any case, a book on the shelf of the West Yarmouth Library on Cape Cod grabbed my attention: *Read These Banned Books: A Journal and 52-Week Reading Challenge from the American Library Association*. Briefly, I leafed through it, then showed it to the woman at the checkout counter and asked if the library might consider subscribing to the periodical I publish biannually and founded in 1998: *The American Dissident*, a 501c3 nonprofit journal of literature, democracy, and dissidence. She then introduced me to Chris Kaufmann, Technical Services, Yarmouth Town Libraries.

And so in a corner of the library, the latter and I sat and talked for a good 30 minutes or so. Now and then, we deviated from the subject in question. I'd begun the discussion by showing her the ALA book. She leafed through it and, like me,

didn't appear to appreciate it. If it hadn't been for that book, I wouldn't have brought the subscription matter up ... for I'd essentially given up trying to get libraries to subscribe ... and wanted to avoid problems.

Over the past decade, I'd knocked on many library doors on Cape Cod (and elsewhere). Not one library on the Cape was willing to subscribe (\$22/year). Watertown Free Public Library, though not on the Cape, had banned me for six months in 2008 without warning and without due process. Indeed, I'd only been to that library once. My crime? Well, I'd tried to get the reference librarian to subscribe. Evidently, she had extremely thin skin and did not like the [ALA's Library Bill of Rights](#), which I pointed out to her, in particular: "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view." The ALA ought to at least be honest and state the reality, as in "some points of view," instead of the hypocritical unreality of "all points of view." For details of that incident, examine "[Watertown Free Public Library--The Angry Librarian and the No-Trespass Order.](#)"

Of course after a decade of knocking on library doors on the Cape, I knew the likelihood was close to nil that West Yarmouth Library would subscribe. In 2013, Mashpee Public Library on the Cape was going to break the hermetically-sealed doors of the Clams Library System of Cape Cod. Its director had asked me to send a copy and an invoice. Then after I'd done that, suddenly she decided not to subscribe. Unfortunately, she refused to provide a reason for the change of heart. For details, examine "[Mashpee Public Library--Free Speech in Peril.](#)"

As I drove off from West Yarmouth Library down route 28 to a cranberry bog for a photo run, the crux came to mind, though I'd already thought of the idea. Indeed, I'd written an essay on the thought several months prior to it: "[Librarian Shadow Banning Books and Periodicals.](#)" I just hadn't thought of it during the conversation. The crux reality was indeed shadow

banning, a form of censorship. Gatekeeping is also a form of censorship. Most librarians in reality serve as gatekeepers of information and are certainly not de facto in accord with the ALA's Library Bill of Rights. Most of them, from my lengthy experience dealing with them, certainly are not true believers in that statement, which constitutes a vacuous exercise in virtue signaling for the large majority of library directors and reference librarians, including those involved with the ALA itself.

Statements that attempt to justify the exclusion of rare periodicals, which actually criticize libraries and other cultural organizations, include "not enough shelf space" and "we can't buy everything." Those justifications are of course simple deflections from the shadow-banning, censoring librarian reality. Sadly, Kaufmann seemed quite in favor of the new misinformation/disinformation call for censorship. Clearly, that is what it is and that is precisely why President Biden's Disinformation Governance Board fortunately met huge public disapproval to the point where it was terminated. After all, how insane could it get when an egregious [spreader of disinformation, Nina Jankowicz](#), was appointed as director? It is difficult to understand those who cannot comprehend the simple problem with censoring hate speech, misinformation and disinformation. Juvenal put it quite simply: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who will watch over the watchmen? In essence, who will make the decisions of what is and what is not hate or misinformation ... and then who is going to watch over them? Subjectivity with a strong injection of political bias would evidently determine what would be censored and what would not be.

During the conversation, I noted that the new ALA president was in fact a self-proclaimed Marxist lesbian. Kaufmann did not believe that and thought I was dissing the new president. But the latter's own statement can easily be found on Google, for example, "[American Library Association Chooses Marxist](#)

[Lesbian as President-Elect.](#)” Indeed, President Emily Drabinski clearly stated: “I just cannot believe that a Marxist lesbian who believes that collective power is possible to build and can be wielded for a better world is the president-elect of [@ALALibrary](#). I am so excited for what we will do together. Solidarity! And my mom is SO PROUD I love you mom.”

Kaufmann and I discussed Marxism briefly. The problem with it, at least for me, is that it constitutes an ideology ... and, when put into practice, ideologies—left or right—always end up with a highly authoritarian elite ruling class and dictator. Stalin, Hitler, Castro, Maduro, and Mussolini were all into the Marxist/socialist ideology. And yes, I combine both terms since both end up with highly restricted free expression—the death of free expression. Whenever truth and facts counter an ideology, they are either buried or simply dismissed by the reigning autocrats. Freedom of expression and reason are the staunch enemies of ideologies. In essence, today the ALA has an ideologically-bound leader. Is that not aberrant and contrary to its diverse intellectual freedom, bill of rights, and [Freedom to Read](#) statements?

Oddly, Kaufmann did not agree with me that hate speech is in fact protected by the First Amendment. With that regard, she ought to read, for example: “[Is hate speech protected by the First Amendment?](#)” The egregiously evident reason for the protection of hate speech is the egregious subjectivity of the term itself. In essence, hate for you might be love for me and vice versa. I evoked the *dialogue de sourds* I had with James LaRue, former director of the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom: “[Notes on the Office for Intellectual Freedom... Sham.](#)” In that exchange, LaRue evokes the typical excuses, which Kaufmann also evoked, for shadow banning periodicals like mine. Again, I repeat: “not enough shelf space” and “limited funding,” as in “we can’t purchase everything.”

Eventually, I brought up Sturgis Library on the Cape, which had permanently banned me in 2012 without warning and due

process and without even providing me with a written document. Never did I make any threats of violence AND never did director Lucy Loomis state that I had. Kaufmann seemed absolutely convinced that I must have done something like that. And of course that's certainly understandable. But, an autocrat with power can do whatever the hell she wants ... exterior to the realm of reason and fairness. Clearly, my "[Open Letter to the Public Librarians of Cape Cod](#)," disseminated five days prior to the banning, and "[Open Letter to the Librarians of Cape Cod, Part II](#)," disseminated two days prior to it, had something to do with the banning. Not one director deigned to respond to the two open letters. A Sturgis Library trustee, however, responded, though not to any points made in them, but rather with puerile ad hominem kill-the-messenger/avoid-the-message epithets. Note that the trustee at the time was Loomis' boyfriend and is now her husband. Note also that the *Barnstable Patriot* had refused to publish my critical piece, regarding his seeking the position of director of Barnstable's Department of Public Works, after it had published a glowing editorial on him.

Dear recipients of Todd [sic] Sloan's [sic] email. [sic]

Preface: I speak for myself and not as the representative of any organization. Mr. Sloan is correct in that he is unlikely to get a response to his rant. If one must yell to be heard then the message likely carries little substance. Mr. Sloan wallows in bloviating (Thanks, Mr. Will) self-interest. If his publication has value than [sic] those with interest will find it.

At last year's Barnstable Village 4th of July parade [sic] and festivities, Mr. Sloan walked around the village as a human billboard, sporting the "F" word. Apparently being offensive is another tactic in his arsenal to garner attention to himself. He is no more than an exhibitionist engaging in intellectual masturbation. No wonder his

message is falling on deaf ears.

Dan Santos

What I simply had done at that parade on July 4, 2011 was protest against the sad truth of the parade as nothing more than a séance of flag-waving, boozing, fireworks, pummeling noise, and, of course, commerce.

“CELEBRATE THE FIRST FUCKING AMENDMENT, NOT COMMERCE!” was the sign I held, as an experiment in free speech that day. The essay and poem I wrote regarding my observations are [posted](#) on my blog site: “Superficial, Subjective Civility First.. Democracy Last: An Experiment in Free Speech.”

In any event, Loomis decided to finally lift the ban after a decade at my request in November 2022. A reasonable individual might wonder why suddenly I was no longer a safety threat, as in “for the safety of the staff and public.” Loomis’ 2012 [email](#) with that regard is, to say the least, odd. As for the banning, I was not made aware that the police had also banned me. My request a decade later and Loomis’ response can be read [here](#).

By the way, the only reason I was able to read that 2012 email sent to the library trustees, not to me, was due to a letter from the State Secretary of Records of Massachusetts, which was sent to Russell Streur, a supporter of *The American Dissident*. Streur stated on the webpage he created regarding the banning that “Word comes today, March 9, 2013, that the Public Records Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has ordered the Town of Barnstable and the Sturgis Library to produce all records related to the trespass order against G. Tod Slone.” The actual letter can be [viewed](#) on that site, Upon a Matter of Free Speech. Loomis’ email was the only document present with my regard. Back to the discussion Kaufmann and I had, we also somehow got into Covid-19, Big Pharma and Big

Gov. She seemed to fully trust Dr. Fauci, whereas I fully distrusted him. I evoked a segment on Tucker Carlson, who she quickly labeled a "twit," though backed off when I mentioned the term ad hominem and how it serves to kill undesirable opinions and facts. Carlson spoke about the egregious collaboration of Big Gov and Big Pharma quite intelligently on his [show](#), which is no longer available on YouTube, known for its censoring of undesirable opinions and facts. The MSM will of course not consider the points made by Carlson. One must wonder how a thinking person can trust Big Gov regarding that which benefits Big Pharma immensely monetarily? Robert Kennedy, Jr. has been quite vocal against Dr. Fauci and Big Pharma, and has appeared on Carlson a number of times. Perhaps because he, like Carlson, comes from a family of wealth that he dares speak truth—Emersonian rude truth. In essence, both are not dependent on jobs and career. Now, I do NOT agree with everything that comes out of Carlson's mouth, but he is anti-war, anti-Big Pharma, anti-Woke, and pro-free expression, unlike Hillary, Pelosi, and Biden, for example.

Finally, I'd asked Kaufmann to provide several articles (or even just one) highly critical of Cape Cod cultural organizations. I have yet to find one such article. She mentioned someone, but noted he was now dead. Generally, articles regarding Cape Cod cultural organizations are not critical but rather publicist in nature and usually in the chamber of commerce/tourist industry sense. The absence of real criticism ends up promoting culture (e.g., poetry and art) as an arm of the establishment, nothing more, nothing less. Librarians and other cultural directors on Cape Cod are certainly in favor of that. As an example, I visited the Cape Cod Museum of Art recently. For that museum, art seemed to be anything but(t), well, there was the naked male BUTT statue outside in front of it, so anything but(t) art critical of the art establishment. There's even an old outhouse in the museum, titled "In-House." Just prior to Biden's election, however, there were a lot of pieces critical of Trump. In any case, via

Sendspace, I made issue #43 of the periodical I publish available since Kaufmann had asked to see the contents. She'd also asked if it had been reviewed. But could the coopted, castrated, and corralled careerist poetry editors, librarians, newspaper publishers, and cultural apparatchiks, for example, present an unbiased review in these times of waning objectivity? Check out the [Washington Post](#)'s "Newsrooms that move beyond 'objectivity' can build trust."

Well, no need for ad hominem, silence tends to be the general modus operandi. I cannot even obtain a simple response from journals like the ALA's *American Libraries Magazine*, *Book Pages*, *Poets & Writers*, and NewPages.org. The latter two refuse to even list *The American Dissident* with the many other periodicals listed. Quite a while ago, the periodical was [reviewed](#) by a few reviewers and the editor [interviewed](#) by a few interviewers.

Again, I urged Kaufmann to get her library to subscribe and end the essential shadow-banning of *The American Dissident* on Cape Cod. I also expressed that I'd be quite interested in reading how she might dodge every point made in this essay, which will not be made available at any library on Cape Cod, nor in the *Cape Cod Times* or *Barnstable Patriot*, which refuse to publish anything I send. Yes, over the past, I've been openly critical of the editors ([see](#), for example, "The Journalists, Shackled to the Narrative.")

N.B.: This essay was sent to Chris Kaufmann, who chose not to respond at all. It was also sent to *Provincetown Arts*. But “Your message wasn’t delivered. Despite repeated attempts to deliver your message, the recipient’s email system refused to accept a connection from your email system.” It is quite likely that the former editor of that magazine, who I’d openly criticized in the past ([see](#), for example, “Bullseye: a Synopsis of the Pitiful Reality of the Art Establishment”), had my email address permanently blocked.

Marxist Intellectual Freedom?

The American Library Association Today

Featuring Emily J.M. Knox, Editor of the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* (Published by the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom) and also Professor at the University of Illinois

I just cannot believe that a Marxist lesbian who believes that collective power is possible to build and can be wielded for a better world is the president-elect of @ALALibrary.

—Emily Drabinski, the new ALA President



NB: Marxism is an ideology, which rejects intellectual freedom. The ALA is an incarnation of Orwellian doublethink. As for Knox, rather than addressing each critical point made in my essay, she instead deflected. For example, she argued: “Also, I am unable to find an ISSN for your magazine. [...]. For many libraries, in order to subscribe to an individual serial title, the title would need to have an ISSN...”. Well, it does have an ISSN! But even if it didn’t, how would that jive with the ALA’s statement that “libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view”? For Knox’s actual virtue-signaling image, see <https://emilyknox.net/contact/>.

More importantly, I sent the essay to the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* (published by the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom). Surprisingly, the editor, Emily Knox, responded: “Unfortunately, your personal essay is out of scope for the Journal. Although we do publish commentaries, they must speak to larger issues of censorship, intellectual freedom, and privacy.”

Eventually, I asked Knox how libraries and librarians could possibly improve if they hermetically shut their doors to criticism and how could that possibly help promote intellectual freedom. She did not respond. It is interesting

to observe the librarians at the helm of the ALA and many public libraries deflect from the "library bill of rights," in essence, a veritable deflection away from information ethics. The de facto reality is, of course, quite different than that "de jura" statement. Point by point, I responded to Knox' response. But no further communication was received from her.

To Editor Emily J.M. Knox, Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy:

Thank you for your response. That in itself is somewhat unusual vis-a-vis librarians (and professors)... when criticized even indirectly. Actually, regarding your comment on my feeling perhaps frustrated, I do not feel at all frustrated. The norm really does not frustrate me. What it does is provoke me to create—write and cartoon. [With that regard, one might cite Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Guerre: "La merde a de l'avenir. Vous verrez qu'un jour on en fera des discours." (Shit has a future. You'll see, one day, out of it, discourses will be created.). In essence that has become my general modus operandi, though I put it a little differently: From the dross, I create.]

The essay I sent does indeed highlight only one particular example of shadow banning. But has your journal ever even contemplated the concept of the shadow banning of periodicals by librarians? Charles Willett's statement in the beginning of the essay certainly underscores that reality. Moreover, how might one access other examples of shadow banning via the ALA or libraries in general when they will not even acknowledge its existence? And how does the banning of patrons who openly criticize library directors via writing not fall within your "larger issues of censorship, intellectual freedom, and privacy"?

Contrary to your statement, shadow banning is clearly

defined in the essay. It is the librarian rejection of a periodical or book via excuses like not enough shelf space or insufficient funding or our patrons aren't interested. It is a form of censorship in that it clearly serves to restrict information available in public libraries.

You seemed to have somehow missed **the key point** in the essay that the rejected periodical in question (The American Dissident) is the only one that openly questions and challenges local cultural organizations in the region known as Cape Cod, including all of the libraries (35!). That ought to spark interest from the ALA.

Moreover, the essay does not state that no libraries have been willing to subscribe to the periodical in question. Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, New York Public Library, and a handful of other libraries do subscribe, but not one in the entire Clams Library System of Cape Cod (Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing).

The periodical does in fact possess an ISSN: ISSN 1555-9777. So, that invalidates the point you implied with that regard.

It is curious, to say the least, that shadow banning of periodicals does not fall within the realm of your "larger issues of censorship, intellectual freedom, and privacy." It is indeed surprising that the concept I evoked in the essay would not be of interest to your journal. And again how might one discover other shadow-banned periodicals when the large majority of librarians, from my experience, are simply unresponsive (revert to the essay RE the two open letters sent to the librarians in which not one of whom deigned to respond).

It is amazing that perhaps most librarians reject the reality that they are indeed gatekeepers of information. And in that darkness, how can one not evoke the egregious

hypocrisy of the ALA's library bill of rights provision, in particular, that "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view"?

Finally, the periodical in question, in the light of democracy (free expression and vigorous debate), not only brooks hardcore criticism with its regard and the editor's, but encourages and publishes the harshest received in each and every issue. Can you name another literary or librarian periodical that does that? How about the ALA's American Libraries Magazine ... and the Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy? My suggestion to you and yours: open your hermetically-closed doors! Embrace criticism! Publish criticism! [No further response was received.]

The following email was sent to the local Cape Cod librarians regarding Part I, published in *New English Review*.

From: George Slone

Sent: Saturday, March 11, 2023 9:01 AM

Subject: STRICTLY PROHIBITED: Criticism of Cape Cod Librarians

To the Librarians of Cape Cod:

Be the first, if not only librarian on the Cape to possess the curiosity to actually read my latest critical essay on librarians: "[Libraries Shadow Ban Books and Periodicals, Part I](#)." Although some of you might believe the contrary, criticism is NOT a synonym for hate. And when one is fully buffered from criticism like so many hacks at the helm, how can one possibly improve?

Not one library on the Cape has yet been willing to

subscribe to the journal I've been publishing on the Cape since 2010. Sturgis Library, my neighborhood library, which had [permanently banned](#) me in 2012 (at my request a few months ago, it finally agreed to drop the ban), had even rejected a free subscription offer. Does that sound like Ryan Bray's "[Local Libraries Support Diversity Of Offerings](#)"? And, of course, the local newspapers like the Cape Cod Times and Cape Cod Chronicle will NOT publish anything I send with that regard... or any other regard, for that matter.

As far as I am aware, not one periodical on Cape library shelves actually criticizes the local cultural organizations of Cape Cod, including the libraries, newspapers, museums, and arts centers. For some of my critical essays with that regard, examine <https://www.newenglishreview.org/authors/g-tod-slone/> (as well as <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2429825381>, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1661653875>, <https://globalfreepress.org/contributors/usa/g-tod-slone?start=6>).

Finally, you will be informed when part II of my essay is published. You will also be informed if any of you actually respond to this email... and disagree with former Sturgis Library trustee Daniel Santos that anyone who criticizes the favored hacks at the helm like him somehow automatically "[wallows in bloviating](#)." I, of course, do not by any means whatsoever hate librarians. The librarians at Yarmouth Port Library, for example, where I've been going since the banning in 2012 have been no less than wonderful. That library, however, is completely private (not taxpayer-funded), so not held to the freedom of expression legal considerations of publicly-funded libraries. A few libraries (Marstons Mills and Yarmouth) do not have available emails on their websites.

Au plaisir,

Tod Slone (PhD–Université de Nantes, FR), aka P. Maudit, Founding Editor (1998)

The American Dissident, a 501c3 Nonprofit Journal of Literature, Democracy, and Dissidence

www.theamericandissident.org

wwwtheamericandissidentorg.blogspot.com

todslone@hotmail.com

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G. Tod Slone, PhD, lives on Cape Cod, where he was permanently banned in 2012 without warning or due process from Sturgis Library, one of the very oldest in the country. His civil rights are being denied today because he is not permitted to attend any cultural or political events held at his neighborhood library. The only stated reason for the banning was “for the safety of the staff and public.” He has no criminal record at all and has never made a threat. His real crime was that he challenged, in writing, the library’s “collection development” mission that stated “libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view.” His point of view was somehow not part of “all points of view.” He is a dissident poet/writer/cartoonist and editor of [*The American Dissident*](#).

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