

# **Bylaws of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL)**

Approved by Membership E-Ballot - 21 August 2007

Revisions Approved at Annual Membership Meeting - 11 September 2009

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**Article 1. Name**

The name of this association shall be the Association for Rural & Small Libraries, henceforth referred to as the "Association."

**Article 2. Purpose**

The Association shall be a not-for-profit organization established under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

The mission of the Association is to provide a network of people and materials to support rural and small library staff, volunteers, and trustees to integrate the library thoroughly with the life and work of the community it serves.

The objectives of the Association are:

- To organize a network of members concerned about the growth and development of useful library services in rural and small libraries;
- To provide opportunities for the continuing education of members;
- To provide mechanisms for members to exchange ideas and to meet on a regular basis;
- To cultivate the practice of librarianship and to foster a spirit of cooperation among members of the profession, enabling them to act together for mutual goals;
- To serve as a source of current information about trends, issues, and strategies;
- To partner with other library and non-library groups and organizations serving rural and small library communities;
- To collect and disseminate information and resources that are critical to this network;
- To advocate for rural and small libraries at the local, state, and national levels.

**Article 3. Membership**

Membership in this Association shall be open to any person or institution interested in librarianship who subscribes to the purposes stated above and who pay annual dues.

Dues for membership shall be set each year by the Board of Directors and ratified by a majority vote of those members present and voting at the Association's Annual Meeting. The membership year for the Association is January 1 through December 31. Each member shall be entitled to one vote at the Annual Meeting.

## **Article 4. Meetings**

The Association may hold as many meetings a year as it wishes, either electronically or in person.

The Annual Meeting of the membership shall be held at the Association's Annual Conference. A written announcement of the date, time, and place shall be provided to members at least one month in advance. In the event that an Annual Conference is not held, the Board of Directors shall schedule an Annual Meeting either electronically or in person.

Other meetings of the membership may be called when deemed appropriate by the President or by petition of at least five members and approval of the Board of Directors. A quorum for any meeting shall consist of those in attendance. All meetings may be held in person, by teleconference, or electronically.

## **Article 5. Board of Directors.**

### **Section 1. Number.**

The Association shall be managed by a Board of Directors of twelve (12) members, one-third of whom shall be elected from among the Association's active members for a three-year term at each Annual Meeting. Each year the Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate for Vice President/President-elect and three Board members. The Board may add *ex-officio* members as needed. *[Paragraph revised 11 September 2009]*

Only individuals are considered for election. Organizations may wish to designate an official representative who would then become eligible to serve as a Director.

### **Section 2. Terms of Office.**

The term of office shall be for three (3) years. Board members will assume office at the close of the Annual Meeting immediately following their election and will serve a term of three years. Directors may be re-elected for one additional three-year term and then must rotate off the Board for at least one year.

### **Section 3. Duties.**

The Board shall have the power to conduct business on behalf of the Association, including the appointment of committees, filing of reports, disbursement of funds, etc.

In addition, the Board shall fix the time and place of business meetings, make recommendations to the Association, and perform other duties as specified herein or by parliamentary authority. The Board will be subject to the orders of the Association, and none of its acts will conflict with action taken by the Association.

**Section 4. Powers.**

The Board of Directors shall have sole power, on behalf of the Association, to incur indebtedness, solicit funding, make public statements, issue public writings, and establish and maintain relations with other organizations.

However, the Directors shall not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities or other obligations of the Association.

**Section 5. Quorum and voting.**

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority (7) of the Board. Resolutions of the Board shall be passed by the vote of a simple majority of its members present and voting.

*Ex-officio* members of the Board of Directors will not count toward a board quorum and will not retain the privilege of voting. [Paragraph revised 11 September 2009]

**Section 6. Meetings.**

There shall be a meeting of the Board at each Annual Meeting, and there shall be at least four (4) meetings of the Board called and convened between the Annual Meetings of the Association in person, by teleconference, or electronically, each of which will be made known to the membership. In other months the Officers may also meet in person, by teleconference, or electronically as needed and the budget permits.

Regular and additional meetings of the Board shall be called, and the time and place set, at the discretion of the President or six (6) voting members of the Board.

All meetings of the Board are open to members of the Association.

The Secretary shall take minutes of Association, Board and Executive Committee meetings and maintain the official record on file with the secretary's papers. Copies of the minutes from all meetings shall be distributed to the entire membership within one month of the meeting date on the Association Listserv and posted on the web site. Minutes of Board meetings shall be distributed to Board members at least one week prior to the next Board meeting.

**Section 7. Publication of resolutions.**

The text of these Bylaws, and all major resolutions and policy decisions of the Association shall be published on the Association web page and listserv.

**Section 8. Vacancies and removal.**

Vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be filled during the year by appointment of the President with concurrence of the Officers for the remainder of the unexpired term.

A Board member who does not attend four (4) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings shall be removed from the Board. A member may also be removed for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Board present and voting.

## **Article 6. Officers**

### **Section 1. Members**

The officers of the Association shall be the President, Vice President/President-elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Vacancies in any office shall be filled by the Board of Directors from their membership for the unexpired term.

### **Section 2. Terms of Office.**

The President and Vice President of the Association shall be elected by the membership of the Association. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the Board of Directors from their membership at their first meeting during the Annual Meeting.

### **Section 3. Duties of officers.**

The officers shall perform those duties assigned to them by these bylaws as well as the parliamentary authority of the Association.

#### **President:**

1. Prepares the agenda for Board meetings to be sent at least one week prior to the meeting.
2. Presides at the Board meetings and maintains order.
3. Expedites business compatible with the rights of those present.
4. Signs documents as necessary.
5. Appoints appropriate committees as needed.

#### **Vice-President/President-elect:**

1. Presides in the absence of the Chair.
2. Serves as member of the Annual Conference planning committee.

#### **Secretary:**

1. Takes minutes of all Association, Board, and Executive Committee meetings.
2. Distributes minutes from each meeting to all Board members within three (3) weeks and to the entire Association membership within one month of the meeting date through posting on the Association Listserv and web site. Minutes of Board meetings shall also be sent to Board members attached to the meeting agenda at least one week prior to the next Board meeting.
3. Reads the minutes of the last meeting (if required by the group).
4. Signs the minutes after they have been approved by the Board.
5. Maintains a record of all Association, Board and Executive Committee meetings as the official Association record on file with the secretary's papers.
6. Signs documents with the President as necessary.
7. In the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Secretary will call the meeting to order with the first item of business being the election of a temporary chair for the meeting.

#### **Treasurer:**

1. Prepares and annual budget.
2. Keeps an accurate account of all financial transactions and makes a report to the Board at the regular scheduled Board meetings.
3. Files all reports with the Secretary for inclusion in the Association records.
4. Signs documents as necessary.
5. Serves as chair of a budget committee if formed.

**Section 4. Removal of Officers.**

An officer may be removed for cause by a simple majority vote of the Board present and voting.

**Article 7. Committees****Section 1. Executive Committee**

The Board of Directors may, by a simple majority vote of its members, designate an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer, delegating to such committee the powers and authority of the Board in the management of the business and affairs of the Association, to the extent permitted, and except as may otherwise be provided, by provisions of law.

By a majority vote of its members, the Board may at any time revoke or modify any or all of the Executive Committee authority so delegated, increase or decrease but not below two(2) the number of the members of the Executive Committee, and fill vacancies on the Executive Committee from the members of the Board.

The Executive Committee shall keep regular minutes of its proceedings, distributing them to the full Board after each meeting and filing them with the Association records.

**Section 2. Other Committees.**

There shall be such committees as the Board of Directors will create or will be created by a simple majority vote of those present and voting at any meeting of the Board.

Members of the Board shall be assigned to chair and serve on these committees. Individuals from the Association membership who are not members of the Board may be invited to serve on these committees and shall act in an advisory capacity to the Board.

The Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate for Vice President/President-elect and three members to be voted on prior to the Annual Meeting.

## **Article 8. Finances**

### **Section 1. Financial Year.**

The financial year of the Association shall be January 1 through December 31. All expenditures shall be made with the approval of the Board of Directors, and paid by the Treasurer who shall be responsible for keeping a record of all financial transactions for the Association. An annual financial and program report shall be provided to the Board and membership at the Annual Meeting.

### **Section 2. Activities Restricted.**

No part of the net earnings of the Association will inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, Board of Directors, officers or other private persons, except those the Association will be authorized and empowered to make reasonable compensation for services rendered to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the Association's purposes [see Article 2 above], including distributions to other such organizations under Section 501(c)(6) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

No substantial part of the activities of the Association will be attempting to influence legislation, and the Association shall not participate in, or intervene in, including the publishing or distribution of statements or any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, the Association will not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

### **Section 3. Dissolution.**

Upon any dissolution, voluntary or involuntary, revocation of its charter, insolvency or bankruptcy of the Association, the Board of Directors will, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all of the remaining assets of the Association by donation to be determined. *[Section revised 11 September 2009]*

## **Article 9. Parliamentary Procedure**

The rules contained in the Special Parliamentary Procedures for Small Boards in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. (Scott Foresman, 1990) will govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the Association may adopt.

**“Procedure in small Boards.** In a Board meeting where there are not more than about a dozen members present, some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business. The rules governing such meetings are different from the rules that hold in assemblies, in the following respects:

Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking, which they can do while seated.

Motions do not need to be seconded.

There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a question, and motions to close or limit debate generally should not be entertained.

Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.

Sometimes, when a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion's having been introduced. Unless agreed to by general consent, however, all proposed actions of a Board must be approved by vote under the same rules as in an assembly, except that a vote can be taken initially by a show of hands, which is often a better method in such meetings.

The chairman need not rise while putting questions to vote.

The chairman can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair; and, subject to rule or custom within the particular Board (which should be uniformly followed regardless of how many members are present), he usually can make motions and usually votes on all questions.”

*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.*  
Scott Foresman, 1990. pp.405-6.

### **Section 2. Voting.**

The majority of the members voting will decide general and special elections.

Only members in good standing will be permitted the privilege of voting. *[Section revised 11 September 2009]*

### **Section 3. Amendments.**

These Bylaws may be changed or amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those members present and voting at the Annual Meeting of the Association, or by an electronic or online vote of two-thirds majority of the members registered and voting.

Notice of these changes must be given to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting when the vote is taken or electronic notification of an electronic or online vote will be emailed at least two weeks in advance of any vote taken. Electronic or online voting will be concluded within a 2 week timeframe from day online polls open until vote is concluded.

*[Section revised 11 September 2009]*

Article 10. Endorsements.

The Association endorses the *Library Bill of Rights* of the American Library Association, the *Freedom to Read*, the *Freedom to View*, and the *Statement of Professional Ethics* of the American Library Association. The texts of these statements can be found in the Appendix. *[Section added 11 September 2009]*

Date Adopted by the Membership of the Association: 21 August 2007.

Date of adoption of the proposed 16 June 2009 revisions: 11 September 2009.

# Appendix A

## LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

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.

Adopted by the ALA Council June 18, 1948;  
Amended February 2, 1961; June 28, 1967; January 23, 1980; and  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## Appendix B

# THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label “controversial” views, to distribute lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. 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 attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings. The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

***We therefore affirm these propositions:***

***1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.***

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

***2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.***

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

***3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.***

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

***4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.***

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

***5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any expression the prejudgment of a label characterizing it or its author as subversive or dangerous.***

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

**6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.**

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

**7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.**

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the  
Westchester Conference of the American Library Association  
and the American Book Publishers Council,  
which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the  
Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953.  
Amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004  
by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

## Appendix C

# FREEDOM TO VIEW

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

1. It is in the public interest to provide the broadest access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences, films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or prejudging a film on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee  
of the American Film and Video Association  
(formerly the Educational Film Library Association)  
and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979.  
This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council, January 10, 1990.

## Appendix D

# Statement of Professional Ethics

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representations of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Adopted by the American Library Association June 28, 1995.