Letter To The Editor: Concerned About Our Library's Affiliation



This letter to the editor was posted in the Gillette News Record on May 13th, 2025. You can read the original letter online **HERE**. Links have been added to this version so that readers can compare the two library associations for themselves.

Media education classes at the Campbell County Public Library would be a significant benefit to our community, a notion sparked by recent discussions and quickly validated by readily available online resources. The **American Library Association** stands out, boasting an extensive collection of materials and support for libraries aiming to implement such programs, evidenced by its comprehensive website with over 300,000 pages.

However, our library is now affiliated with the **World Library Association**. Surprisingly, accessing the WLA website is blocked on the library's internet, preventing patrons from evaluating its offerings. My independent search revealed a stark contrast: the WLA's website is minimal, with only 45 pages, many underdeveloped, unlike the ALA's robust platform.

Two current library trustees, Sage Bear and Charles Butler, are listed on the WLA team. This raises questions about the due diligence in switching from the well-established ALA and the transparency of this decision, especially given the restricted access to the WLA website at the library.

The disparity between the ALA's vast resources and the WLA's apparent lack thereof is significant. Our library's affiliation, coupled with the blocked website, disadvantages our community and hinders the implementation of valuable programs like media education.

As the terms of trustees Butler and Chelsie Collier expire in June, I urge the county commissioners to appoint open-minded individuals who prioritize the community's best interests. Given recent controversies, including legal challenges, thoughtful solutions are crucial. Maintaining access to comprehensive resources, like the ALA's, is a reasonable step. The blocked WLA website further highlights the questionable nature of this affiliation.

Ultimately, media literacy classes would greatly benefit

Campbell County. I sincerely hope the library board and future appointees will reconsider our flawed affiliation and explore ways to bring such enriching programs to our community.

Campbell County, I urge you to contact the commissioners and let them know that our community is now at a disadvantage because of our public libraries disassociation with the ALA.

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Gillette