

July 22, 2022

Ebba Hierta
Chilmark Library
chllib@vineyard.net
Dear Ebba,

I am so sorry that this issue has become so personal. For me it's a matter of principle. I have fought against censorship all over the world and I sincerely believe that if I had defended Hillary Clinton none of this would have happened.

Let me first say that I regret my statement about "taking the heat." But let me explain the context. We were talking about the pressures that all librarians are under from the extreme right and the extreme left to ban books and to ban speakers. What I said was that to be a librarian today, you have to be able to take the heat and avoid the pressures of the censors on either side. Journalists, obviously tried to make it more personal and nastier. I hope we can put this behind us, but not without some principled resolution.

I have made several proposals which I plan to repeat at the library board meeting. One, you can invite me for next year in June when there are few people and restrict entry to the first 25 who appear. Two, you can make it a library event and hold it outdoors on the back porch. But it has to be a library sponsored event. Three, you can arrange for a larger venue as was done several year ago.

But as it now appears, someone – don't know whether it was you or the board or someone else – succumbed to political pressures to prevent me from giving my traditional speech that I have given for many years, only because I was perceived as being pro-Trump (I am anti-Trump I would never vote for him).

Finally, since I am apologizing, let me seek some reciprocity. You know it was wrong for you to suggest that I wanted to speak because of the money I would get from selling books. You know that I have always contributed the small amounts of money I made from selling books to the library. I understand you were made at me, but you shouldn't have said that.

We both live in Chilmark and love it. Let's try to put this behind us. At the very least, let's make it less personal. Let me say I apologize for anything I said that offended you.

Sincerely,