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**SARAH HULL HALLOCK FREE LIBRARY GOES FINE-FREE**

**— Library in Milton Removes Barriers to Borrowing --**

**MARCH 3, 2022 -- MILTON, N.Y.** The Board of Trustees of the Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library (SHHFL) has unanimously voted to move the over-135-year-old library toward a more equitable, inclusive, and accessible future. The library on Main Street in the hamlet of Milton has eliminated fines for overdue materials.

SHHFL initiated waiving fines as a practical and sensible measure in 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The library believed its community – which was coping with closures, pandemic protocols, and economic and health challenges – did not need the added burden of worrying about missed due dates. Perceiving the positive effects of removing late fines, library leadership and staff concluded that SHHFL’s fine-free status should not just be a temporary pandemic practice, but a permanent institutional policy.

Lois Heiser Skelly, library director, explains: “We want all interested in using the library to enjoy access to our books and other materials, without the barrier of accruing fines. Lending materials and supplying information – that is what we are here for.”

“We believe that removing fines will encourage more frequent and easier use of our library,” says Rosemary Wein, president of the library’s Board of Trustees. “Patrons need not hesitate to take out materials because they may have difficulty paying fines, or finding transportation to the library, or leaving their book at Grandma’s house.”

The staff of SHHFL reminds patrons that as a member library of the Mid-Hudson Library System, SHHFL cannot waive fines on books taken out from other libraries in the system that charge fines. Patrons will also be responsible for the cost of damaged and lost items. There still

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remain traditional due dates on loaned materials, and patrons will continue to receive overdue notices as reminders. But, when overdue items taken out from SHHFL are returned, patrons will not be fined.

Incorporated in 1887, the Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library is an anchor building on Main Street at the heart of the hamlet of Milton. To learn more about the library, its services, history, and new fine-free policy, visit the library on-line ([www.miltonlib.org](http://www.miltonlib.org)) or in-person. Inquiries for information are also cheerfully answered by phone (845-795-2200) or e-mail ([miltonlibrary@live.com](mailto:miltonlibrary@live.com)).

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