



OITP Seeks Comments on Libraries and Indigenous Cultural Works

OITP is sponsoring two programs at Annual to gather feedback from ALA members on a draft set of library principles regarding traditional cultural expressions (TCE). TCEs are creative works of indigenous and traditional communities - folk tales, symbols, songs, dances, rituals, pottery, sculpture, textiles, architecture, crafts and music. For some indigenous communities, access to these works, especially when sacred in nature, is an affront to their cultures. When librarians become stewards of TCEs, they often are unaware of the concerns of indigenous communities. Rather, librarians are committed to the goals of equitable access to all information for all library users. Can the interests of indigenous communities whose creative works are central to their cultural identity be understood and met by the library profession when those concerns may be in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights?

Indigenous people, archivists, folklorists, academics and librarians have been discussing these ideas over the last several months and have drafted a set of principles on libraries and traditional cultural expression for the consideration and review of ALA members and other stakeholders. Their hope is to bring awareness to the library community, to open further discussion, and ultimately gain consensus within ALA to accept TCE principles as a new ALA policy.

Members are urged to learn more about this topic by attending the program “Traditional Cultural Expression and Libraries” on Saturday from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Conference Center Room 12d. Kay Mathiesen, Assistant Professor in the School of Information Resources and Library Science at the University of Arizona. Her research and teaching focus on issues of information ethics and policy. We also encourage members to attend an open forum on the topic on Sunday. This session is critical to collecting member feedback on this important policy making

process.

The principles are available at:

<http://wo.ala.org/tce/2009/06/16/second-draft-librarianship-and-traditional-cultural-expressions-nurturing-understanding-and-respect/>

Print copies will be provided at the open forum.