MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Crisis after crisis: RMN had six; today we have Lebanon, Grenada, Central America, the nuclear freeze, the departed James Watt - you name it, crisis seems to be a key word for our time. So too, with me, and my crisis is a personal move -- leaving the detritus of seventeen years with the Cabell County Public Library in Huntington, West Virginia, to accept a new position (for me) in Jacksonville, Florida. Congratulations may be in order, but the resultant emotion is bittersweet.

As change moves the individual, so it moves the body (if IFRT is a body). Our history is ten years old, our future, how many more? Rhetoric aside, IFRT should now plan its future agenda, to manage now those changes time will bring. Of course, the Executive Committee's agenda at Washington will include current committee reports, plans for the Dallas conference, awards (old and new), and the other commonalities of now and the immediate future. And those items are important.

As important are our future agenda. Random items that occur to me include:

-- an award for intellectual freedom writing and style, in memory of Eli Oboler
-- confidentiality of data bases
-- the continuing and growing confrontation between security and open access
-- illiteracy, not only as a national disgrace, but also as a cancer that erodes true intellectual freedom
-- and more

As part of the midwinter agenda, the Executive Board meetings are set for Sunday, January 8, 1984 from 2 - 4 and Tuesday, January 10, from 11:30 - 12:30. There will be time reserved to map IFRT's agenda for tomorrow. If you have thoughts in that regard, present them there. Our meetings are open.

--Jim Nelson
Director, Jacksonville Public Library System
Jacksonville, Florida

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

Since the IFRT Report is published twice a year, before Midwinter and Annual Conferences, this issue is best suited to solicit volunteers for liaison and committee appointments. Anyone interested in serving on one of the following committees or in being one of our liaisons should contact me in writing by April 1, 1984.

Committees: BY-LAWS AND ORGANIZATION, IMMROTH MEMORIAL AWARD, MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION, NOMINATING, STATE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM COMMITTEE AWARD, PROGRAM, and PUBLICATIONS.

Liaisons: To the INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM COMMITTEE, FREEDOM TO READ FOUNDATION, LEROY C. MERRITT HUMANITARIAN FUND COMMITTEE, and IFC COALITION TASK FORCE.

I look forward to seeing you in Washington and in Dallas.

--Pam Bonnell
Plano Public Library System
Plano, Texas
**DALLAS ’84**

Things will be different in Dallas. The joint intellectual freedom program at ALA's 1984 Annual Conference will have the usual big name speaker. But, the bulk of the program will be devoted to small group training sessions.

These sessions are intended to impart basic, practical interpersonal skills, useable with individuals (patrons, supervisors, employees, and co-workers) and with groups (library boards, community groups, etc.). They will be directly applied to dealing with censors and censorship.

The tentative working title for the program is "Censors Are People Too." It stresses the need to go beyond preparing selection and appeal procedure statements to the interpersonal dynamics present in censorship situations. These situations could vary from the public service person's first contact with the patron as he or she brings forth his or her newest find to the library director's interaction with a divided board at the height of a crisis.

The main speaker for Dallas has not been selected but the leaders for the training sessions have. They are Judith Monroe and Robert LeLieuve, authors of Peoplework: Communications Dynamics for Librarians published by the ALA in 1979. Peoplework applies psychological insights, especially those of humanistic psychology, to library work. It argues forcefully for librarianship as a profession helping the whole person. (For an interesting alternate viewpoint, you might see "Library Inreach" by David Isaacson in the Fall, 1983 issue of RO).

During the Midwinter Meeting in Washington, D.C., Monroe and LeLieuve will be training 30 selected persons who will in turn lead small groups in Dallas. The training itself will run from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, January 7 and 8 (times are tentative).

If you like to come away from Annual Conference with something you can really use, this may be your kind of program.

- J. Douglas Archer

**ON SELF INTEREST**

By substituting suitable types of reading in the following lines attributed to Martin Niemoller, you may come up with a dandy little consciousness raiser.

In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.
"Rights in Conflict? The Library and the New Patriotism" was the title of a conference held in Gary, Indiana on October 11 during the Indiana Library Association/Indiana Library Trustees Association District I Fall Meeting. The featured speakers were Michael P. Farris, President, the Bill of Rights Legal Foundation and formerly counsel for the Washington State Moral Majority and Robert Doyle, Assistant to the Director of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom.

Mr. Farris, a lawyer and recently ordained Baptist Minister, stressed a need for public virtue as the basis of "true liberty," the moral nature of all legislation, first amendment guarantees of religious freedom, public control of public libraries including selection, and the special situation of children in the censorship/intellectual freedom debate. In addition, he stressed the political nature of moral debate in a democracy, a point strongly made from a different perspective by Nat Hentoff at the IFRT program in Los Angeles this last summer.

Bob Doyle focused on the ideal of an open, non-judgemental environment for the exchange of ideas as a hallmark of the American Public Library. Citing rising censorship from both the right and the left he highlighted four recent changes in censorship activities. These included a shift from attacks on single titles to whole categories of books (e.g. abortion), parental demands for control of their children's reading, the changing of the definition of a "balanced collection" to a numerical basis assuming that issues have only two sides (good/evil, right/wrong, them/us) rather than being multi-faceted, and finally a not so subtle effort by the federal government to reduce the amount of information available to the public.

The strongest of the library community responses was a call by Danny Gunnells for the realization on the part of all that censors are no longer (if ever) merely uneducated crazies. They are frequently well educated and well organized - and so must we be, especially at the local level.

Given the conference organization there was no actual debate among the principals. However, the question and answer session did provide some heated exchanges. In the process it became clear that if Mr. Farris' supporters should win control through the democratic/political process, the diversity of materials available in public libraries would be greatly reduced and minority interests ignored. In other words, he was all for balanced collections until his group could achieve majority control.

The conference was jointly sponsored by District I of the Indiana Library Association/Indiana Library Trustees Association, the Indiana Committee for the Humanities, the Gary Public Library, and the Northwest Indiana Area Library Services Authority. A hour video tape is being produced and will shortly be made available. Further information can be had from Bill Crowley, Northwest Indiana Area Library Services Authority, 1919 81st Ave. W, Merrillville, IN 46410.

- J. Douglas Archer
When 2500 librarians gathered in Cincinnati November 1-5 for the Midwest Federation of Libraries Conference, the IF theme seemed to be "How much controversy are librarians willing to withstand in defense of the First Amendment?"

At a Cracker Barrel Talk Table session, Ted Balcom, administrator of the Villa Park (IL) Public Library, led a large and very vocal group in discussing what Intellectual Freedom means to the working librarian. What happens to your integrity in this regard when your job is put on the line? How do you know what is the right thing to do when your state has a law that says you can be fined $10,000 and go to jail for two years if you display a certain kind of book? Who among us is ready to go the last mile for the First Freedom? Among the librarians gathered at this Talk Table from the six MFLA states, the answer to the question "Are librarians copping out?" was YOU BET! - at least among school and public librarians. A few of those present related incidents of actual removal of books from their library's shelves but the majority admitted to simply exercising prior restraint in their selection process to avoid potential problems. The reasons? Library Boards unwilling to stand behind the librarian and librarians simply unwilling to become embroiled in a censorship controversy - an emotionally draining and resource consuming situation.

Barbara Parker, Director of the Freedom to Learn Project of People for the American Way, picked up this same theme later in the day in her presentation to a packed room of librarians obviously eager to learn how to handle challenges in their own libraries. The real issue in the challenges to the right to read, view, and listen, Ms. Parker maintained, is how well we handle the controversy. The challenges are always going to be out there - they are not going to go away. How we as librarians and educators respond to these situations is what is going to make the difference in the preservation of the First Amendment.

"Absolutely," responded Jane Raifsnider, Indiana's representative to the panel reacting to Ms. Parker's talk. "The way we handle the controversy of challenges or the possibility of challenges to our materials selection policies is going to determine the success of potential censors. As Nat Hentoff is fond of saying, 'Censorship is like a greased pig; it is hard to contain.' If you allow it to happen once, how do you creditably stand firm the next time?"

A poster being purveyed at MFLA by the Illinois Library Association's Social Responsibility Round Table summed up this problem succinctly. Depicting a library with shelves devoid of any books except for a Dewey (abridged), the poster declares "We had a censorship problem in our library - but it solved itself."

- Jane Raifsnider
IFRT STATE PROGRAM AWARD

As you know, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table has established a new award, to be presented yearly to the state intellectual freedom committee that produces the most successful and creative intellectual freedom project. The award is funded by SIRS, Social Issues Resources Services, and the $1,000 prize will be given for the first time at the 1984 ALA Annual Conference in Dallas.

Eligible projects may be one-time, one-year or ongoing and multi-year; the award will be presented personally to the state IFC chairperson most responsible for implementation of the project, but the presentation will be on behalf of the committee as a whole. A wide range of types of achievement will be considered, among them successful fundraising projects in the area of intellectual freedom, successful coalition-building programs, public relations/consciousness-raising programs, effective recruitment efforts, effective (and successful) intervention by the committee in a state or local censorship crisis, and implementation of an organizational structure which markedly enhances the continuity and effectiveness of the state IFC. Special attention will be paid those projects with good potential for use elsewhere.

You are urged to nominate your own committee if you feel you are deserving; the Award Committee is eager to ferret out the deserving by whatever means, and false modesty should not be a barrier. While the deadline for nominations (Dec. 15) will have passed by the time of Report publication, your nominations still may have a chance for this year and will certainly be eligible for future awards. Nominations and supporting evidence should go to Laurence Miller, Chair, IFRT State Program Award Committee, Florida International University, Tamiami Trail, Miami, FL 33199.

ELI M. OBOLER

This past June 15 former IFRT Chair Eli Oboler lost his long and brave battle with cancer, and our profession lost one of its most effective and devoted champions of the cause of intellectual freedom. Born in 1915, Eli was a graduate of the University of Chicago and the Columbia University School of Library Service; he was for over three decades University Librarian at Idaho State University. The author of literally hundreds of influential articles, reviews, and books (including the much-admired Fear of the Word: Censorship and Sex, 1974), he was a founding member of the Freedom to Read Foundation, active member of the IFC, and long-time ALA Councillor, as well as leader of inspiration to us on the grass-roots level in the IFRT. Many of the leaders of the profession have spoken out in tribute to Eli, and last summer in Los Angeles the ALA Council unanimously adopted a memorial resolution honoring this "scholar, thinker, activist, and educator" for, among many other things, "the continuing legacy of his wisdom, which will help us continue the never-ending struggle he did so much to advance!"

At this coming Midwinter and Annual Conferences, the IFRT Executive Committee will formulate an award to be given in honor of Eli. It will, appropriately enough, focus on the best writing in the area of intellectual freedom. Suggestions as to the nature of the award are welcome.

GOOD STUFF FROM THE FIELD

The Connecticut Library Association IFC, following the Texas and Michigan IFCs, has issued a wallet-sized Intellectual Freedom card for handy reference, including key phone numbers (such as the ALA OIF number) and quick advice for censorship defense. The young adult librarians' magazine VOICE OF YOUTH ADVOCATES is selling a striking Big Brother's eye poster with the words IT IS NOW 1984: WHO'S WATCHING YOU? Get it for $4 (it's 18"X24") from Dorothy Broderick, VOYA-FR, P.O. Box 6569, University, AL 35486. A dollar of every purchase has been dedicated by FTRF Board Member Broderick to the direct support of that splendid organization (which you should join, now! Freedom to Read Foundation, 50 East Huron, Chicago 60611. 25 tax-deductible bucks per annum).
CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

Recently three more states have added laws protecting the confidentiality of library records to their books: Maine (Public Law 208, signed April 29, 1983), Louisiana (law signed July 8, 1983), and Illinois (S.B. 1669, signed August 30, 1983). The last is unique in that it applies to all libraries, including private institutions. This brings the total of "privacy states" to 21 (for now): California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

MOTION PICTURE RATINGS AND LIBRARIES

The New York Library Association has issued a statement opposing the (apparently growing) practice of using the Motion Picture Association of America rating system in libraries. In the words of NYLA president Gerald Shields, "The association recommends to all libraries in New York State that the designation of the rating system on films or videocassettes not be used in any manner to label the product either in its organization into the collection or in its designation in the card catalogue." The NYLA formal statement refers to the Library Bill of Rights declaration that labeling is an "attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor's tool."

DATELINE: EDUCATION AND CREATIONISM

---August 19. In a tentative decision, Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge David Dolgin struck down a Mt. Diablo (Calif.) school district requirement that students get parental permission before reading MS. He stated that "In this case the minor student does have a constitutionally protected right...the School Board may not interfere with this right, but...the minor student's own parents have a right to interfere with their minor child's right to receive information."

---October 17. The Louisiana Supreme Court, in a 4-3 decision, ruled that the state legislature has a right to order creationism taught alongside the theory of evolution in public schools. It ruled only on the narrow grounds that the legislature has the authority to determine curriculum. The state's "creationism law" mandating "equal treatment" of opposing theories is expected to be challenged in federal court.

GOOD STUFF FROM THE OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM (50 East Huron, Chicago 60611)


NEWSLETTER ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, bimonthly, from the ALA Subscription Dept. $15.00.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS: J. Swan (Bylaws), David Cohen (I mmroth Award), Paul Cors (Membership) and Sue Kamm (Nominating). For a complete list of officers and committees, contact the OIF.

*In our continuing effort to keep life interesting for serials librarians, we have returned to the original name of this publication (for issues 14-16 it was the IFRT Newsletter). Editors: Douglas Archer (Notre Dame) and John Swan (Wabash College). Assembled by the latter at Wabash for the ALA OIF. Pub. by the ALA OIF, 50 East Huron, Chicago 60611.