MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings from sunny Florida, where your Chair is rapidly finding that the most insidious—and certainly most dangerous while least intentional—form of censorship is the manipulation of public purse strings. Financial shortfalls as the ultimate censor will be one of my topics of discussion at the IFRT Program Meeting at the ALA Annual Conference in Dallas (see the enclosed program schedule).

Of great moment at that meeting will be the announcement of the first winner of the State Intellectual Freedom Committee Programming Award. That winner (already known to many) will be officially announced at our IFRT annual meeting. But that award should not overshadow the presentation of the Immroth Memorial Award to Gene Lanier for his years of dedication to the defense of First Amendment rights in North Carolina and the nation. For more information on the doings in Dallas, see Doug Archer’s story and the program schedule, both in this issue.

--James B. Nelson
Chair, IFRT

BOB DOYLE: CONGRATULATIONS (AND REGRETS)

After much good work for us in the IFRT, and after 41 issues of the Office for Intellectual Freedom’s Invaluable Memorandum to Chapter IFC’s, Bob Doyle has left the OIF to take up the position of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)’85 Coordinator. We wish him well in his new role—but we’ll miss him.

IFRT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES: A Quick Look (before everything changes: Did You Vote?)

Chair: James B. Nelson, Director, Jacksonville P.L. System, 122 N. Ocean St., Jacksonville, FL 32202. 904-633-2829
Chair-Elect: Pamela B. Bonnell, Plano Public Library System, P.O. Box 356, Plano, TX 75074. 214-867-1002
Secretary: Barbara Jones, Library Director, Fashion Institute of Technology, NY. 782 West End, #62, New York, NY 10025. 212-760-7782
Treasurer: Amanda R. Bible, Director, Columbus County P.L., 117 E. Columbus, Whiteville, N.C. 28472
Directors: David Cohen (Queens GSLIS); Ginny Moore Kruse (Cooperative Children’s Book Center, Wis.); Noel Peattie (UC-Davis); Sam Whitten (U. Texas GSLIS)
Committees
Bylaws and Organization: John Swan (chair), Irene Stoller, Frank Van Zanten
Immroth Award: David Cohen (chair), Thomas Budlong, Jr., Carol Liu, Martha Merrill, Noel Peattie; Membership Promotion: Paul Cors (chair), Patricia Case, Steven Crowley, Dorothy B. Russell; Nominating: Sue Kamm (chair), Lee Brawner, Barbara Immroth, Bruce Shuman
State IFC Programming Award: Laurence Miller (chair), Judith Sessions, Karen Tallman, Patty Latch, Donna Marie Garcia; Program: James Nelson, Dan Gunnells, Edith Phillips, C. Rader, Melvin Rosenberg
Liaisons and Representatives to other ALA Units and Organizations: Richard M. Buck (to IFC); J. Douglas Archer (to FTRF); Karen Tallman (to Merritt Humanitarian Fund); Dan Siebersma (to IFC Coalition Task Force)
There will be three major intellectual freedom functions at the Dallas Annual Conference. The ALA IFC will sponsor "Censors Are People Too" with the co-sponsorship of the ALTA, ALSC, PLA, and YASD IF committees and your own Round Table. We will sponsor the traditional "Role Call of the States" and the ALA IFC and the American Association of Publishers (AAP) Freedom to Read Committee will jointly present "Government Secrecy." The format and the focus of each will be quite different. "Censors..." will stress communications dynamics and will offer practical skills. The "Role Call..." will provide for grass roots sharing while "Government Secrecy" will offer a prominent speaker from a different profession.

"Censors Are People Too" will feature Judith W. Monroe and Robert P. LeLievre the authors of Peoplework: Communications Dynamics for Librarians. After an opening session participants will break into small groups. Over 30 "facilitators" were trained at the Washington Midwinter Meeting to lead these groups.

The focus of the program is on understanding the communication dynamics at work in censorship incidents—on defusing conflict at the start. An added plus for the program is that the skills presented can be used in most any conflict situation. It is hoped these insights will be carried back to local libraries by the participants and shared with co-workers. In addition the facilitators will be available in their own localities for further programs. For instance, tentative plans have been made to offer a similar session at an Indiana Library Association District Meeting this fall.

The "Role Call of the States" will be the same old thing—which is to say great! It is a real opportunity to find out what is going on at the local level; to hear what is working (or not working) in other states and communities. No program details are available now for the simple reason that the program will be you. You and the spokespersons from your state will provide the fresh and frequently spontaneous input which makes the program so valuable. A membership meeting will follow the program.

The third program is the joint ALAIFC/AAP Freedom to Read Committee session. Richard Schmidt who is counsel to the American Society of Newspaper Editors will speak on "Government Secrecy." According to the preliminary conference booklet this program will examine "...the librarian's role and responsibility to acquire, preserve and disseminate the diversity of human thought."

—Late Update. There are two other programs of special interest. YASD and others will offer "Who Speaks Up for Youth: Intellectual Freedom, Public Relations and the Library." And LHTR will sponsor "Censorship and Librarianship," a program with historical focus.

- J. Douglas Archer
Intellectual Freedom Programs and Meetings

1984 Annual Conference - Dallas

Thursday, June 21

Freedom to Read Foundation
Board of Trustees
9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.
ADOL-Dan Moody Room
ADOL-Dan Moody Room

Friday, June 22

Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
ADOL-Dan Moody Room
ALTA Intellectual Freedom Committee
11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
HIL-Room 418
IFC/Div. IFCs/IFRT Program Planning
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
ADOL-Dan Moody Room
FTRF Open Discussion Meeting
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
ADOL-Dan Moody Room
ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
SHER-Louisiana

Saturday, June 23

IFC/Div. IFCs/IFRT Program
"Censors Are People, Too"
8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
DCC-East Ballroom A
Committee on Professional Ethics
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
HIL-Room 405
IFRT Executive Committee
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
DCC-Room N211
YASD Intellectual Freedom Committee
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
SHER-Arkansas
YASD Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
HIL-Room 414

Sunday, June 24

Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
DCC-Room N233
IFRT Business Meeting and Program
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
DCC-East Ballroom A
AASL Intellectual Freedom Representation and Information Committee
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
PLAM-Plaza Ballroom
ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
HIL-Room 404
IFRT Membership Promotion Committee
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
HIL-Room 410
YASD President's Program
"Who Speaks Up for Youth: Intellectual Freedom, Public Relations and Library"
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
SHER-Rep. of TX
LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund
2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
DCC-Room N210
Monday, June 25

ALSC Intellectual Freedom Committee 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. DCC-Room N205
IFRT Executive Committee 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. GREN-Autumn
IFC/Div. IFCs/IFRT 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. GREN-Autumn
Screening of CENSORSHIP OR SELECTION 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. DCC-Room E409
IFC/AAP Freedom to Read Committee Program "Government Secrecy" 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. DCC-West Ballroom D
Committee on Professional Ethics Program "Ethics of Vendor-Library Relations" 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. DCC-West Ballroom C
Library History Round Table Program "Censorship and Librarianship" 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. DCC-Room E401
IFC/AAP Freedom to Read Committee 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. ADOL-Burnett
PLA Intellectual Freedom Committee 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. DCC-Room 4213

Tuesday, June 26

Intellectual Freedom Committee 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. DCC-Room 4216

KEY:
ADOL - Adolphus Hotel
DCC - Dallas Convention Center
GREN - Grenelefe Hotel
HIL - Hilton Hotel
PLAM - Plaza of the Americas Hotel
SHER - Sheraton Dallas Hotel
A proposal that would restrict pornography on the basis that it violates women's civil rights was passed by a vote of 24-5 on April 23 by the City-County Council in Indianapolis.

The Indiana Library Association/Indiana Library Trustees Association Joint Executive Board voted during their April 19 meeting to speak against Proposal #228 because of the censorship issues raised and the implications for libraries. A letter sent on behalf of the Associations to City-County Council President Beurt SerVaas said that the Associations "strongly oppose passage," citing that the bill does not "address any of the problems at the root of pornography...poses its own serious threat to the freedom of expression and freedom of access to information"; it called the measure "nothing less than a blatant attempt at censorship under the guise of protecting the rights of women."

The measure would allow a person who thinks material is sexually violent to file a protest with the local civil rights commission. If the commission agreed, the material would be banned and, if appropriate, charges filed against those responsible for its publication and distribution. A similar ordinance was passed in Minneapolis but vetoed by Mayor Donald M. Fraser, who said it violated the constitutional protection of free speech. Indianapolis Mayor William Hudnut is expected to sign the measure.

Attorney Sheila Suess Kennedy spoke against the proposal on behalf of the Media Coalition, a watchdog organization which includes the country's major publishers and distributors. Expressing delight at the "sudden interest" in the rights of women, she stated that, among other things, the proposal violates the Constitutional right of due process and the right of free speech: "As a woman who has been publicly supportive of equal rights for women, I frankly find it offensive when an attempt to regulate expression is cloaked in the rhetoric of feminism...Pornography undoubtedly degrades women. It also degrades men. As a society we will always be concerned with the proper balance between First Amendment rights and censorship of distasteful and obscene expression. The approach suggested here is an attempt to evade that very fundamental responsibility..."

Libraries are considered in the measure to be exempt from charges of "trafficking in pornography," but "special display presentations" in libraries are deemed sex discrimination. The lack of a definition for "special display presentations" and the vagueness of the definitions provided for pornography (there is no reference to precedent standards of obscenity) are cause for real concern in the library community.

Opponents of the proposal, speaking at the public hearing April 16, cited its violation of the First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and claimed it would transform the Office of Equal Opportunity into a board of censors. Beulah Coughenour, sponsor of the measure, admitted there would be challenges: "We're not under any illusion that we're going to be able to implement this immediately. But there would be no civil rights legislation if someone hadn't started it." Council members agreed that the measure would likely end up in the U.S. Supreme Court.

LAWSUITS: On May 1 the Freedom to Read Foundation, the American Booksellers Association, the Association of American Publishers, the other members of the Media Coalition, and the Indiana Civil Liberties Union filed as plaintiffs against the City of Indianapolis to prevent implementation of the ordinance, which defines pornography very broadly ("sexually explicit subordination..."), then seeks to prohibit it on the grounds that it harms "women's opportunities for equality of rights..."
Dateline: Education and Evolution

—March 13. Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox declared unconstitutional the Texas State Board of Education rule which required textbooks to state that evolution is "only one of several explanations of human origins." Shortly thereafter the Board amended its regulations to conform to Mattox's opinion.

(OIF ALA Memorandum, April, 1984)

Dateline: Censorship

—January 5. Minneapolis Mayor Donald M. Frazer vetoed a sweeping antipornography ordinance passed by the City Council on December 30, 1983. The measure was proposed by women's rights advocates and sought to define pornography as a violation of women's civil rights. In his veto message Frazer stated:

To the extent that this ordinance would bar obscene material it is redundant, because obscene material is now prohibited by law. The ordinance is broader, though. It seeks to ban material that is not obscene under existing law. The ban would apply to material that meets two requirements: it must be a) sexually explicit and b) degrading to women. But sexually explicit material that is not obscene is protected by the First Amendment. Also protected is the expression of abhorrent or detestable ideas such as the claim that women are mere sex objects or otherwise to be thought of in degrading terms.

This controversy received national attention in a recent "60 Minutes" broadcast. On that program one of the backers of the ordinance promised to carry it to other communities throughout the country.

(Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, March, 1984)

—April 23. The Indianapolis City Council passed an ordinance similar to the one vetoed in Minneapolis. Mayor William H. Hudnut intends to sign the legislation. A court challenge is guaranteed. Please see the featured story for more details.

(Indianapolis Star, April 24, 1984)

—April 10. Huckleberry Finn has been at it again — always in trouble. A Springfield High School business and typing teacher requested recently that Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn be banned from use in the High School. The request was made because of its portrayal of Blacks. The request was denied by a specially appointed school committee.

(Chicago Tribune, April 10, 1984)

—May 2. LATE NEWS: According to Judith Krug, OIF Director, pornography bills of the Minneapolis/Indianapolis type have now been filed in 17 cities. Yours?