MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This is my first opportunity to speak to you and express my excitement about this year and thank you for the privilege of serving as your chairman. As chairman, one of my personal goals is to expand our membership. It is through the active participation of our current membership that the Round Table can introduce other librarians to the purpose and goals of this organization and the importance of continued commitment to intellectual freedom.

This past year IFRT awarded the first SIRS State Program Award in recognition of outstanding successful and creative state IFC projects. Accepting on behalf of the South Carolina Library Association IFC was Daniel Barron, and Gene Lanier was the recipient of the John Phillip Immroth Award.

This year emphasis will be placed on the following:

1. Establishing an Eli Oboler Award in recognition of an outstanding published article on intellectual freedom.
2. A new membership brochure and a test market mailing to increase membership.
3. Develop a plan of action for the IFRT Coalition Task Force.
4. A successful annual program "This Program is Rated X" with Richard Hefner, Grace Slocum, and Mary Hutchings-Reed. The IFC have requested the IFRT be responsible for coordinating programming for the IFC, IFRT, and division IFC's. This is a privilege and an excellent opportunity for the Round Table.
5. Working with ALA President, E. J. Josey on the Conference theme "Forging Coalitions for the Public Good."

We are moving ahead in all these areas. Should you have any suggestions for activities or programs, please let me hear from you.

--Pamela G. Bonnell
Chair, IFRT
Plano Public Library System
Plano, Texas
MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHAIR

We in Indiana are awaiting the decision of Judge Sarah Barker in the now-notorious Indianapolis pornography ordinance case—and the pro- and anti-censorship forces in at least a score of other cities are also waiting to take action based on the outcome in capital. The ordinance, based on the Minneapolis model designed by Andrea Dworkin (author of Woman Hating and other works) and Catherine MacKinnon (U. Minn. law professor), defines pornography as the violation of the civil rights of women. It outlines porn in sweeping terms without reference to precedent obscenity law, for instance: "a scenario of degradation...in a context that makes these conditions sexual." The language of the ordinance could empower women to sue for damages on the basis of passages in Updike, Voltaire, Mailer, even Alice Walker. The Indiana Library Association-Library Trustees Association voted last spring to join the suit against ordinance as friend of the court. The American Booksellers Association, the Freedom to Read Foundation, and others are bringing the suit, which was heard in late July. Both sides have declared that this case is "going up," whatever the outcome at this level.

As coordinator of planning for the 1986 Annual Conference censorship program, I have begun to put together ideas for a major session on—you guessed it—pornography and the First Amendment. This is very likely to be a big issue for some time to come, and the conference location, New York City, seems to be an appropriate site for the subject (maybe we'll just stroll down 42nd Street en masse and save the trouble of a program...). The first official planning session for this program will take place in January at ALA Midwinter, and I'll shortly be writing various IFC members and Division IFC chairs for advice/input, but I would appreciate hearing from anyone with (good) ideas and from anyone willing to help in the cause. We are planning a similar program for our state library association conference in the spring, and we will learn much from that, but we'll still need all the help we can get. Write me at Lilly Library, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933.

--John Swan
Vice Chair/Chair-Elect,
IFRT
Eli Oboler Award

We are planning this award as a memorial to one of the profession's finest champions of free speech, and we believe an award directed at the best writing on IF published within a given time period (probably every two years) would not only be highly appropriate, but would generate effective publicity. (We would not confine ourselves to library writing.) We are still designing this award for Executive Board approval, and any thoughts about it should be forwarded to me or to another member of the Oboler Award Committee. Please do this soon, because we want to present this award for approval at Midwinter.

--John Swan
Eli Oboler Award Committee Chair

John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award For Intellectual Freedom

This award is given to an activist for intellectual freedom who has made a notable contribution to the cause, both in terms of personal courage and positive action. It consists of $500 and a citation.

Please send your nominations for next year's John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award to:

Carol F.L. Liu, Chair
Queens Borough Public Library
89-11 Merrick Boulevard
Jamaica, New York 11432

IFRT State Program Award

The SIRS, Social Issues Resources Services, State Award is given to eligible projects which 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 to those projects with good potential for use elsewhere. A $1,000 prize will be given.

Please send nominations for the SIRS State Program Award to:

Richard Buck, Chair
Performing Arts Research Center
111 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, New York 10023
CASE STUDY?

We enemies of censorship surely talk a good game, don't we? To listen to us, we are ripe for the chance to fight for our personal convictions. Yet every once in a while we come face to face with the "beware-of-what-you-ask for" syndrome (you might get it), and we are confronted with a censorship issue as it often appears in real life-murky, ambiguous, unanswerable-or is it? For instance-picture the following hypothetical situation.

A library in a rapidly-growing, affluent, metropolitan area decides to subscribe to Playboy. Years ago, when the community was less than a third of its present size, the magazine was part of the periodical collection—the subscription was cancelled not because of any protests, but because the theft rate was so high. Five months into the current subscription the library director removes it from the shelf and cancels the subscription. When asked why by the library manager, who is also the current chairperson of IFRT, the answer is that the director was requested to do so by the head of the Parks and Recreation Department, to whom she reports. He telephoned her, reported that he had had a verbal complaint from a citizen, and directed the magazine be removed at once. The library director was tactfully reminded that there exists a clear-cut policy to be followed in the event of a complaint, and that this policy has always been adhered to in the past—the library staff depends upon it, the community depends upon it. It is our protection and defense. No matter, said the library director, who also refuses to present the issue to the library board.

Now what are the options of our heroine, the library Manager? She is the IFRT chairperson, but also values her job. What can she do when it is obvious that the library director and the director's supervisor refuse to acknowledge established library policy? What can she do when the community leaders fail to come forward in any attempts she might make to get their support? Does anybody out there have any concrete, realistic suggestions? If so, send them on to me (Judith Bradley, P.O. Box 356, Plano, Texas 75074), and I'll forward them on to the hypothetical heroine.

IFRT OFFICERS
CHAIR: Pamela G. Bonnell, Library Manager, Plano Public Library System, P. O. Box 356, Plano, Texas 75074. (214) 867-1002.
CHAIR-ELECT: John C. Swan; SECRETARY: Judith Sessions; TREASURER: Amanda R. Bible; DIRECTORS: Ginny Moore Kruse; Sam G. Whitten; Gene Lanier; Anne Martel.
COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Norman Horrocks (Bylaws); Carol F.L. Liu (Immroth Award); Laurence Miller (Membership); James Nelson (Nominating); Richard Buck (State Program Award); Pamela G. Bonnell (Program); Judith Bradley (Publications); John Swan (Eli Oboler Award); Dan Siebersma (Coalition Task Force).