No. 34
Summer 1992

Some information and a concern from the chair

Fran McDonald, Chair, IFRT

The Information
As you make your plans for annual conference in San Francisco, be sure to schedule time to attend two major IFRT events.

Resources about witchcraft are a major target in libraries. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom reports that one of the most frequently cited reasons for challenges to library materials is a connection with satanism or the occult. The IFRT intellectual freedom program in San Francisco addresses this. The name of the program is Witches and Devils: Legitimate Resources or Demonic Force? Your Right to Know. We have magnificent speakers with different points of view who will challenge your thinking about the subject. The two speakers are Johanna Michaels, author of Like Lambs to the Slaughter: Your Child and the Occult and Robert Hicks, author of In Pursuit of Satan: The Police and the Occult.

The second major event is our annual Soap Box. People who attend ALA spend many hours listening to speakers who may or may not address their burning issues. The Soap Box is grassroots—the agenda is open. People who attend the Soap Box are thinkers and talkers. People who attend determine the topics we talk about. If you have an issue or concern that needs a hearing, or if you are a frustrated speaker without an audience, or if you just enjoy lively debate, attend the Soap Box. I guarantee that you will be stimulated, maybe challenged, and leave with new ideas.

The Concern
One of the difficult issues the IFRT had to face during Midwinter was use of time during our Executive Committee meetings. At issue was the conflict between the time needed by the IFRT Executive Committee to complete its agenda and carry out the business of the Round Table and the time needed by individuals and groups to present intellectual freedom issues of concern to them or to their organizations. During Midwinter, several committee reports had to be shortened and action delayed because of lack of Executive Committee time. Since I am a chair with a heavy gavel, the fault was not with the Chair, but with the long agenda. Committees that complete their work and bring information and recommendations to the Executive Committee have earned time on the agenda. Their recommendations deserve attention from the Executive Committee.

On the other hand, Round Tables are designed to provide a loose structure within ALA to address the concerns of members. IFRT Bylaws state that the Intellectual Freedom Round Table is to be “a forum for the discussion of activities, programs and problems in intellectual freedom of libraries and librarians;” and “a channel of communications in intellectual freedom matters.”

Over the dozen years I have been hanging out with IFRT, only once do I remember time during an Executive Committee meeting for an open discussion. Has the IFRT become just another cog in the giant bureaucracy that is ALA? Have we lost our original purpose to provide a grassroots forum for members?

During Midwinter I appointed a committee to address the issue. The committee, chaired by Sylvia Turchyn from Indiana University, will report to the Executive Committee in San Francisco.

In the meantime, think about this and send suggestions to me or plan to attend the Soap Box where this will surely be an item of discussion. Is the problem that we do not have a Membership Meeting during both Midwinter and Annual Conference? Keeping in mind that we are not a policymaking body and that we serve as a channel of communication, should we create an issues committee to screen requests for help? The committee could then formulate recommendations for action by the Executive Committee...or would that be compounding the problem? What do you think?
Comments From the Chair-Elect

I very much enjoyed the Midwinter Meeting held in San Antonio last January. It was good that so many were able to attend considering the hard economic times for libraries. While it is always a pleasure to see familiar faces, I would also like to commend our chair, Fran McDonald, for bringing so many new people into the IFRT leadership and committees. This is what makes the IFRT such a membership-responsive Round Table.

I presented my program ideas for the 1993 Annual Conference in New Orleans at both the IFRT Executive Committee meeting and the IFC/IFRT/Division IPC's Joint Meeting. The various program ideas which were listed in the last issue of the IFRT Report were fully discussed at each meeting. I was very gratified at the response to my favorite program theme: “For Sex, See Librarian”, which would deal with sexuality materials in libraries and is based on Martha Cornog’s book Libraries, Erotica, & Pornography. Many useful comments and observations were made concerning this theme, and I welcome additional feedback from the membership. A final decision on the 1993 program theme will be made at the Annual Conference in San Francisco, after the various division intellectual freedom committees have had the opportunity to discuss it further.

It is always pleasing to see great interest in intellectual freedom issues, and it was particularly exciting to attend the standing room only Open Hearing on Guidelines Regarding Patron Behavior and Library Usage during the Midwinter Meeting. Getting such a large turnout on a rainy Saturday night impressed on many the importance and timeliness of this issue. Much of the discussion revolved around the Kreimer v. Morrisstown case, but many other concerns regarding patron behavior and access rights were also addressed. The Intellectual Freedom Committee has a Task Force studying this issue: I am looking forward to seeing its report.

Out and about

Last November, Virginia Beach (VA) Public Library Director Marcy Sims, Virginia Beach librarian and IFRT Program Committee member Carolyn Caywood, and local bookstore owner Harvey Eluto organized a freedom of speech rally attended by several intellectual freedom advocates, including Judith Krug, Director of the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom. Since the rally, according to Caywood, area citizens have formed a grassroots freedom of speech organization, Virginians Against Censorship. Eluto has been elected president of the new organization, and two librarians are officers: Caywood is corresponding secretary, and Virginia Beach Public Library Assistant Director John Stewart is treasurer. The group intends to raise public consciousness concerning First Amendment issues by organizing programs, producing printed materials, and acting as a clearing house and referral center for those threatened by the censors.

In New Hampshire, IFRT member Peggie Partello, Interim Director of the Mason Library at Keene State College; Jane Perlunger, Keene Public Library Director; and Lucille Watt, librarian at Nashua High School, have distributed an intellectual freedom survey to about 900 academic, public and school libraries across the state. The survey asks whether the libraries have written materials selection policies and written procedures for handling complaints, and how “sensitive” or challenged materials are treated. Other questions solicit information about videos and restrictions placed on their circulation, patron complaints about materials, the types of library materials challenged, and how the challenges were resolved. According to Partello, about one-third of the libraries surveyed have responded. By the time this newsletter reaches IFRT members, the results of the survey will have been presented to members of the New Hampshire Library Association. They may be published at a later date. Partello is a member of the Bylaws and Organization and Program Committees of the IFRT.

IFRT Chair Fran McDonald is in the process of analyzing survey data from the Minnesota Censorship Survey, a project of the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union where she is on the board of directors. This survey of public and school libraries is an update of one done in Minnesota during 1983, and looks at a variety of issues, including the number of challenges to library materials and the reasons for those challenges. While tabulations are not complete, Fran told us that the number of challenges seems to be about the same as in the previous survey, but that witchcraft complaints have emerged as a significant reason for challenges. She hopes to have the results summarized before the ALA Annual Conference.

Eric Welch, IFRT Membership Chair and Director of Learning Resources at Highland Community College in Illinois, was involved in two intellectual freedom programs during the past year. Last August, during Faculty Development Days at Highland, he held a seminar on academic freedom issues. For this seminar, he prepared a half-hour lecture on the history of academic freedom, and developed case study materials. After the lecture, faculty and administrators divided into groups and used the case studies as a basis for discussion and development of policy statements. In September, Eric organized a program on censorship issues for school librarians in the Northern Illinois Library System, a multitype library system. Eric gave a lecture on censorship and materials selection policies. This was followed by a panel which included two school librarians who had been involved in book challenges.
The IFRT award committee will announce the winners of the following awards during the program Witches and Devils: Legitimate Resources or Demonic Force? Your Right to Know.

John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award

Dorothea Hunter, Librarian at the Berry School Library in Detroit, Michigan, will be the 1992 recipient of the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom. Ms. Hunter is being recognized for her long and courageous battle involving the Detroit Public Schools elementary book selection process. Her persistence, steadfastness, and remarkable personal courage provide an excellent example for everyone interested in promoting the cause of intellectual freedom. Through her persistence and determination, she kept the challenge alive, with the result that five of the six books that had been removed from media centers were reinstated in all Detroit Public School elementary school media centers.

John Phillip Immroth, author, teacher, scholar, advocate, and defender of First Amendment rights, was the co-founder and first chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. The Immroth Award was established to honor his memory and to encourage and recognize continued substantive devotion to the principles of intellectual freedom. The award consists of a citation and a prize of $500. Recent recipients include Pamela Bonnell (1990) and Christopher Merrett (1991).

Sherry Carrillo,
Chair, Immroth Award Committee

State Program Award

The Oklahoma Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee will be honored as the 1992 recipient of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table State Program Award.

“This intellectual freedom committee has created a sound program that should be used as a model for other states,” said Sylvia Turchyn, Chair of the IFRT State Program Award Committee. “Of particular note has been the IFC’s involvement with FOI Oklahoma, Inc., a coalition consisting of members of the media, librarians, attorneys, educators and citizens-at-large dedicated to preserving intellectual freedom in Oklahoma.”

One venture in which FOI and the Oklahoma Intellectual Freedom Committee became involved was Education for Freedom, a workshop based on a package program provided by the First Amendment Congress. The workshop involved librarians in showing teachers how to use school curricula as an educational tool for the First Amendment. The librarians also provided information on supplementary materials available in school libraries.

According to Turchyn, “the Oklahoma Intellectual Freedom Committee has clearly demonstrated the value and effectiveness of participating in cooperative ventures in order to protect and promote intellectual freedom.”

The State Program Award consists of a citation and a prize of $1000. Sponsored by Social Issues Resources Series, Inc. (SIRS), the award is presented annually to a state library association intellectual freedom committee, state educational media association intellectual freedom committee, or state intellectual freedom coalition for producing the most successful and creative project or program during the calendar year.


Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award


Libraries, Erotica, and Pornography addresses one of the most important intellectual freedom issues of our time—the selection, collection, dissemination and censorship of sexuality materials in libraries. This collection includes articles which explain how libraries and librarians have dealt with the subject of sexuality in collection development from the nineteenth century to the present; grapple with the problems involved in using terms like “erotica”, “obscene” and “pornography”; discuss the research and archival value of sexuality materials; look at the issue of feminism and pornography; examine the case of the Library of Congress and the brailing of Playboy; address the problems associated with providing access to sexuality materials; provide annotated bibliographies of erotica and x-rated videotapes; and cover other related topics. The contributors include both librarians and writers in the field of human sexuality.

Martha Cornog is currently Manager of Membership Services at the American College of Physicians in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Eli M. Oboler Award is a biennial award of $1,500 donated by HBW Associates, Inc. It is presented to the author of an article (including a review article), a series of thematically connected articles, a book, or a manual published on the local, state, or national level in English or in English translation. Works considered for the award must have as their central concern one of the issues in the area of intellectual freedom, and must be published during the two year period ending in the December prior to ALA Annual Conference in which the award is given.
Thursday, June 25
Freedom to Read Foundation
Board of Trustees
8:30 am–12:30 pm MAR-4J
2:00 pm–5:00 pm MAR-4H
Freedom to Read Foundation
Board of Trustees Reception
5:00 pm–6:30 pm MAR-4H
Freedom to Read Foundation
Orientation
6:30 pm–7:30 pm MAR-4F

Friday, June 26
Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 am–11:00 am MAR-4H
IFC/IFRT/Div. IFC’s Joint Program
Planning Meeting
11:30 am–12:30 pm MOSC-274,276
IFRT Executive Committee
2:00 pm–5:30 pm MAR-4H
Committee on Professional Ethics
4:30 pm–5:30 pm MAR-4I

Saturday, June 27
Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 am–12:30 pm MAR-4H
IFRT Bylaws and Org. Committee
9:30 am–11:00 am MAR-4D
IFC/IFRT/Div. IFC’s Joint Program
2:00 pm–4:00 pm ANA-Cabernet 1-3
“Witches & Devils: Legitimate Resources or a Demonic Force—Your Right to Know”
Hearing on Guidelines for Preparation of Policies on Patron Behavior and Library Usage
8:00 pm–10:00 pm HIL-Imperial A,B

Sunday, June 28
IFC/IFRT/Div. IFC’s Joint Meeting
8:00 am–9:00 am MOSC-212
11:30 am–12:30 pm MAR-4G
Committee on Prof. Ethics Program
“People Who Love Libraries And The Librarians Who Hate Them”
(The Unwelcome Client)
2:00 pm–4:00 pm MAR-4H
LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund
4:30 pm–5:30 pm MAR-4F
Intellectual Freedom Committee
8:00 pm–10:00 pm MAR-Sunset A,C

Monday, June 29
LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund
8:00 am–9:00 am MOSC-252
IFRT Membership Committee Meeting
(by to be determined) HIL-Imperial B
IFRT Membership & Program
“Get Up On Your Soapbox”
9:30 am–12:30 pm MAR-4H
Committee on Professional Ethics
9:30 am–12:30 pm ANA-Chablis
IFRT Publications Committee Meeting
11:30 am–12:30 pm SHER-Gold BR
IFC & AAP/FRC Joint Program
2:00 pm–4:00 pm MAR-4H
IFC & AAP/FRC Joint Meeting
4:30 pm–5:30 pm MAR-4H
IFC & AAP/FRC Jr. Meeting Dinner
5:30 pm–8:00 pm MAR-4H
IFRT Fourth Annual “Get to Know Intellectual Freedom” Reception
5:30 pm–7:00 pm MAR-Sunset-E,F

Tuesday, June 30
IFRT Executive Committee
11:30 am–12:30 pm MOSC-236
Intellectual Freedom Committee
2:00 pm–5:30 pm MAR-4H

Additional Conference Highlights

Sunday, June 28
PLA Audio/Visual Committee—
“Rapping on the Door of Censorship”
2:00 pm–5:30 pm MAR-Presidio

Monday, June 29
LAMA/PRS Public Relations Management
Discussion Group - “The Dead Sea Scrolls
and NAMBLA—PR Opportunities,
Lessons Learned”
9:30 am–11:00 am HYATR-Embarcadero

Key:
ANA ....... ANA San Francisco
HIL ........ San Francisco Hilton
HYATR ... Hyatt Regency San Francisco
MAR ....... San Francisco Marriott
MOSC ..... Moscone Center
SHER ...... Sheraton Palace
To the Editor:

The aspect of intellectual freedom which particularly interests me is librarians' self-censorship of alternative press materials.

As an acquisitions librarian at large university libraries for many years, as European representative of Ambassador Book Service, and as founder of CRISES Press, a non-profit company that markets alternative publications to libraries, I have become increasingly aware of the shocking, self-imposed conformity and complacency found in most American libraries.

Each type buys the same core collection and narrows book and periodical selection increasingly to "mainstream" materials spoon-fed by bland corporations and university presses via slick advertising and automated delivery systems. Vast regions of the country—even entire states—do not contain a single copy of *Alternative Press Index*, and those libraries that have it subscribe to a mere smattering of its titles.

Library self-censorship was mentioned just once in *IFRT Report* #33, and that only with regard to books for children and young adults. Non-selection of controversial adult materials was ignored. An intense ideological struggle is going on right now for the hearts and minds of Americans, a struggle much more frightening than that during the McCarthy era, but you hardly seem aware of it.

The IFRT leadership is preoccupied with itself: filling committee vacancies, revising by-laws, building coalitions to other organizations... Are you asleep? Are you mesmerized by the corporate disinformation your libraries buy?

For a wider view, stop by the CRISES Alternative Press Exhibit booth at ALA Conferences...

Sincerely,

Charles Willett,
President,
The CRISES Press, Inc.

From the Editor

This issue of the *IFRT Report* includes two new features.

The Out and About column is intended to provide news about IFRT members involved in intellectual freedom activities of any type. The aim is to give readers an idea of the scope of IF activities across the nation. The Here and There column serves a complementary purpose: to provide a place for reporting on local events and issues of interest to IFRT members.

The idea for these features is not new. Earlier issues of the Report have included information about individuals and short news features. Under the editorship of Beth Rile, the Report began to publish a "short story" section, and the publications committee was expanded to provide a base for generating and researching such features. The establishment of the two features is thus a formalization of previous trends.

We would like to encourage all IFRT members to contribute ideas for these columns. If the Out and About section in this issue seems to concentrate too much on the activities of IFRT committee members and officers, this is because those are the people with whom the editor is regularly in contact. The intention is to make the column a place where the involvement of all IFRT members is reflected: if you are involved in IF activities which you would like to share with the membership, please let us know. Similarly, we would like to the Here and There feature to have the widest scope possible. If anything of interest to the intellectual freedom community is happening in your area, please contact the editor of the Report. A publications committee member may be in touch with you later on to obtain further details.

I would like to start a regular guest editorial column in which IFRT members may sound off about a matter or matters of concern. Anyone interested in writing such a column should contact me well before the deadline for the next issue, which is November 4th.

Not many people write to the editor of the *IFRT Report*. I am therefore pleased to print Charles Willett's letter. Willett makes a point which is worth further discussion. There is a lot of material out there which many libraries do not collect, for budgetary or other reasons. Some libraries' alternative press publications may be limited almost exclusively to the *Utne Reader*; others may not even buy that. Should the number of alternative press publications we buy dictate whether or not we provide indexes to those publications? And what about those of us whose institutions do buy the *Alternative Press Index* and/or significant numbers of alternative publications? How often do we refer patrons to these sources in addition to the more standard sources of information when answering reference questions? Should we do so?

The *IFRT Report* is an irregular publication of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table of the American Library Association and is sent to members of the Round Table. Membership information and/or correspondence about your subscription should be addressed to IFRT, Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The current editor of the *IFRT Report* is Paul Vermouth, Rm. 145-222, M.I.T. Libraries, Cambridge, MA 02139. Letters to the editor are welcomed.
Currently working its way through the Massachusetts legislature is a bill titled “An Act to Protect the Civil Rights of Women and Children” (H-5194), a local version of the MacKinnon-Dworkin ordinance which put Indianapolis, and later Bellingham, Washington, in the news. The Massachusetts bill raises significant free speech issues, not least because of its definition of pornography as “the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures or words…”

Libraries are treated in a subsection of the Massachusetts draft which states that it “shall be sex discrimination to sell, exhibit, or distribute pornography, including through private clubs. This subsection applies only to pornography made using live or dead human beings or animals. Isolated parts shall not be the sole basis for complaints under this subsection.”

“City, state, and federally funded public libraries or private and public university and college libraries in which pornography is available for study, including on open shelves but excluding special display presentations, shall not be construed to be trafficking in pornography.”

The progress of the bill is being carefully monitored by groups concerned with free speech issues, including the Massachusetts Library Association IFC.

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**Intellectual Freedom Round Table**  
American Library Association  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

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**SSRT Sponsors Israel Study Tour**

The Social Responsibilities Round Table has arranged for a study tour to Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip for October 17–24, 1992, in cooperation with the Center for Global Education of Augsburg College. Designed especially for librarians and information specialists, the seminar will give particular attention to issues of intellectual and academic freedom, press censorship, and the closing of universities and libraries. The projected cost is $1975, which includes all expenses from New York. Further information may be obtained from Dr. Donald G. Davis, Jr., Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas at Austin, (512) 471-3806; or the Center for Global Education, (612) 330-1159.