

**ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
Report to Council
2015 Midwinter Meeting
Chicago, IL
Tuesday, February 3, 2015**

The ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) is pleased to present this update of its activities.

UPDATE

During the 2014 Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV, the IFC proposed revisions to 14 Interpretations to the *Library Bill of Rights* for inclusion in the 9th edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*. All of the proposed revisions to the Interpretations were adopted by Council. During the discussion of the resolutions, the IFC was tasked to review the Labeling and Ratings System Interpretation after Annual and report back to Council on its findings. After review, the IFC has decided to split Labeling and Rating Systems into three separate Interpretations and will send the drafts to ALA Council in April for review and comment prior to submitting the revised Interpretations for approval at the 2015 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco.

INFORMATION

The *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, Ninth Edition

Editor Trina Magi of the University of Vermont has re-imagined and re-designed the 9th Edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* for use as a practical guide for librarians in the field. As part of the redesign, the historical materials will be published as a separate supplement to the manual. Manuscripts for the manual and the historical supplement have been submitted to ALA Editions and the manual is on track for release on April 2015. It will be available for purchase both online and at the ALA Store at Annual.

Challenges to Library Materials Update

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi has been challenged many times this year. After a parent complained about *Persepolis* to the superintendent of schools in Chatham, Illinois, the superintendent immediately removed the book from the hands of all the high school seniors reading it for their Human Rights unit, violating the district's reconsideration policy. The parent's concerns included a complaint that the graphic novel format was low value literature and that *Persepolis* describes torture and is used as propaganda. OIF wrote a letter in support of *Persepolis*, graphic novels, the professional education and judgment of teachers and librarians. Ultimately, the Chatham Ball School District redirected the complaint through policy approved channels. At the conclusion of the reconsideration process, OIF received an email stating "Great

news! The Board voted unanimously to keep *Persepolis* in our curriculum. Principal Jim Lee did a wonderful job in his presentation, extensively using materials you sent me. The decision is being reported in our local newspaper and radio stations. So we're all pretty happy here. Thank you again for your and your office's support. We're all extremely grateful!"

Highland Park Independent School District in Texas has received attention from multiple national and local press affiliates including the New York Times and School Library Journal. As in Chatham, the superintendent removed seven books from the curriculum in violation of school policy. (A frustrating pattern that is emerging is administrators not following their own reconsideration policies.) Parents in the community formed two organizations: HP Kids Read, supporting academic excellence, intellectual freedom and diverse curricula, and Speak Up for Standards, a group seeking to remove books containing content they deemed sexually explicit, vulgar and graphically violent. During the controversy, there has been a lot of discussion about selection policies and opt-out alternatives, and the novel *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein was officially challenged; after review by a reconsideration committee, it was retained. Subsequently, a parent challenged the nonfiction work *The Working Poor* by Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter David Shipler, suggesting that the students read Ayn Rand's *We the Living* instead. That challenge remains pending before a reconsideration committee. The Freedom to Read Foundation provided HP Kids Read with a \$5000 grant to facilitate an educational event with Pat Scales, "Communicating with Your Kids Through Literature." OIF is continuing to work with the parents and students of this community.

At the Sussex Central High School Library (DE), *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, an award-winning teen novel by Emily Danforth was quietly removed from school library shelves during a local debate about the inclusion of LGBT terminology and HIV and STD education in the school district health curriculum. When the act of censorship came to light, the school's Gay-Straight Alliance created its own library so students would still be able to read the book. Eventually, the book was reviewed by an official reconsideration committee and was retained only to have the committee's decision appealed by their very own school board president. Multiple conference calls and emails were exchanged between OIF, ACLU, NCAC and the IF Committee of the Delaware Library Association to decide how to best support the high school librarian, the novel, and the freedom to read for the students. At the board meeting, the superintendent eventually withdrew his appeal. The high school librarian has updated us and says that they now own 4 copies of *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* and that all 4 copies are checked out and there is a waiting list to read the book.

Online Learning

To help achieve its goal of educating librarians and the general public about the nature and importance of intellectual freedom in libraries, OIF will continue to host webinars on founding principles and new trends of intellectual freedom. Upcoming topics include

- Advocating for Internet Access in School Libraries,
- Introducing the 9th edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual;
- I'm a New State IFC Chair, Now What?

Every quarter there are web meetings to connect state IFC chairs and AASL IF affiliates. We discuss state, local, and national intellectual freedom issues; the projects and programs OIF and various chapter IFCs are working on; and how ALA can provide assistance and support to the state IFCs and members of state affiliates.

Robert B. Downs Award

This year's recipient of the University Of Illinois Graduate School Of Library and Information Science's Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award are the staff and trustees of the Orland Park Public Library. The award recognizes the steadfast commitment of the staff and trustees to intellectual freedom and the principles established in the Library Bill of Rights as demonstrated by their decision to maintain the library's policy of not filtering adults' internet access despite a protracted year-long controversy fostered by pro-filtering advocates. The Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read Foundation were pleased to provide support and assistance to Orland Park Public Library as they fought to protect freedom of access.

PROJECTS

Banned Books Week

For the fourth year in a row, the ALA hosted the Virtual Read-Out during Banned Books Week (Sept. 22-28). Over 500 readers joined critically acclaimed authors and celebrities, Stan Lee, Lois Lowry, and Jeff Bridges in the Read-Out. SAGE Publications generously helped to sponsor the Virtual Read-Out.

Banned Books Week 2015 will take place September 27–October 3. Banned Books Week merchandise, including posters, bookmarks, t-shirts, and tote bags, are sold and marketed through the ALA Store and will be available online in the late Spring. More information on Banned Books Week can be found at www.ala.org/bbooks and www.bannedbooksweek.org.

Choose Privacy Week

Choose Privacy Week will take place May 1 – 7, 2015. This year's theme is "Who Reads the Readers?" and the IFC's Privacy Subcommittee looks forward to working with LITA's Patron Privacy Interest Group and other ALA offices and groups on developing online programming and materials for librarians and the general public about data mining, data flows, and the need to adopt new policies and procedures to protect user privacy. It is hoped that the online materials and programming will encourage libraries and librarians to develop privacy programs and resources for their communities. Posters, buttons, and other items addressing both "Freedom From Surveillance" and "Who's Tracking You?" remain available online via the ALA Store.

ACTION ITEMS

If one were unaware of the growing number and intensity of assaults worldwide on free expression in general and journalists in particular, the recent deadly attack on the staff of the French satirical publication Charlie Hebdo came as a harsh wake up call. Librarians, traditional

defenders of free expression, were equally shocked by this event. In order to express solidarity with our French library colleagues and affirm the basic human right of free expression, the American Library Association's International Relations Committee and its Intellectual Freedom Committee have jointly prepared the following resolution for action by ALA's governing Council.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee moves the adoption of the following action item:

CD # 19.1, Resolution Denouncing the Recent Attack on Charlie Hebdo and Other Attacks on the Freedom of Expression

In closing, the Intellectual Freedom Committee thanks the division and chapter intellectual freedom committees, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the unit liaisons, and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work.

Respectfully Submitted,
ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
Doug Archer (Chair)
Ann Crewdson
Teresa Doherty
Tiffany Arielle Duck
Michael Giller
Clem Guthro
Pam Klipsch

Charles Kratz
Cynthia Mari Orozco
Mary Elizabeth (Ma'Lis) Wendt
Michael Wright
Audrey Barbakoff (intern)
Hannah Buckland (intern)

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Resolution Denouncing Recent Assaults on the Freedom of Expression
as Exemplified in the Attack on *Charlie Hebdo*

Whereas the American Library Association has long been on record affirming the freedom of expression as described in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Policy B.6.2.1 Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights);

Whereas the American Library Association has been a staunch advocate for and defender of the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech contained in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America;

Whereas the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* states: "Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment" and that "Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas;" (Policy B.2.1 *Library Bill of Rights*);

Whereas these rights when taken together form a core professional value of the American Library Association, intellectual freedom (Policy B.1.1 Core Values of Librarianship);

Whereas the recent attack upon *Charlie Hebdo* is another heinous attempt to undermine freedom of expression; and

Whereas over sixty journalists were killed and over two hundred were imprisoned worldwide in 2014 alone*; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members:

1. denounces these bloody assaults on fundamental human rights;
2. expresses its deepest condolences to all those associated with the publication *Charlie Hebdo* and to the French people;
3. affirms its solidarity with L'Association des Bibliothécaires de France
4. reaffirms in the strongest possible terms its unwavering commitment to the advocacy and defense of intellectual freedom including freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of expression; and

Resolution Denouncing Recent Assaults on the Freedom of Expression as Exemplified in the Attack on *Charlie Hebdo* /2

5. directs Keith Michael Fiels, Executive Director of the American Library Association to communicate its support and resolve to Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic for the people of France and to our colleagues of L'Association des Bibliothécaires de France.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, February 3, 2015, in Chicago, Illinois



Keith Michael Fiels
Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council

*Committee for the Protection of Journalists, www.cpj.org