

HEADQUARTERS

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LIBRARY

IFRT **report**

No. 38

Summer 1994

Intellectual Freedom Round Table of the American Library Association

IFRT Celebrates

20 Years

at the

**"Get to Know
Intellectual Freedom"
Reception in Miami**

Join us in celebrating IFRT's
20th birthday at the trendy and
elegant Allioli Cafe in the
Cardozo Hotel, Ocean and 13th,
on Monday, June 27, from
5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Hors d'oeuvres cash bar

Your chance to meet informally
with ALA's intellectual freedom
leaders and celebrate IFRT's
twenty years of support
for the freedom to read!

Everyone who's anyone will
be there! See YOU there!

Statement on John C. Swan, 1945-1994

"Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman": John C. Swan, head librarian at Bennington College, Vermont, and a former chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table of the American Library Association. A scholar in the field of opera and *commedia dell' arte*, a prolific author in library periodicals, particularly on collection development and intellectual freedom, a teacher and library director, he worked almost to the last, despite the increasing disability which amyotrophic lateral sclerosis imposes on its sufferers, and in every way gave his life for, as well as to, his profession.

John's leadership in the intellectual freedom field is well known, and his challenging articles in *Library Journal* and elsewhere brought him into healthy conflict not only with more conservative colleagues but even with those who might consider themselves especially tolerant. But, John was perhaps less well known as a helper and healer. He inspired the launching of the Eli M. Oboler Award for writing on intellectual freedom, and also assisted in the granting of the Immroth Award to Christopher Merrett of South Africa, when our cultural relations with that country had become a subject of debate. In the recent controversy over Israeli censorship in Palestinian libraries, he took a reconciling position intended to close a difficult conflict within the American Library Association.

Perhaps his most celebrated effort in the defense of intellectual freedom was the "Swan-Peattie debate" held at the ALA conference in New Orleans in 1988, on the view which librarians ought to take concerning "Holocaust revisionists" and their publications. This public discussion, in which the majority of librarians in the audience voted for Swan, was celebrated, indeed, at a local Creole restaurant, at which Peattie, as loser, had to pay the bill. The further result of this debate was the publication, the following year, of *The Freedom To Lie: A Debate About Democracy*, in which both authors defended their position with such elegance and skill, that now the book has become a text: library school students are obliged to read the book and take sides in papers of their own.

More importantly, Peattie and Swan, from being almost at daggers drawn, became fast friends; writing, on each other's behalf, enthusiastic letters recommending promotions for the other fellow, and meeting at ALA conferences, with bear hugs, and cries of "Ah, my distinguished antagonist!" The cynic who said, "Scratch a friend and find a foe," had it, in this case, "bass ackwards." Finding a foe, and then turning him, by God's grace and his into a beloved friend is wonderful; then losing him to an implacable disease, against which he kept up work and courage to the last, places him among those whose scholarship, style, compassion, courtesy, and decency stand foremost in our memory.

Noel Peattie, Sipapu, Winters, California
Sanford Berman, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minnesota

So Long, John... Until We Meet Again

I don't know what the "C" in John's name stood for; To me, he'll always be John *Cubfan* Swan. (He, in turn, dubbed me "Dodgerlodger," knowing full well my devotion to the Boys in Blue.)

John did a lot of work for this Round Table. He edited the *IFRT Report* for several years, and chaired the Publications Committee. As chair of the Round Table, he took a lot of heat from people who objected to his chosen program on pornography. He wrote and produced the *Leadership Handbook* for IFRT officers and committee chairs. He helped establish the Eli M. Oboler Award.

You will read other tributes to John Swan elsewhere in this newsletter. You will also read that he is receiving, posthumously, the John Phillip Immroth Award. He joins the company of such defenders of intellectual freedom as I. F. Stone and Nat Hentoff. One regret I have, as the person who nominated John, is that I didn't want Sylvia Turchyn to let him know he was being considered. I wanted it to be a surprise for him.

Like John's good friends Sandy Berman, Bill Davis, Noel Peattie, and Bruce Shuman, whose memorials to him you see elsewhere in the *IFRT Report*, I'll miss a good and decent man, who, as Ted Kennedy said in his eulogy to his brother Robert, "saw wrong and tried to right it." It's a cliché, but we shall not see John Swan's like again.

Sue Kamm
Editor

John Swan Dies

Long-time Intellectual Freedom Round Table member, former chair of the Vermont Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee, Director of the Crosetts Library of Bennington College, and much loved friend John Swan, died on January 26, 1994. Throughout his career, John was a leader on the intellectual freedom battle lines. Even in sometimes heated discussions, John maintained his good humor and marvelous sense of the absurd, while never losing sight of his goal—to protect and defend intellectual freedom, and to keep the profession strong and free from inconsistency or hypocrisy in its stance on crucial intellectual freedom issues. He will be sorely missed.

John Swan's family has asked that those who wish to make a gesture in remembrance of him make donations to the Crosetts Library, Bennington College, Bennington, VT, 05201; to the John Swan Lecture Series, Vermont Library Association, P.O. Box 803 Burlington, VT, 05402-0803; or to the Upstate New York ALS Foundation, St. Peter's Hospital, 315 S. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY 12208

John Don't Want No Sad Songs Sung: A Tribute

The world's a sadder place these days
Since we have lost John Swan.
We're walking in a sort of daze
Because our friend is gone.

His kind of wit was hardly fit
For a prudish folks' convention
But at ALA he'd always say
Things to break the tension.

At challenges to the Right to Read
John would get real pissed
And write an article or a screed —
That's just part of why he's missed.

See, John was there when we did need 'im
For baseball expeditions,
Supporting intellectual freedom
And fighting prohibitions.

But those of us who mourn his going
(There must be six or seven)
Share the comfort of just knowing
John's now organizing heaven.

From cloud to cloud he drives a Lotus
Listen up and hear his cry
He's up there serving solemn notice
That censorship just ain't gonna fly.

Heaven's one big music store
On that you can rely
With songs and symphonies galore
When you get there, just go by —

To find Old John, that clever dog
In the teeming celestial dell,
Just consult *Swan's Catalog*
He's in there, sure as hell!

And Heaven's great or so they say,
(So don't mourn its newest tenant)
There's baseball every single day —
And God awards the pennant.

But John, we have some questions
When you get God off alone —
You might make some suggestions
And get back to us by phone:

Why can't censorship be made uncool
By heavenly decree?
And can't the Designated Hitter Rule
Be declared an infamy?

Yes, John, we want some answers
While y'all are cruising pubs
Ask God why She made censors
... And what's She got against the Cubs?

Bruce Shuman

fellow Cubfan, admirer, and friend

CFP94 Report

Carolyn Caywood

The fourth Computers, Freedom, and Privacy conference met in Chicago in late March. Although it was cosponsored by LITA, there were few librarians present. But their presence at previous CFPs had a lingering effect; few speakers failed to mention libraries as access points to the information superhighway.

The primary issue this year for most attendees was encryption with opposition to the government's proposed Clipper chip widespread. Distrust of Clipper is both political and technical. The political argument centers on whether it gives government potentially invasive power while the technical reason is that, being classified, it hasn't been subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny as private encryption such as PGP, (Pretty Good Privacy). Arguing with government representatives, Mike Godwin, of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, pointed out that any technology can be used anti-socially, while Phil Zimmerman, creator of PGP, asked why we should be treated like an enemy population by our own government, and a European attendee exclaimed, "Why are you screwing yourselves this way?"

Encryption may seem far from library concerns, but, aside from its obvious connection to confidentiality, encryption has the potential of making the Internet a much more powerful tool. Suppose you post email to a group on the Net and someone quotes you but inserts the word "not", how is a reader to know that's not what you originally said? Encryption can protect the authenticity of a document.

LITA presented a Saturday morning program discussing the role of libraries with Carl Kadie, Bernie Margolis, and Elaine Albright. Kadie showed the relevance of ALA policy documents on labeling, restricted access, expurgation, etc. to recent censorship in cyberspace and demonstrated the need for well thought out selection policies for electronic archives. His full speech is available on the Net; at EFF's gopher choose the CAF archives and then search for cfp94.kadie. Margolis observed that

Maggie's Place had shown that library users crave electronic resources in addition to, not as replacement for, traditional materials. Both he and Albright emphasized the role of libraries in training citizens to drive the information superhighway.

Another Saturday panel discussed bringing the Internet into schools. The presenters agreed that the present hierarchical administration of schools would find the anarchy of the Net very disturbing, one even suggested it would be a Trojan Horse. They feared that in protecting the status quo of schools, the ethic of the Internet would be destroyed. Old paradigms like "Don't talk to strangers" become ludicrous on the Net. More optimistic speakers hoped that, instead, technology might empower students to replace traditional methods of education with independent learning. Specific concerns ranged from how to have selection criteria for a constantly changing medium, to the ease with which students could embarrass their institution.

That Internet ethic had been discussed in an earlier session, with Steven Levy, author of *Hackers*, saying that the principles he identified in his book had made the transition to the Internet, though they might not survive its growth. Some of these principles, that access should be unlimited and hands on, information should be free, and authority and centralization are not to be trusted, have a familiar ring to libraries.

Thursday night BOFS (birds of a feather sessions) for informal discussion included privacy, with Anne Penway telling how libraries handle this. In other sessions, a

Canadian official, David Flaherty, pointed up the dangerous temptation to consolidate client records across social service agencies. The superhighway metaphor came in for a lot of criticism, including a comment on the negative effects of highways on community life. The audience was more interesting than the panel in a session on how other nations' laws and cultures will affect the Internet. Kadie insisted that system administrators could not "be responsible for labeling content for acceptability by each nation." Another added that there is no inherent right to remain unoffended.

The economics of access worried many speakers, prompting one to ask if we are creating an electronic democracy or an oligarchy. Others deplored the possibility that the Information Superhighway might be nothing more than a virtual shopping mall, or access to a video dial tone. Citing the Sullivan gag on abortion speech, Daniel Weitzner, EFF, reminded a panel that government, too, can use funding to foster its own viewpoint and free speech may be safer in the marketplace.

One unscheduled event was FBI questioning of a participant who had the bad luck to have the same name as an alias of the notorious phone phreak Kevin Mitnik who's presently on the run. No one had expected the divergence of views at the conference to be so concretely demonstrated. Condensing three packed days into a page is impossible, and I can only hope that next year there will be more librarians present to discuss issues as vital to our interest as they are to the future of our society.

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 Sue Kamm, Inglewood Public Library, 101 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood, CA 90301. Letters to the editor are welcomed.

Intellectual Freedom Round Table Programs and Meetings 1994 Annual Conference—Miami

Friday, June 24

IFC/IFRT/Div. IFCs Joint Program Planning Meeting	11:30 am - 12:30 pm	FNT-Bordeaux
IFRT Executive Committee	2:00 pm - 5:30 pm	MBCC-D236

Saturday, June 25

IFRT Bylaws & Organization Committee	9:30 am - 11:00 am	HYAT-Board
Intellectual Freedom Round Table "Keeping Out of Mischief: Fending Off Censorship Pressures"	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	INT-Versailles

Sunday, June 26

IFC/IFRT/Div. IFC's Joint Meeting	8:00 am - 11:00 am	FNT-Burgundy
IFRT Membership & Promotion Committee	9:30 am - 11:00 am	INT-Michaelangelo
IFRT Membership & Promotion Committee	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	FNT-Conference 7
IFRT Executive Committee	4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	MBCC-B215

Monday, June 27

IFRT Get to Know Intellectual Freedom Reception and 20th Anniversary Celebration	5:30 pm - 7:00 pm	Allioli Cafe Cardozo Hotel Ocean Drive & 13th
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Late News!

Gail Zappa, widow of the late Frank Zappa, and their daughter Moon, will make a special appearance at the IFRT's Intellectual Freedom program (Keeping Out of Mischief: Fending Off Censorship Pressures,) on Saturday, June 25, 1994 during the Annual Conference in Miami. They will briefly address Frank Zappa's anti-censorship battles, and their own feelings about the role of libraries in a democratic society.

Office for Intellectual Freedom Establishes Listserv

The Office for Intellectual Freedom has established an intellectual freedom listserv! The list exists for two primary reasons: as an additional avenue for reporting challenges (challenges posted will **not**, of course, be confidential, because every subscriber to the list will have access to the information), and as an open and unmoderated forum for discussion of library related intellectual freedom issues. To subscribe, send the message "Subscribe ALAOIF [your name], to listserv@uic.um.edu."

FNT	Fontainebleau
INT	Intercontinental
HYAT	Hyatt
MBCC	Miami Beach Convention Center

John Swan

I found myself postponing this until the last moment. It is hard to write about John because it means acknowledging the truth his friends don't want to face: he's gone.

John was a good person. Yes, he contributed to librarianship and to the cause of intellectual freedom, but that was secondary. His most important contribution was that he was a truly good person. There are fewer of those today. We can't afford to spare any. We need good models.

John had his faults. Obviously anyone who continually believed the Red Sox were going to win a pennant "this year" lacks a certain acquaintance with reality. His friends, however, humored him. In return John taught friends an important truth about intellectual freedom, one that far too many of us never learn: Opponents are people.

John could disagree vehemently, often with his best friends, over an issue. They were always his friends. Everyone was John's friend. He firmly believed in fighting ideas, not people. My mother used to preach to me to "hate the sin but love the sinner." John Swan was one of the few people to live by that credo.

His most important contribution was teaching that the essential element of intellectual freedom is tolerance and acceptance of others. He reaffirmed that censorship is the enemy, but the censor is still another human being deserving of respect. His goodness was the gift he gave those around him. He helped us overcome ourselves and find we could separate the idea from the person if we only tried.

John left us writings. He left us the product of a fine mind. More important, he left us the products of a fine heart. We miss him.

Bill Davis
Director,
Country Music Foundation Library

From the Chair

"Keeping Out of Mischief" is the Subject of Annual Conference Program

Right of center pressure groups are targeting libraries as never before. As Chair of the IFRT, I have the opportunity to put together the Conference program, and I am proud that this year, we will address this serious and growing problem. I'm very excited about the speakers, and I urge you and all your Conference-attending friends to come! On to the details:

The program takes place Saturday, June 25, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. in the Brittany room of the Fontainebleau Hotel. Titled "Keeping Out of Mischief: Fending Off Censorship Pressures," the program will provide strategies for avoiding censorship attacks and for building community support.

Robert Boston, Assistant Director of Communications for Americans United for Separation of Church and State will reveal who the pressure groups are, their agendas, where they are found and what they're doing. Susan Glickman, Florida Field Coordinator for People for the American Way, will discuss specific winning strategies for combatting censorship and building community support, before, during and after a pressure group attack. Candace Morgan, ALA's IFC Chair, will provide insight into special challenges relating to minors' access, and give examples of proactive steps librarians can take to deal with these tough issues.

The program is sponsored by IFRT, and cosponsored by ALA's IFC and the IFCs of AASL, ALSC, ALTA, LAMA, ALCTS, PLA, RASD and YALSA.

This is an important and timely topic. Remember, this is your program, so why not use it as an opportunity to introduce your friends who may not yet be members of IFRT to the stimulating and substantive conference programming we provide! See you in Miami!

Pamela Bonnell
IFRT Chair

From the Vice-Chair

One can scarcely pick up a newspaper these days without seeing an article on some aspect of the national information infrastructure, usually employing its dominant metaphor, the "information superhighway."

Librarians need to be concerned about two types of access to the NII. I call these Access and access.

Access (with a capital A) concerns public space: will there be adequate public space on the net as it develops? Will it be interactive, open, and affordable? Will libraries be able to carve out a central role for themselves as information providers, points of access to the net, and perhaps even as training centers? Will privacy be respected (or even possible)?

The second type of access (with a lowercase a) concerns access to materials on the net. There is a lot out there already. The easy accessibility of certain types of materials, especially those of a sexual nature, has already led to controversy. As more and more libraries provide access to the net, we are almost certainly poised for yet another series of battles for free speech principles, this time concerning data available over the net.

The working title for the intellectual freedom program at the 1995 ALA Annual Conference is: "Intellectual Freedom: Will it become Roadkill on the Information Superhighway?" Planning for this program is still in its early stages. Suggestions for speakers and program content are welcome.

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IFRT Award Winners Announced

Freedom to Read Foundation Wins IFRT State and Regional Achievement Award

The Freedom to Read Foundation is the winner of this year's State and Regional Achievement Award (formerly State Program Award.) Underwritten by Social Issues Resource Series, Inc. (SIRS), the \$1,000 prize and certificate is given for outstanding contributions to intellectual freedom at the state or regional level.

Committee chair Dr. Frederick Stielow said, "The award committee unanimously selected the Freedom to Read Foundation as this year's winner for its crucial assistance to libraries in several states. The Foundation's assistance clarified First Amendment law, and helped libraries resist demands to restrict or eliminate access to library patrons."

The award will be presented to Gordon Conable, President of the Foundation.

Immroth Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom Goes to John Swan

The 1994 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom will be presented posthumously to John Swan, past chair of both the Indiana and the Vermont Library Association intellectual freedom committees. At the

time of his death, John Swan was Director of the Crossett Library of Bennington College in Bennington, Vermont.

The award, \$500 and a citation, honors individuals or groups who have demonstrated extraordinary courage in defense and support of intellectual freedom. It is named for the co-founder of the Round Table, who was an author, teacher, scholar, and advocate and defender of intellectual freedom.

"John Swan's career in librarianship was a model for all who revere the freedom to read, view and listen. He was especially loved by his colleagues for his wit, and the gentle but determined manner in which he exposed inconsistencies in policy or action which compromised intellectual freedom. His courage, perseverance and dedication to the principles of intellectual freedom never wavered—he was taken from us much too soon, and he will be sorely missed by his friends and fans in the library profession," said Sylvia Turchyn, chair of the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee.

The award will be presented to Mr. Albert Joy, former Vermont IFC chair and President-elect of the Vermont Library Association, who was designated by Mr. Swan's family to accept the award on his behalf.

Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom

What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America (Yale University Press, 1992), by Joan DeFattore, Professor of English at the University of Delaware, is the 1994 recipient of the biennial Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award for the best published work in the area of intellectual freedom. The Oboler Award consists of a certificate of recognition and \$1500, funded by PROVIDENCE Associates Inc, library consultants and planners. The award is named for Eli M. Oboler, commemorating his service to the library profession and his championship of intellectual freedom.

Past winners have included *Emergence of a Free Press* by Lawrence W. Levy (1986); *Choosing Equality: The Case for Democratic Schooling*, published by Temple University Press (1988); the Spring, 1988 Edition of *Media Horizons*, a publication of the Missouri Association of School Librarians (1990); and *Libraries, Erotica, and Pornography*, edited by Martha Cornog (1992). The next Oboler Award will be given in 1996 for the best work in the area of intellectual freedom published during 1994 and 1995.

Joan DeFattore will accept the award. All three awards will be presented on Saturday, June 25, during the ALA Annual Conference in Miami.

Intellectual Freedom Round Table
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FIRST CLASS