

IFRT Report

Issue 81: Summer 2019



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From the Chair

I feel like only yesterday I was just starting out as chair, and a whole year has gone by. We've been able to do a lot of excellent work in IFRT this year, and this truly reflects positively on our member volunteers. As I give over the reins to Audrey to become chair next year, I want to tell you a little bit about what we've achieved this year.

This year, IFRT undertook its first strategic planning process ever. A group of volunteers was put together to analyze our strategic position, our members' needs, outside perspective on IFRT, and our own feelings as to what IFRT could become in the future. A draft plan was put out for comment to the membership in May 2019, and it is projected that this plan will be approved and become our guiding document at our board meeting in June.

The new IFRT Strategic Plan focuses on four key areas:

- Speaking Our Minds
- Internal Advocacy
- Member Services
- Financial Health



JOHN MACK FREEMAN

SPEAKING OUR MINDS

IFRT is one of the oldest round tables in ALA, exhibiting our members strong support for the principles of intellectual freedom. However, with history can come complacency. As a round table, IFRT will evolve into a round table that is on the forefront of conversations within the LIS world. Intellectual freedom isn't a neutral position, and our collective belief in its importance means that IFRT should advocate for the IF viewpoint whenever possible.

INTERNAL ADVOCACY

ALA is changing. Between getting rid of Midwinter, the moving of ALA HQ, the work on organizational effectiveness, a new Executive Director, and numerous other changes, ALA will look very different in the near future. One of the things being discussed is a reinterpretation of round tables that may limit the total number of them or their scope. IFRT believes that round tables form a vital part of the ALA ecosystem by reflecting member interests, providing leadership opportunities, and providing new members a way to get easily involved.

Additionally, IFRT has found from our studies this year that this is a large amount of confusion between the difference between IFRT, OIF, IFC, FTRF, and other parts of the intellectual freedom community. One way to make IFRT more distinct is to establish partnerships with various groups within ALA to work on projects of mutual importance. For instance, we are in the early stages of discussing a partnership with the new Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table since graphic materials are some of the most commonly challenged items in libraries. We also want to seek opportunities to partner with those doing important EDI and social justice work inside the association, showing that devotion to IF does not have to be held in opposition to EDI.

MEMBER SERVICES

Something that I've always loved about round tables is that it offers individuals the chance to get involved and do something. And something that our members are asking for are more services from the round table: education opportunities, networking events, ways to volunteer, and methods to get involved. Because of this, we are going to explore opportunities to allow the RT to become more nimble in offering these new things while still maintaining the quality of our legacy work in providing programs at conferences, maintaining our awards, and creating IF content.

As most of you probably already know, Midwinter as it is currently constituted is being discontinued, and a new winter event will take its place with a larger focus on professional development. As such, IFRT will have to rethink the way we do our in-person engagement, and this offers an excellent opportunity to explore options for engaging people digitally or regionally without the expense of major conference travel.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

One of the better kept secrets inside of ALA is that round tables are in great financial health, and IFRT is in fantastic financial position. Although we typically budget for breaking even in the year or a slight deficit, we typically take a very conservative stance. Thus, we almost always have a surplus that has been reinvested into our fund balance. As of this writing, IFRT has over \$100,000 in fund balance (with operating expenses of between \$10,000–\$20,000 per year). Because of our excellent financial shape, now is the time for us to take bold action and to spend our resources to better IFRT, our members, and the library community as a whole. We can back up the efforts we are making in other areas because we have the financial ability to take calculated risks and try new things. Additionally, we can ensure the future viability of IFRT and our awards for years to come through exploring investment opportunities through the ALA endowment. Additionally, the work that Charles Kratz has done as past-chair and head of our Fundraising Task Force may well evolve into a new standing committee focused on fundraising for our initiatives.

A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered for the Strategic Planning Task Force and everyone who spoke to us about it, filled out a survey, or contributed their thoughts.

Additionally, we have awarded the Immroth and Hodges awards, continued our increased presence through the work of our Communications and Publications Committee, participated in ALA conversations about the future of the organization, sponsored an Emerging Leader, sponsored an Emerging Leader project for the first time, and begun to think more broadly about what IFRT looks like in the future. IFRT is about to turn 50 years old, but our mission has never been more important. In an age of declining privacy, impenetrably written user agreements, the rise of censoring voices, and a world that is only becoming increasingly complicated, it has never been more important to defend the basic right of people to access information so that they can make up their own mind as to what is real and true and honest.

I want to thank our board, our members, and our OIF staff for being so helpful to me this year. Any sort of member-driven association can get complex, but when you've got a strong team to help you out, it makes it all possible. I have been honored to have been selected as your chairperson for this past year, and I look forward to continuing my work with IFRT for decades to come.

Sincerely,

John Mack Freeman
IFRT Chair, 2018–2019

Meet the Board

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- **John "Mack" Freeman**, Chair
- **Audrey Barbakoff**, Chair Elect
- **Isabel Klein**, Secretary
- **Steve Norman**, Treasurer
- **Charles Kratz**, Past-Chair
- **Kristin Joy Anderson**, Director-at-Large
- **Sarah Houghton**, Director-at-Large
- **Wanda Mae Huffaker**, Director-at-Large
- **Eldon "Ray" James**, Director-at-Large
- **Martin Garnar**, IFRT Councilor

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- **Cyndi Robinson**, Bylaws and Organization Committee
- **Shenise McGhee**, Coalition Building Committee
- **Rebecca Moorman**, John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee
- **Samantha Helmick**, Membership Promotion Committee
- **Charles Kratz**, Nominating Committee
- **Ashley Brown**, Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award Committee
- **Jeremy Brett**, Program Committee
- **Stephanie Barnaby**, Publications and Communications Committee

[Learn More about the Board](#)

The Results Are In

The results of the 2019 ALA elections are in, and the results of IFRT's ballot are as follows:

- The proposed bylaw change to make committee chairs voting members of the Executive Committee (see full text below) was approved by a large margin, with 92.9% of voters approving it! The full text of [IFRT's bylaws](#) are online.
- Angela Ocana and Stephanie Barnaby were both elected Directors-at-Large.
- Wanda Mae Huffaker won the vote for Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect.
- Ashley Janet Brown won the vote for Treasurer.

Approved Bylaw Revisions (changes in italics): The officers of the Round Table and the chairs of the Bylaws and Organization, *Coalition Building*, *John Phillip Immroth Award*, Membership Promotion, *Merritt Fund Support*, Nominating, *Eli Oboler Award*, Program, and *Publications and Communication* Committees shall constitute the Executive Committee. Chairs of other standing committees and Liaisons shall be non-voting members of the Executive Committee.

Thank you to all the candidates who ran for positions, and thank you as well to everyone who voted. Members of the [Nominating Committee](#) are: Charles Kratz and Larissa Gordon. Members of the [Bylaws and Organization Committee](#) are: Cyndi Robinson, Scott DiMarco, Wanda Huffaker, Emily Knox, MacKenzie Ledley, and Edgar Mosshamer.

Join an IFRT Committee

Are you interested in becoming more actively involved in the Intellectual Freedom Round Table? Join an IFRT Committee! Now is the perfect time to join. Just complete the [IFRT Volunteer Form](#) or email the incoming chair, Audrey Barbakoff at albarbakoff@kcls.org.

- **Bylaws and Organization Committee** reviews and updates the official IFRT bylaws and the IFRT handbook. Official changes to the bylaws are proposed to the executive committee and voted on by the membership.
- **Coalition Building Committee** networks with the State Intellectual Freedom Network (SIFnet) and recognizes an ALA Chapter with the Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Chapter Relations Award.
- **John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee** serves as the award jury to select and honor notable contributions to intellectual freedom.
- **Merritt Fund Committee** raises awareness and funds for the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund which provides financial support to librarians who are denied employment rights because of their defense of intellectual freedom and privacy, or as a result of discrimination.
- **Membership Promotion Committee** communicates with new members and develops initiatives to build and retain membership.
- **Nominating Committee**, chaired by the immediate past chair, recruits candidates to run for IFRT elected offices.
- **Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award Committee** reviews published works in the area of intellectual freedom for the biannual Oboler Award.
- **Program Committee** plans and implements conference programs. One reserved program is the Chairs Program which is planned in alignment with the chair's goals for the year.
- **Publications and Communications Committee** promotes the activities of IFRT on social media, maintains the website, produces the IFRT Report and archives the Intellectual Freedom News and IFRT Newsletters.
- **Education Advisory Special Committee** develops professional eLearning opportunities in collaboration with the Office for Intellectual Freedom.

For more information on the IFRT Committees and what they do, visit the [IFRT website](#) or the [IFRT handbook](#).

IFRT Events at 2019 ALA Annual

The IFRT Chair's Program is titled "**Telling Stories, Expanding Boundaries: Drag Queen Storytimes in Libraries**"

This session will explore the public library as a site for the intersection of gender expression/identity and intellectual freedom, by discussing the phenomenon of Drag Queen Storytime. The session will consist of a panel featuring originators of the Drag Queen Storytime concept; librarians whose institutions have been involved in Drag Queen Storytime, with both the popularity and the controversy that have ensued; and a local drag queen storyteller who will read a story to the audience. The Drag Queen Storytime program has been immensely popular with many audiences at libraries across the country, but it has also produced its share of resistance and controversy. The panel will discuss how Drag Queen Storytime was developed and originally implemented, how librarians have been using it today, how institutions have dealt with specific successes and controversies, and how Drag Queen Storytime relates to intellectual freedom.

The IFRT has organized two major fundraising events for ALA Annual in Washington, D.C. this year.

The first event is **An Evening with the Capitol Steps**, scheduled for Friday, June 21, 7:30–9:30 pm at the Ronald Reagan building. Attendees will enjoy an evening of political satire in the form both musical satire and stand-up comedy. The [Capitol Steps](#) have been performing since 1981, when they began lampooning the political climate of the moment by creating new lyrics for popular songs and stand-up comedy that includes a healthy dose of spoonerism ("lirty dies" for "dirty lies"). The initial run of tickets made available for this event sold out quickly and IFRT purchased a second batch of tickets that were made available as a conference ticket add on earlier this year. All available tickets for this event are now sold out! Thanks to everyone who has purchased tickets already, we have already been able to raise \$2,550—thank you all for your support!

The second event is the **Intellectual Freedom Awards Breakfast**, scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 7:30–9:00 am at the Marriott Marquis. In addition to celebrating with the recipients for the Immroth and Hodges awards, attendees will also hear Mr. Sanford Unger, with the [Georgetown University Free Speech Project](#), and enjoy connecting with others interested in intellectual freedom issues.

Funds raised by these events, support IFRT projects: sponsoring Emerging Leaders; networking and continuing education events; promoting core professional values; and awards to honor champions of intellectual freedom, authors, and exemplary chapters or organizations.

Saturday afternoon from 3pm–5pm, the executive board gathers for their annual in-person **Intellectual Freedom Round Table Meeting**. The board provides oversight of round table business and planning. It carries out the formal decisions of membership and approves the annual round table budget. It makes recommendations and reports to membership through round table communication channels. Everyone is welcome.

A complete list of sessions, meetings and socials can be found on the blog post "[Intellectual Freedom & Privacy Events in our Nation's Capitol](#)".

ALA Annual 2019

Intellectual Freedom Events

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019

■ Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) Business Meetings

The Freedom to Read Foundation meeting provides an opportunity for attendees to understand the scope of work being done by FTRF, as well as intellectual freedom related issues, changes, and cases that are happening throughout the country. Guests are welcome. www.ftrf.org

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2019

■ Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) Meetings

The charge of the IFC is to recommend policies for libraries and librarians, in accordance with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by ALA Council. Guests are welcome

■ Intellectual Freedom 101

At this one-hour fast-paced session, you'll learn about the intellectual freedom activities of ALA and affiliated organizations (such as the Intellectual Freedom Round Table and the Freedom to Read Foundation) and get all the details on upcoming programs and events. Intellectual freedom leaders will share how you can get involved in a community dedicated to protecting the First Amendment and patrons' rights.

■ Emerging Leaders Poster/Reception

The 2019 class of Emerging Leaders will showcase their final projects at this poster session. It will be a culminating event for this class of Emerging Leaders. Since the Midwinter Meeting, teams have been working virtually on projects related either to ALA units or other professional concerns. This poster session will allow each team to highlight its creative and innovative solutions for their project assignments. Emerging Leader sponsors, member guides, and all conference attendees are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2019

■ Stand with the Banned!

At the Stand for the Banned booth, show your support for banned books and their authors in a variety of interactive ways. Watch videos of authors reading funny and inspiring tweets, write them a note, or snap a pic in the banned books photo booth. You'll also be able to find resources to help you celebrate Banned Books Week in September, as well as a great Banned Books Week giveaway. Hosted by SAGE Publishing and ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, the Stand for the Banned booth draws attention to the authors who create important works and offers readers creative ways to say "thanks."

■ Pitfalls of neutrality: What does inclusivity mean in libraries

Librarians are committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, but what does this mean in today's political climate? We are frequently required to make decisions that pit free speech against the comfort and safety of other patrons (e.g. allowing political or hate groups to use our meeting rooms), or called upon to defend our collection, exhibit, or program decisions in the face of patron challenges. Even our decisions about configuring the space in our

libraries may create controversy—gender neutral restrooms, prayer rooms, lactation rooms, or how we make our buildings accessible. This program will bring together a diverse group of speakers who have handled these challenges. They will share their experiences and how they dealt with various situations. Attendees will have the chance to ask questions and interact with the speakers and each other. They will leave the program with strategies from different libraries to consider when examining their own perspectives on equity, diversity, and inclusion and how to address these issues in their libraries. The program is co-sponsored by the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom.

■ **Sticky Selection Scenarios: Using Policy to Answer Your Collection & Reconsideration Questions**

Toolkit author presenters will begin the session by highlighting important aspects of the toolkit for all types of libraries; however, the majority of the session time will be spent in small group discussions. To make the session relevant to attendees, the presenters from school, public, and academic libraries will lead guided group discussions based on scenarios of common and/or difficult selection and reconsideration issues that library workers face. The conversations will address specific intellectual freedom-related questions that session attendees bring to the discussion. Near the end of the session, each group will share key ideas and strategies from the discussion with all of the participants. Attendees will receive a print copy of the toolkit with specific policy language color-coded by type of library. The Office for Intellectual Freedom and toolkit authors are collaborating with United for Libraries and the Intellectual Freedom Round Table for this session.

■ **Library Confidentiality: Your Privacy is Our Business**

This program makes participants aware of the potential for challenges to patron reading records and models options to be both proactive and reactive, outlines the history and practice of ALA's ethical and legal response to those challenges, and reflects upon the increasing institutional focus on assessment, data-driven decision making and the use of Big Data to prove our value. Will these new initiatives threaten our patrons' privacy?

■ **When You Can't Go Home Again: Refugee and Exile Authors in the U.S.**

Facing censorship, threats and uncertainty, refugee and exile authors travel to the U.S., where they confront a new set of obstacles. "When You Can't Go Home Again" will explore the challenges authors experience in countries around the world, and issues that they encounter after moving to the States. These issues range from locating an interested publisher and depending on a translator, to resisting self-censorship and being aware of the ever-watchful presence of their home country. After taking an eye-opening exploration into the realm of international writings and translations, attendees will gain insight into how they can welcome these authors on their shelves and in their libraries.

■ **Freedom to Read Foundation 50th Anniversary Celebration**

Come celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Freedom to Read Foundation! Hear banned authors speak about their experiences over appetizers and a cash bar. Tickets are \$25 and include keynote speakers Laurie Halse Anderson and Colson Whitehead. FTRF has published a commemorative book "Reading Dangerously" to celebrate its 50th anniversary and to highlight 50 years of advocacy, education and litigation.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2019**■ Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) Privacy Subcommittee Meeting**

Business and planning meeting for the Intellectual Freedom Committee's Privacy Subcommittee.

■ Censorship Beyond Books

Panelists will detail the tools and resources they used to survive the experience as well as those they wished had been available. Answering questions such as; "what would you do different?" "what advice would you give a new librarian to prepare for such a challenge?" and "how has this changed you as a librarian?"; these intellectual freedom fighters will expand the expertise and experience in the area of censorship—beyond books.

■ Privacy by Design

You will learn why privacy should be a critical design component for any of those areas of responsibility. When we see exciting technological advancements, such as machine learning, big data, online assistants, personalization, and chatbots; it can be tempting to deprioritize privacy, a core value of librarianship, in pursuit of implementing these types of tools and technologies. If you have a hand in designing, developing, and/or implementing programming, registration methods, data tracking methods, user experience research, or digital experiences (e.g. your organization's website), you will take home some ideas for how to construct a plan of action that helps you incorporate privacy by design.

■ Are You Going to Tell My Parents?: The Minor's Right to Privacy in the Library

A panel of experts will summarize the laws and ethical statements applicable to minors' privacy rights, and explore positive and proactive ways that libraries can protect minors' privacy and confidentiality. Panelists will discuss state and federal laws impacting minors' privacy, including the Child Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Following this introduction to minors' privacy, school and public librarians will each speak about different approaches, policies, and procedures they use to protect minors' privacy. The panel will focus on ways to address the issues librarians face in crafting policy, procedures, and guidelines that preserve minors' privacy.

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2019**■ Controversial Speaker Planned for Your Library Event? Things to Consider**

Sometimes, when an event is planned at your library: it might be more controversial than you originally anticipated. Having policies in place before the event, can make you feel more prepared. Hear from authors, public relations experts, and Intellectual Freedom Committee's (IFC) "Responding to and Preparing for Controversial Programs and Speakers Q&A" authors about questions and aspects you may want to consider before holding such an event. Participants will receive a handout with questions to consider when developing program policies, as well as a crisis communications template.

■ Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE) Meeting

The council Committee on Professional Ethics shall augment the Code of Ethics by explanatory interpretations and additional statements, prepared by this committee or elicited from other units of ALA. Guests are welcome!

■ Minds Unlocked: Supporting Intellectual Freedom Behind Bars

Come fill your toolkit with strategies to support intellectual freedom for those you serve with jail or prison outreach. Learn about the realities of correctional censorship, how to develop a policy to answer the toughest challenges, and how you can be a powerful and articulate advocate for your community.

Emerging Leader Jess Newman

The Emerging Leaders Program of the American Library Association is a "leadership development program which enables newer library workers from across the country to participate in problem-solving work groups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity." There are 50 library workers in the 2019 Class of Emerging Leaders. Ninety percent of the emerging leaders are funded by ALA divisions, round tables, chapter, or affiliate organization.

Jess Newman and a group of other Emerging Leaders will work on the IFRT project "*Engaging the Non-Librarian: Intellectual Freedom is Everyone's Fight*". The project explores how to better engage non-librarians in the fight to protect intellectual freedom,

IFRT has sponsored Jess Newman of Memphis, Tennessee for the 2019 Emerging Leaders Program. Attendees of the 2019 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. have the opportunity to meet the 2019 class of Emerging Leaders (ELs) at a poster session and reception on Friday, June 21, 2019 from 3:00–4:00 p.m. in the Washington Convention Center, room 207A.



JESS NEWMAN

Jess Newman's commitment to Intellectual Freedom began as an undergraduate at Rhodes College, where she was given permission to explore, interrogate, and integrate a variety of fields. Unwilling to commit to a single domain and give up this freedom, she ended up creating her own major, largely comprised of Biology and Sociology courses, to investigate the history and construction of the natural sciences. As a first-generation college student she was excited to make use of the expertise and resources made available to her, and very grateful for the opportunities she hadn't had at her K–12 institutions. In this new environment she formed both a stronger sense of herself and her worldview through open, and at times difficult, conversations with mentors and peers.

Today, her interests in Intellectual Freedom focus more specifically on technology and surveillance. As a master's student in the University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences she took a class on social media and was introduced to the concepts of privacy and identity as they relate to web 2.0, big data, and personalization. Later, as an instructor for a Social Justice and Digital Humanities summer fellowship, she found that her undergraduates, while highly dependent on technology, were often woefully digitally illiterate. Most were unaware of what personal information they were sharing, with whom, and to what effect. Why privacy matters became a primary learning objective. As ALA states in "*Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*," –

"Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. Lack of privacy and confidentiality chills users' choices, thereby suppressing access to ideas. The possibility of surveillance, whether direct or through access to records of speech, research and exploration, undermines a democratic society."

Jess currently works as an Assistant Professor and Assessment and Scholarly Communications Librarian at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. The healthcare field is relatively new to her, but she has found a home working with early career researchers to discuss intellectual property rights, information access, and data management.

The IFRT sponsored ALA Emerging Leader for 2018 was Angela Ocana. Her project is *Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ materials in school libraries*. A biography of Angela, including her interests in intellectual freedom, can be found in [last year's IFRT Annual report](#). At the close of the 2019 Annual Conference she will assume a position as a Director-at-Large for IFRT.

Member Spotlight MacKenzie Ledley

MacKenzie Ledley is the Executive Director of the Pulaski County Public Library in Indiana and a fervent intellectual freedom fighter. Her interest in intellectual freedom issues began in graduate school, but seeing her community's positive response to Banned Books Week programming inspired her to begin volunteering for the Intellectual Freedom Round Table.

"One Saturday, I saw a community member carrying an, 'I Read Banned Books' tote, and it took my breath away to consider that this public assertion was a result of library programming. People are excited to learn about the prior year's most challenged books nationwide, and the staff always looks forward to seeing what the ALA Graphic's team has designed for Banned Books Week."

When she began her directorship, she found the resources of the ALA to be extremely valuable in educating her staff and increasing the value of intellectual freedom in her rural community. Each year she and her staff create informative displays, distribute 100 copies of a selected challenged or banned books to the community, and they conclude Banned Books Week with a community book discussion.

"A few years ago, the King James Version of the Bible was selected from the list of nationally challenged books, and we had a robust discussion with community members on the importance of religious freedoms as a part of intellectual freedom. As a result, I believe many in our community have developed a greater respect for the importance of the library providing a varied material collection."

The Pulaski County Library still receives book challenges from patrons, but the library staff is effectively trained to address any concerns and educate the public on the benefits of intellectual freedom.

MacKenzie says the most challenging part of her job is not being able to compensate library employees at a rate of pay that she believes they deserve. As a director, she knows that there are countless factors that enter into salary calculations, including board member's final approval. She recognizes the value of the hard work of her library staff in supporting the library's mission, and she wishes that their pay could reflect national trends more closely, while balancing the fiscal needs of a library budget.

Her favorite part of her job is having the opportunity to collaborate with different organizations to enhance the availability of services in her rural community. Sometimes this means working with mental health providers to address the needs of the library's teens and pre-teens, or collaborating with other library districts to identify best practices in providing relevant digital resources.

Through her work with a variety of organizations and library districts, she recognizes the importance legislation plays in achieving new goals and retaining valued services. This has led her to begin actively participating in the Indiana Library Federation's legislative advocacy committee, and subsequently co-chairing the committee for several years. She has found meeting with legislators to be a wonderful opportunity to share the public library's changing identity and to learn more about how libraries can help to meet the needs of the statewide community.

MacKenzie feels that any time we spend cultivating civility is time well spent. She is grateful for the training resources provided by the American Library Association, Intellectual Freedom Round Table, and Freedom to Read Foundation, that make it possible for any size library to share the importance of intellectual freedom in their community.



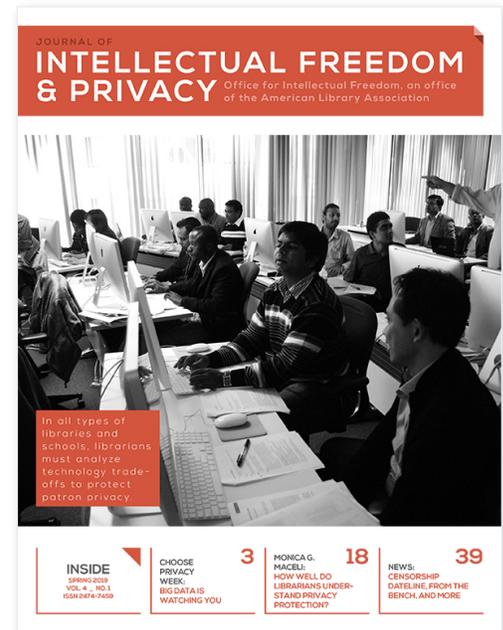
MACKENZIE LEDLEY

Write for and Subscribe to the Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy

The goal of the *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* is to be the center of discourse on issues related to intellectual freedom and privacy in libraries. Writing for the *Journal* is an excellent opportunity to advance scholarship in the intellectual freedom community. As the official journal of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom, The *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* welcomes submissions related to intellectual freedom and privacy, both in libraries and in the wider world. Submissions can include:

- research articles (peer reviewed)
- non-peer reviewed articles and essays discussing or describing policies, practices, projects, law, and scholarship related to intellectual freedom and privacy
- personal accounts of censorship and intellectual freedom challenges
- opinion pieces and essays on current and topical issues
- book and publication reviews

The most recent issue of the *Journal* is volume 4, no. 1 Spring 2019 and included commentaries, reviews and news articles.



LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund

The [Merritt Fund](#) was founded in 1970, in honor of Dr. LeRoy C. Merritt. The fund assists librarians who have lost their positions, or who need financial assistance, due to their stances on intellectual freedom issues. The fund also provides aid to librarians who are put under financial strain due to various discrimination concerns. In helping libraries face these issues, the Merritt Fund continues to serve an important role.

The Merritt Fund is supported solely by donations and contributions from concerned groups and individuals.

IFRT is sponsoring a "Reception for a Cause" hosted by ALA President Loida Garcia Febo to raise funds. For more information about the Merritt Fund, and how you can support this worthy cause, please visit the fund's website.

The Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund elected trustees for 2018–2019 are J. Douglas Archer, Steve Norman and Julia Warga.

THE MERRITT FUND

Providing Assistance to Librarians
Facing Discrimination or
Defending Intellectual Freedom

Immroth Award Winner Jim Duncan

The IFRT selected Jim Duncan as the recipient of the 2019 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award, which honors significant contributions defending intellectual freedom. The award consists of a citation and \$500. It will be presented at the ALA Annual Conference at this year's IFRT Awards Recognition & Fundraising Breakfast on Saturday, June 22.

Mr. Duncan is Executive Director of the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC), which negotiates prices with database vendors to Colorado libraries. In October 2018, a lawsuit was brought against EBSCO and CLiC by the parents of a Cherry Creek School District student who claimed that their middle school aged daughter was able to access "hardcore porn" through the school district's EBSCO subscription. Mr. Duncan led the fight against this challenge, and developed a guide for librarians called [Libraries Under Attack](#) that provides clear guidance on preparedness to meet similar challenges.

Established in 1979, upon the death of John Phillip Immroth, the founder and first chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the Immroth Memorial Award honors the courage, dedication, and contribution of a living individual, group, or organization who has set the finest kind of example for the defense and furtherance of the principles of intellectual freedom. Members of the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee are: Chair Rebecca Moorman, Tyrone Cannon, Michael Furlong, Russell Hall, Ray James, Candy Morgan, Kelley Rowan, and Lynda Salem Poling.



JIM DUNCAN

Hodges Award Winner Utah Library Association

The Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Chapter Relations Award recognizes an intellectual freedom focused organization that has developed a strong, multi-year, ongoing program or a single, one-year project that exemplifies support for intellectual freedom, patron confidentiality, and anti-censorship efforts. Named after Gerald Hodges, an ALA staff member from 1989 to 2006, who held positions as the associate director of communications and marketing as well as director of membership services and the Chapter Relations Office. His real passions were for intellectual freedom and chapter relations and upon his 2006 death, as a charter member of the ALA Legacy Society, willed a portion of his estate to support ALA's intellectual freedom efforts.

The Coalition Building Committee awarded the 2019 Hodges Award to the Utah Library Association. The Utah Library Association (ULA) took the lead in building a coalition of partners and creating a media campaign to reinstate access to EBSCO databases for more than 650,000 students after the Utah Education Network (UEN) blocked access over complaints that EBSCO databases contained pornographic content. ULA's rapid response and coalition building resulted in the reinstatement of access to EBSCO databases for students across Utah.

The award will be presented at ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. at the IFRT Awards Recognition and Fundraiser Breakfast featuring Sanford Ungar, director of the Free Speech Project at Georgetown University, on Saturday, June 22, 2019. Members of the Coalition Building Committee are: Chair Shenise McGhee, Jordon Andrade; Brian Greene, Heather Hopkins; Sarah Houghton, Isabel Klein, and Michael Oetting.

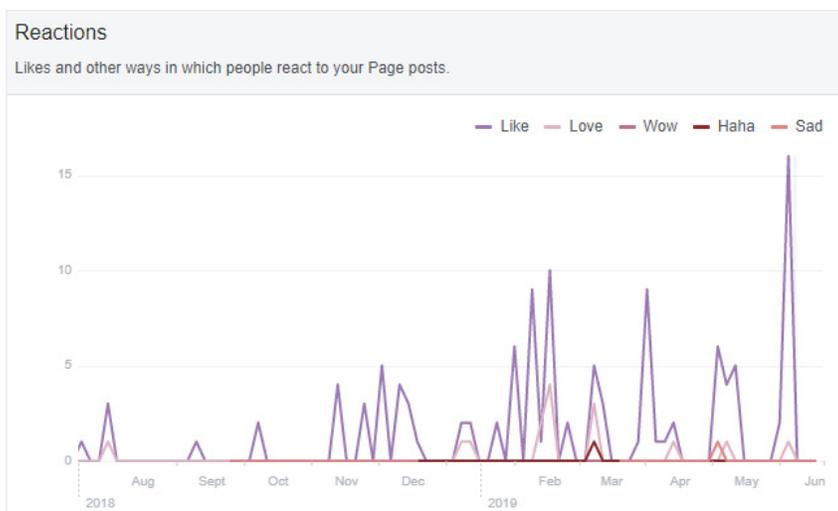
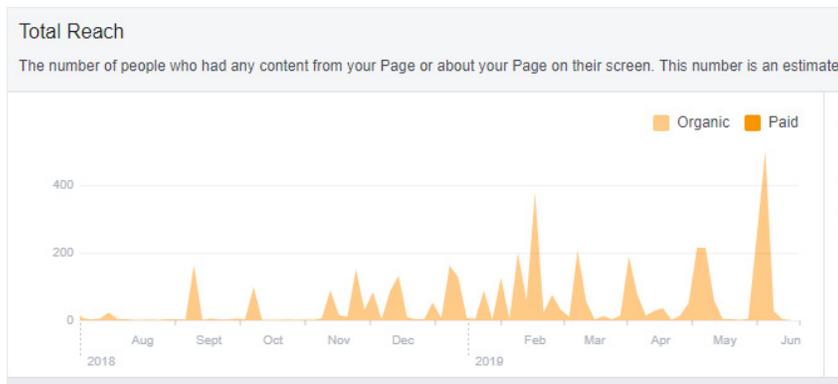
Publications and Communications Highlights

The 2018–19 year saw a number of IFRT website updates, with the goal of connecting members with information that is pertinent and can be navigated with ease. Did you know that along with an archive of intellectual freedom newsletters, the IFRT website also houses [meeting minutes](#) going back to 2015? The IFRT website also has a collection of ways to get involved with the intellectual freedom community as well as homepages for each of the awards linked to the round table.

The addition of the new [Resources](#) page allows members to access a number of relevant intellectual freedom resources in one spot. The Resources page includes links to all of IFRT’s social media accounts, links to other ALA intellectual freedom resources, a collection of intellectual freedom scholarship, and files that might be of interest. Check out the 2019 Banned Author Birthday Calendar on this page!

IFRT’s social media presence is growing! Along with official accounts on Facebook (currently 1,669 followers) and Twitter (currently 1,514 followers), IFRT now creates content for Instagram as well. Along with the official accounts, IFRT’s social media is home to a group we call Intellectual Freedom Fighters. To be an Intellectual Freedom Fighter join the separate IFF Facebook Group and follow it’s Twitter handle. The content on our social media platforms has included regular updates for [#IFRTBannedAuthorBirthdays](#), [#IFRTThoughtfulThursdays](#), [#intellectualfreedom](#), and current awareness links to intellectual freedom related news, and the promotion of both IFRT events and other events that might be of interest to the intellectual freedom community. Social Media is a great way to engage with the Intellectual Freedom Round Table; if there’s something you’d like to see, or something you wish we were doing, let us know!

Here’s what our official IFRT facebook account’s reach looked like over the past year:



One initiative that we are very interested in expanding is the collection of IFRT photos: photos from IF events, conference snaps, and award graphics are all items we would very much like to receive for use on the IFRT website, on ALA Connect, and perhaps even in future marketing materials. If you have an image you'd like to share; send it to intellectualfreedomroundtable@gmail.com, or to a member of the Publications and Communications committee!

Members of the Publications and Communications Committee are: Stephanie Barnaby, Daniel Abosso, Michael Groenendyk, Jane Holt, Lisa Hoover, Sarah Houghton, David Moody, Katie Spires, and Keith Weimer.

Program Committee Highlights

The Program Committee is very excited about our session at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference. We have chosen a topic of increasing interest to many inside and outside the library field: the Drag Queen Story Time phenomenon. It's a subject that has produced a lot of loving support and a great deal of hateful controversy, and therefore a suitable topic for our program this year.

Drag Queen Story Time (or Hour) is a program that goes on in libraries across the nation, in which drag queens and kings read stories to groups of children. The program, to quote the creators of *Drag Queen Story Hour*, "captures the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like this, kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real." It's a noble, and important endeavor, which we welcome.

Sadly, there have been malcontents raising their voices in opposition to DQST; there has been a backlash to drag queen story events in libraries in Texas, South Carolina, Indiana, Kentucky, and elsewhere. Fortunately, in most cases community support for these events has vastly outweighed protests, but there still remains an element of prejudice and hatred against these events. Libraries and librarians who want to put on these events need to consider both the advantages and the risks; this panel was designed in part to provide librarians with guidance and advice.

The panelists will include:

- **Michelle Tea.** Michelle is an author, poet, activist, and a voice in the queercore community. In 2015, she founded Drag Queen Story Hour in San Francisco, making her one of the originators of the concept. Michelle will talk about the origins of the program and its cultural and human values.
- **John Spears.** John is the Chief Librarian and CEO of the Pikes Peak Library District (Colorado). PPLD was the site in 2018 of a DGSH event, and John will speak from the librarian's point of view about what's involved in putting on such a program.
- **Kristin Pekoll.** Kristin is the Assistant Director of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom. She is the panel's expert on librarians' legal options and considerations, and what ALA can do for support, should they choose to put on a DGSH event.

The Committee is also working with the local Washington, DC drag community to bring in a drag performer who will read a story to the panel audience!

Members of the Program Committee are: Jeremy Brett, Daniel Abosso, Chris Corrigan, Russell Hall, Ray James, Shane Roopnarine, and Kelley Rowan.

Intellectual Freedom News Plug

Staying up to date on all the intellectual freedom issues is made a lot easier when you are [subscribed](#) to the Intellectual Freedom News, a curated weekly compilation from ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom. [OIF staff and news editors](#) pull pieces of interest from a variety of sources including:

- current book challenges in libraries and schools
- articles about privacy, internet filtering and censorship
- ALA activities, conferences and institutes, products, online learning opportunities, awards and grants, international exchanges, and more
- how to get involved and make the most of what ALA offers

Each weekly newsletter is archived on [IFRT's website](#).



A Year of eLearning

IFRT provides access to [webinars](#) to educate librarians and the public about the nature and importance of intellectual freedom and privacy. Here are a few from the last year.

- **Minds Unlocked: Supporting Intellectual Freedom Behind Bars** with Erin Boyington produced by the Freedom to Read Foundation on May 23, 2019.
- **Practicing Intellectual Freedom in Libraries** with Shannon Oltmann produced by Niche Academy on May 15, 2019.
- **Emerging Issues in Intellectual Freedom** with Ray James and Barbara Stripling produced by the Freedom to Read Foundation on May 2, 2019.
- **Don't #%?\$ My Graphic Novels: Conquering Challenges and Protecting the Right to Read** produced by AASL on April 24, 2019.
- **Privacy, Libraries, Patrons, and the Law** with Deborah Caldwell-Stone produced by ALA Publishing eLearning Solutions on April 8, 2019.
- **The First Amendment and Library Services** with Theresa Chmara produced by ALA Publishing eLearning Solutions on March 4, 2019.
- **Data Privacy: Protecting Your Library, Yourself, and Your Patrons** with Nicole Hennig produced by ALA Publishing eLearning Solutions on December 12, 2018.
- **Fake News or Free Speech: Is there a Right to be Misinformed?** Produced by the Freedom to Read Foundation on October 12, 2018.
- **Litigation and Legislative Reports** produced by the Freedom to Read Foundation on July 31, 2018.

Ideas for future webinars can be submitted via the [IFRT Project Proposal Form](#). If you're interested in developing a continuing educational opportunities for IFRT members, please join the [Education Advisory Special Committee](#) by emailing the incoming chair, Audrey Barbakoff at albarbakoff@kcls.org.

Thank you!

The Intellectual Freedom Round Table leaders are delighted to have such a robust and engaged membership. Thank you for sharing our interest in preserving and advocating for intellectual freedom. The 2019 IFRT Report is brought to you by the members of the Publications and Communications Committee:

- **Stephanie Barnaby**, Chair
- **Daniel Abosso**
- **Michael Groenendyk**
- **Jane Holt**
- **Lisa Hoover**
- **Sarah Houghton**
- **David Moody**
- **Katie Spires**
- **Keith Weimer**