

**ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
Report to Council
2010 Midwinter Meeting
Boston, MA
Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

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

Barbara M. Jones, Director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom

It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to Barbara M. Jones, the new Director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom. Barbara brings 25 years of active engagement on intellectual freedom issues to her new position. She served as treasurer of the Freedom to Read Foundation. She served on the FAIFE (Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression) IFLA Standing Committee, serving as Secretary to FAIFE from 2007–2009. She was a member of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (1990–1994, 2001–2003) and served on the IFC Privacy Subcommittee (2009). In 1986–87 and in 2004–05 she served as Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. She was an ACRL Legislative Advocate and also has served on state Intellectual Freedom Committees in Iowa and Minnesota. As a FAIFE trainer and expert advisor, Barbara has developed curricula and training programs and has conducted workshops internationally. We are thrilled to welcome her in this new role within ALA’s intellectual freedom community.

INFORMATION

Traditional Cultural Expressions

The IFC endorsed *Librarianship and Traditional Cultural Expressions: Nurturing Understanding and Respect* and the Resolution to Endorse the Statement “Librarianship and Traditional Cultural Expressions: Nurturing Understanding and Respect.” Though it was not a unanimous vote, the IFC understands that this is an evolving issue in an information universe where there are no borders. As such, we feel it is important to be engaged in this ongoing conversation so that we can continue to speak for our core values of access and intellectual freedom.

PROJECTS

Emerging Leaders

The IFC will work with a team of five librarians from ALA's Emerging Leaders initiative to revise the *Libraries and the Internet Toolkit*. The goal of the project is to develop a resource which will assist librarians in managing Internet use in libraries and educating their public about how to use online resources effectively, in accordance with the *Library Bill of Rights*, the ALA Code of Ethics, and ALA policy. Martin Garnar, chair of IFC, will serve as member mentor and Deborah Caldwell-Stone, deputy director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom, will serve as staff liaison. Our emerging leaders are Eileen Bosch, Toni Dean, Mara Degnan-Rojeski, Amanda Robillard, and Ngoc-Yen Tran. The new version of the *Libraries and the Internet Toolkit* will be ready by the 2010 Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

National Conversation on Privacy

The Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) hosted a fantastic event at this Midwinter Meeting on Saturday, January 16, to help launch ALA's new privacy initiative, Choose Privacy Week. A large and lively crowd gathered to enjoy cookies, refreshments, and a program featuring social critic Hal Niedzviecki, author of *The Peep Diaries: How We're Learning to Love Watching Ourselves and Our Neighbors*. After a welcome and introduction by ALA President Camila Alire, Niedzviecki talked about his interest in what he terms the age of "peep culture": a tell-all, show-all, know-all digital phenomenon that is dramatically altering notions of privacy, individuality, security, and even humanity. Using personal stories, humor, and incisive critical thinking, Niedzviecki highlighted crucial issues around privacy and self-disclosure that are at the forefront of ALA's initiative to generate a national conversation about privacy in a digital age.

ALA's efforts will culminate in the first-ever Choose Privacy Week, May 2–8, 2010, and will be an ongoing education and awareness initiative similar to Banned Books Week. Those attending the Saturday event at Midwinter also learned about new tools for libraries to educate and engage their users, and encourage citizens to think critically and make informed choices about their privacy. Following the program, the author took time to greet audience members and sign copies of *The Peep Diaries*, which were given away to the first 100 attendees.

All Choose Privacy Week materials (posters, bookmarks, buttons, and resource guide) are complete and for sale in the ALA Store at www.alastore.ala.org. The *Choose Privacy Week Resource Guide* in particular was a major undertaking and a huge success, thanks to the many ALA members who contributed content and resources to share.

Choose Privacy Week is made possible through a seed grant from the Open Society Institute (OSI) and we thank OSI for their generous support. OIF will continue to pursue other funding opportunities as well.

Civic engagement is a key aspect of this initiative and OIF is pleased to collaborate with the Libraries Foster Civic Engagement Member Initiative Group, particularly in light of ALA's recently announced designation as a Public Policy Institute by the Kettering Foundation.

IF Manual Progress Report

The manuscript for the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* has been sent to ALA Editions. The book will be released during the 2010 Annual Conference. Web-based documents that supplement the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, such as the Q & As, are being worked on by the IFC and will be released in conjunction with the Manual. The Committee would like to thank Candace Morgan, editor of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, for all her dedication and meticulous attention in shepherding the project.

Prisoner's Right to Read

The IFC is beginning review of the Prisoners' Right to Read statement recently posted to ALA Connect by Diane Walden of the LSSPS Library Service to Prisoners Forum. The Intellectual Freedom Committee will be using the LSSPS document content to begin work on drafting a policy statement in this area at our spring meeting.

Banned Books Week

2009 marked the 28th anniversary of Banned Books Week (BBW), which was held from September 26 through October 3.

The week kicked off with the annual Banned Books Week Read-Out!, held on Saturday, September 26, in Bughouse Square, the historic free speech arena in Chicago. OIF, the McCormick Freedom Project, and the Newbery Library hosted this remarkable event. Five of the ten most challenged authors from the 2008 Top Ten Frequently Challenged Books list came together to read from their books that have caused so much controversy. The authors were welcomed by ALA President Camila Alire and introduced by Chris Crutcher, a frequently challenged author and long-time supporter of the freedom to read. In addition to the readings, the CityLit Theatre Company of Chicago and the Chicago Public Library's Teen Volume Reader's Theatre Troupe performed dramatic readings of banned and challenged books.

Banned Books Week 2010 begins on September 25 and continues through October 2. All BBW merchandise, including posters, bookmarks, t-shirts, and tote bags, are sold and marketed through ALA Graphics (<http://www.alastore.ala.org/>). More information on Banned Books Week can be found at <http://www.ala.org/bbooks>.

OIF and ALTAFF Webinars

OIF is partnering with the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF) to present three one-hour webinars in February for library trustees on the topic of controversial materials in library collections.

The webinars, entitled “Controversial Materials in the Library: Supporting Intellectual Freedom in Your Community,” are intended to help trustees understand the basics of intellectual freedom in libraries. They will cover information on collection development policies, procedures for handling challenges to library materials, and tips on responding to controversies that may arise. Angela Maycock, OIF Assistant Director, will lead the webinars.

The webinars will be offered February 17, 2010, 4–5:00 p.m. EST; February 23, 2010, 2:00–3:00 p.m. EST; and February 26, 2010, noon–1:00 p.m. EST.

Each session will include the same content. Registration is limited to 60 participants per session. The cost is \$49 for individuals, \$39 for ALTAFF members, and \$95 for a group of two or more attendees at the same location.

To register for “Controversial Materials in the Library: Supporting Intellectual Freedom in Your Community,” visit <http://www.ala.org/oif/onlinetrainings> or call ALA Customer Service at (800) 545-2433 x5.

LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund

The LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund, founded in 1970 to help librarians who have been denied employment rights because of their defense of intellectual freedom or because of discrimination, is 40 years old in 2010!

To celebrate this landmark anniversary, the Merritt Fund will be having a gala celebration and dinner on Monday, June 28, 2010 in conjunction with ALA Annual Conference. The event will be held at the world-famous Folger Shakespeare Library from 6:30–9:30 p.m. and will feature a special address by ALA past president Carol Brey-Casiano. In addition, the Folger Library is offering a special “behind the scenes” tour starting at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets for the gala and the tour are available via Annual Conference registration. The Merritt Fund 40th Anniversary Celebration is cosponsored by ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Round Table and ALA President Camila Alire. Help the Merritt Fund help librarians in need by attending the 40th Anniversary Celebration or making a donation to the Merritt Fund!

For more information on the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund, or to donate, visit <http://www.merrittfund.org>.

ACTION

Resolution in Honor of the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund's Fortieth Anniversary

The IFC worked with the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund trustees to craft a resolution honoring the Fortieth Anniversary of the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund. The Committee is pleased to put forward this Resolution in Honor of the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund's Fortieth Anniversary and urges Council to adopt the resolution, CD #19.1.

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
Martin Garnar (Chair)
Helen Ruth Adams
Doug Archer
Loida Garcia-Febo
David Gunckel
Terri Kirk
Bowie Kotrla

Trina Magi
Barbara Stripling
Gail A. Weymouth
Jerilynn A. Williams
Bowie Kotrla
Rebecca Blakeley (intern)
M. Teresa Doherty (intern)
Rebecca S. McKee (intern)

Resolution in Honor of the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund’s Fortieth Anniversary

WHEREAS, the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund was established in 1970 in the memory of Dr. LeRoy C. Merritt, one of the library profession’s staunchest opponents of censorship and one of its most vigorous defenders of intellectual freedom; and

WHEREAS, the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund provides direct financial assistance to librarians who are denied employment rights or discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, age, disability, or place of national origin; or threatened with loss of employment or discharged because of their stand for the cause of intellectual freedom, including promotion of freedom of the press, freedom of speech, defense of privacy rights, and the freedom of librarians to select items for their collections from all the world’s written and recorded information; and

WHEREAS, Judith F. Krug provided unwavering support and tireless advocacy for librarians in need through her decades of service (1970 – 2009) as the first and longtime Secretary to the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund; and

WHEREAS, Barbara M. Jones brings many years of library service, as well as teaching, writing, and active engagement on intellectual freedom issues, to her position as the new Secretary of the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund; and

WHEREAS, over \$100,000 has been awarded to dozens of recipients over the past forty years to help pay legal bills, cover living expenses, and provide general support to eligible librarians during times of professionally-related distress; and

WHEREAS, the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund continues to be a necessary source of support to librarians facing discrimination for who they are or for their defense of intellectual freedom issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association congratulates the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund on its fortieth anniversary, commends the Merritt Fund for its continued dedication to supporting librarians who are experiencing discrimination or fighting for the cause of intellectual freedom, and urges its members to financially support the Merritt Fund.