

IFRT Report

Issue 83: Summer 2021

INTELLECTUAL
FREEDOM
ROUND TABLE

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From the Chair

by Wanda Mae Huffaker

I have written so many drafts of this 2020-2021 Annual Report of the IFRT because I have so many thoughts and emotions. Google Docs has saved them all, and I will be able to remember how I felt about this year: surprised, overwhelmed, worried, grateful, impressed and accepted. I was surprised that anyone voted for me, overwhelmed at the very many responsibilities of the Round Table, worried that I could never do them, very grateful when I understood the role of committees, and impressed at the efficient and extraordinary way each committee took on their responsibilities. And I was very, very humbled and thankful for the acceptance of my faults and shortcomings. The congeniality and fellowship that I felt among all members of our Round Table has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Mack Freeman, a previous Executive Board Chair, organized a five-year plan for Strategic Goals (ala.org/rt/ifrt/StrategicPlan) consisting of Financial Health, Speaking Our Minds, Internal Advocacy and Member Services. I was a Director-At-Large at the time and was on the task force that helped write them. As we went into 2020-2021, the financial picture had changed substantially from when we set the goals, and that surplus we discussed no longer existed. But in the light of two annual conferences and Midwinter conference being held virtually, our expenses being reduced and minimal, the magic of Kristin Pekoll, and things with numbers I do not understand, I feel that we did achieve, albeit by default, a measure of financial prudence. I would like to take the opportunity at this time to thank Steve Norman for stepping in mid-year and filling the position as Treasurer when a vacancy occurred. This is the second time Steve has done this, and his service is so appreciated. Steve is also, for the record, truly one of the kindest people I have ever met.

I started working for Internal Advocacy in the spring of 2020, when the RTCA (Round Table Coordinating Assembly) organized a task force to look at standardizing a template for bylaws. There was a recommendation that initially came out of the SCOE (Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness) recommendations, and RTCA felt that if the Round Tables took the initiative themselves, they could draft their own document. I became involved early on, and IFRT, myself, Kristin and Trish Hull of the Bylaws Committee were involved. We not only have a standardized document that was agreed upon by the 19 Round Tables, but had a voice in some organizational changes proposed by Forward Together relating to round tables. Working together with other round tables gave us an opportunity to lead and display the strengths that we have. It was a significant unifying experience.

When I was elected I thought about what I could do for Member Services, ways to increase membership and involvement, and how to help our members feel closer. Previously as Membership Chair, I felt a personal stewardship over the members. I had a sense of failure when I read the names of those who did not renew their membership. Because of the friendship I felt with people I had come to know, I wanted to encourage this same feeling of community. I read our history and the grassroots beginning. I wanted a way for us to all be in the same room, discussing important topics. This past year we have truly been in the same room, in our comfy clothes, with our pets, conducting our business, and discussing issues of intellectual freedom. I feel like it has opened doors for more members to participate and ways to involve more people than ever.



WANDA MAE HUFFAKER

I wanted to use Speaking Your Mind to invite members to come together for conversation. The Round Table was organized as a forum for discussion on intellectual freedom. This year we were able to hold three Happy Hour events that invited casual conversation to offer members opportunities to do that.

The first was held on November 20th. We discussed whether the classics should be replaced in the curriculum with newer and more relevant materials. I may have been of two minds as several people made excellent points and I agreed with them, or at least they gave me something to ponder. The Happy Hour on March 8th was in conjunction with the opening of ALA voting to encourage more votes. We had an opportunity to listen to the candidates and make our decisions. It was very difficult for me as I feel like each person is a friend of mine. On May 14th there was another Happy Hour called "When Publishers Pull the Plug." We discussed what to do with books like the six Dr. Seuss books, and The Adventures of Ook and Gluk by Dav Pilkey when they are pulled by publishers. We also discussed Dr. Seuss himself, some of our favorites, and what we thought should be done with his books. We again did not reach a consensus about what should be done, but did have a forum for civil expression.

At Midwinter I was pleasantly surprised at the opportunity that arose to speak our mind. It occurred over the "Resolution to condemn white supremacy and fascism as antithetical to library work." I didn't recognize it as such initially, when Emily Knox asked us if we were going to discuss it. I am always nervous at conducting, and I had hoped we could slip past the subject, because of the discussion we had previously held on ALA Connect. I respect Emily; she is one of the brightest writers on intellectual freedom I have read and I knew we had to proceed, even if I was afraid of how to maneuver it online. Our entire meeting was an example of civil discourse. It was not one-sided, and there was opportunity for all those who wished to express an opinion to do so. Kristin Pekoll and Ellie Diaz managed the online hands, and Deborah Caldwell-Stone helped me negotiate what to do when time ran out. The initial panic I felt was managed by the OIF (Office for Intellectual Freedom) staff, the civility of our members, and the willingness of all those attending to discuss a very important issue. This was a perfect example of speaking your mind. For the record, and for history, we voted to support it, with the caveat that IFC (Intellectual Freedom Committee) will be involved in the language, mainly the word neutral.

The Committees will write about their extraordinary things they did, and I am so impressed that even in this year of the world shutting down, we did not shut down. We were Intellectual Freedom Grub Hub from Alaska to Florida, Chicago to Iowa and Boston to Salt Lake City (where I live). All across the country we picked up and delivered. I am grateful for the patience you have shown me for any mistakes I have made, for those things I haven't known, for ideas I believe that are different from yours, for choices I may have made that you would not have made. I believe that is what intellectual freedom is about. The freedom to make choices that others may not make, to believe in ideas that some don't believe, to make mistakes and to learn from them. I thank everyone for the opportunity to serve, it has been my privilege.

Sincerely,
Wanda Mae Huffaker
IFRT Chair, 2020-2021

Executive Committee 2020-2021

OFFICERS

- Wanda Mae Huffaker, Chair
- Sam Helmick, Chair-Elect
- Rebecca Moorman, Secretary
- Steve Norman, Treasurer
- Audrey Barbakoff, Past-Chair
- Kristin Joy Anderson, Director-at-Large
- Stephanie Barnaby, Director-at-Large
- Angela Ocana, Director-at-Large
- Jeremy Brett, Director-at-Large
- Martin Garnar, IFRT Councilor

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- Trish Hull, Bylaws and Organization Committee
- Shane Roopnarine, Coalition Building Committee
- Sarah Hartman-Caverly, Education Advisory Special Committee
- Cyndi Robinson, John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee
- Johannah Genett, Membership Promotion Committee
- Ma'Lis Wendt, Merritt Fund Support Committee
- Audrey Barbakoff, Nominating Committee
- Charles Kratz, Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award Committee
- Jennifer Steele, Program Committee
- Amanda Vazquez, Publications and Communications Committee

IFRT Councilor Update

by Martin Garnar

As your IFRT representative on ALA's governing body, I'd like to share a few updates from the ALA Council regarding next steps for the association. Before I dive in, let's review the current structure of Council. We have Councilors representing different constituencies: divisions, state chapters, round tables, and at-large members, giving us over 180 voting members on Council. All of our votes carry the same weight, though the size of our constituencies varies. For example, in the latest round of ALA elections, the minimum number of votes needed to get elected as a Councilor-at-Large was larger than the biggest round table, and the chapter Councilors from Wyoming and California have equal authority. In some ways, it's like mixing the representation principles of the House and Senate into one single body. Some people think Council is too big to be effective, while others like the broad representation afforded by the current model. With that in mind, here are those updates:

- In order to keep IFRT informed about what's happening on Council, I share reports at the conclusion of each conference. You can find them on the IFRT Connect page and I would encourage you to read them if you're interested in the workings of Council, including the actions we take, the resolutions we debate, and the discussions we have. There's always something interesting in addition to the more mundane business items.
- Much of Council's time continues to be devoted to the Forward Together proposals, which would reshape the association's governance structures and membership participation opportunities. There's a separate website with their report as well as ongoing discussions on ALA Connect. I have been part of the Council's resolutions working group that is crafting resolutions that will bring concrete proposals for making changes to the ALA governance structure and have been advocating for a larger voice for intellectual freedom than is currently proposed, but it remains to be seen if those efforts will be effective.
- After more than a year of operating in a virtual environment, Council has demonstrated that we do not need to meet in person to conduct business, though our meeting schedule is still constrained by the current bylaws that assume a physical meeting twice a year. Watch for my updates on Council activities after the 2021 Annual conference to get the latest news on what's happening with our governance structure.

It has been my privilege to represent IFRT on Council for the last six years and to be a voice for intellectual freedom during our deliberations. I have every confidence in my successor Peter Coyl, and I look forward to continuing my participation in IFRT.



MARTIN GARNAR

2021 Spring Election Results

IFRT appreciates those members who stood for election for the 2021-2022 year and the participation of our membership in voting for these positions in the Round Table. Congratulations to those who were elected and will serve in the coming year!

- Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect: Rhonda Evans
- Directors-at-Large: Johana Orellana Cabrera and Amanda Vazquez
- IFRT Councilor: Peter Coyl
- Treasurer: Dr. Jennifer E. Steele

Members of the Nominating Committee are Audrey Barbakoff (chair) and Angela Ocana.

IFRT Sponsored Sessions at ALA Annual Conference Virtual Event 2021

This year, ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition will again be virtual due to the global pandemic. The Intellectual Freedom Round Table is sponsoring the IFRT Chair's Program, titled "Problematic Titles and You: Inclusive Collections, Hot Topics, and Intellectual Freedom." As problematic titles can be a hot topic in all types of libraries today, this live program features a variety of different voices as we explore how to address problematic titles in your library with diversity audits and other tools.

IFRT is also co-sponsoring three programs with ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) for the event. The live program "Freedom of the Press, Assembly, and Speech: First Amendment Issues Today" features experts as they share how libraries can engage their communities in conversation about these important rights and what actions libraries can take to support these rights.

"Can I Wear or Say That? Free Speech in the Workplace," an on-demand program, explores issues facing today's library workers as they navigate free speech and expression in the workplace. What can employers say about dress codes? Can they regulate what you post on social media after hours? Are you allowed to talk about your salary with coworkers? Hear from experts as they answer these questions.

In the on-demand program, "Social Justice Requires Broadband Access," learn from librarians and policy experts about why broadband access is necessary. This past year has shown the urgent need for stable and reliable internet access across the country. Stories of students using free Wi-Fi at fast food restaurants to attend school peppered the coverage of the pandemic.

These sessions are a product of the hard work of the Program Committee whose members are Dr. Jennifer Steele (chair), Kristin Anderson, Nancy Aravecchia Shah, Peter Coyl, Alonzo Crawford, Angie Mirafior, Katie Spires, and Josh Stone.

Education Committee Year in Review

The Education Advisory Special Committee celebrated a successful year of intellectual freedom programming in 2020-21, reaching an estimated 750 participants. Committee members Stephanie Barnaby, Jennifer Steele, and chair Sarah Hartman-Caverly organized events in observance of Banned Books Week and Freedom to Read Week, two IFRT Reads discussions, happy hours, and also partnered with other round table committees on an IFRT Salon and monthly #IFRTChat Twitter threads.



2020 saw the first ever all-virtual Banned Books Week. The Education Committee developed an original virtual escape room, *Escape the Dead End of Censorship!*, which was promoted on the Intellectual Freedom Blog and social media. The escape room was completed by more than 50 players, who shared that the escape room was fun, informative, and a nice break from usual programming in an optional feedback form. The Education Committee also moderated the GNCRT webinar, "Censorship: The Comics Code Authority & Ratings Systems," featuring Alex Cox from Image Comics, and cross-promoted other GNCRT Banned Books Week events. The week culminated in an IFRT Happy Hour watch party of *Scary Stories* followed by a Q&A with director Cody Meirick and OIF's Kristin Pekoll. The Education Committee also partnered with the Publications & Communications Committee to coordinate a #BannedBooksWeek Twitter campaign engaging numerous ALA personalities.

In observance of Freedom to Read Week (Canada) 2021, the Education Committee hosted the webinar panel, "Frosty Windows, Frosty Mirrors: Representation, Labeling, Discoverability, and the Chilling Effect." The event was moderated by Martin Garnar and featured seven panelists—Loida Garcia-Febo, Rhonda Evans, Amanda Vazquez, Laura Koltutsky, Rae-Anne Montague, Shannon Oltmann, and Desmond Wong—sharing of their expertise and experiences with social justice and intellectual freedom. More than 400 people registered for the event, which the Publications and Communications Committee promoted via social media, Connect, and the Intellectual Freedom Blog. There were 251 unique logins during the live event, and the event recording has been viewed more than 200 times via YouTube. "Frosty Windows, Frosty Mirrors" built on previous Freedom to Read Foundation programming co-sponsored by IFRT and the Education Committee.

The Education Committee organized two IFRT Reads discussions during 2020-21. In November 2020, IFRT Reads explored *Beyond Banned Books* by Kristin Pekoll, culminating in a discussion with the author in December. In April 2021, IFRT Reads examined *The Future of Academic Freedom* by Oboler Award-winning scholar, Henry Reichman, followed by a presentation and Q&A with the author in May. In both cases, the Education Committee secured permission from the rights holders to provide IFRT Reads participants with complimentary access to excerpts from the works.

The Education Committee also partnered within IFRT to bring programming opportunities to members. These include co-hosting the IFRT Salon on civic literacy with the Membership Promotion Committee in November 2020, which approximately 25 members attended to discuss civic literacy in the context of the election and decennial census, and facilitating monthly #IFRTChat Thoughtful Thursdays on Twitter in partnership with the Publications & Communications Committee. The committee also partnered with IFRT Chair Wanda Huffaker to coordinate IFRT Happy Hours.

Following a successful IFRT Executive Committee vote, the Education Advisory Special Committee merged with the Programming Committee to form the new IFRT Programming and Events Committee. Please read the column on the committee merger for more information.

Programs & Events Merger

IFRT members approved the new name Programming and Events Committee following the merger of the Program Committee and ad hoc Education Advisory Special Committee via a bylaws amendment vote during the spring election. The Programming and Events Committee is charged with planning and delivering member programming and events that meet the needs and strategic goals of IFRT.

Programming and Events combines the strengths of the former Program Committee with the successes of the Education Advisory Special Committee. The Program Committee organized intellectual freedom sessions and the IFRT Chair's program for ALA conferences. The Education Advisory Special Committee delivered additional IFRT programming throughout the year, including Banned Books Week observances and webinars, IFRT Reads discussions, and co-sponsored an IFRT Salon with the Membership Promotion Committee. The merged committee will also take the lead on IFRT awards ceremonies and social events, including happy hours and all-member gatherings.

The new committee will also seek input from IFRT members to inform program development, and solicit feedback on programs to assess how they are meeting the needs of members and the goals of the round table. Committee chair Jennifer Steele reports, "I am excited by the merging of the Program Committee with the Education Advisory Special Committee into our newly formed Programming and Events Committee. I believe moving forward this will better serve our IFRT membership with diverse and engaging programming that promotes IFRT's mission and fosters discussion around important issues related to intellectual freedom."

Member Spotlight Roundup

Meet, connect and learn about your IFRT colleagues!

Member Spotlight is a new initiative that showcases IFRT members and their diverse experiences in the library world. From public libraries to specialized libraries, from library students to library support staff—we know you make a difference where you serve.

JANUARY 2021

Kristin Joy Anderson is an academic librarian in the Western Chicago Suburbs. She grew up in West Central Illinois where there was nothing to do except read and chase down the outside kitties. She has a MS in Mass Communications and an MLIS. Her favorite books are *American Gods* and *Ready Player One*. In her spare time she reviews for *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*, and still enjoys chasing kitties. She is super into graphic novels and superhero movies, and can't wait for the next books for *Game of Thrones* because she hopes they redeem the last season. (oif.ala.org/oif/?p=24197)

MARCH 2021

Michael Blackwell is the Director of St. Mary's County Library (MD). He came to Maryland from Ohio, where he worked at Columbus Metropolitan and Worthington Libraries. He is the project manager for ReadersFirst, a member of the ALA Joint Digital Content Working Group, Co-chair of the CORE Architecture for Public Libraries Committee, Project

Manager for deploying SimplyE in Maryland, a frequent presenter at conferences and author of posts and articles on digital content, and a two-time winner of Dublin's (OH) Best Legs in Kilt Contest and Grand Leprechaun. In his spare time, he enjoys sailing, cycling, community engagement, and spending time with his spouse Lisa. (oif.ala.org/oif/?p=25241)

APRIL 2021

Molly Dettmann is a Teacher Librarian at Norman North High School in Norman, OK where she loves to promote reading, inquiry, and making in her library. She is the 2021-2022 Chair of Oklahoma Library Association's (OLA) Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Intellectual Freedom Roundtable and served as the Secretary of the OLA's former Intellectual Freedom Committee from 2017-2020. (oif.ala.org/oif/?p=25432)

MAY 2021

Julie Hornick is an instructional services librarian at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, FL, where she works with numerous departments as well as the Schools of Education and Nursing & Health Sciences. She came to FSC after 15 years in K-12 school libraries in South Carolina. She is the current Chair of the ACRL Instruction Section Teaching Methods Committee and is a member of the LIRT Conference Planning Committee, the Florida ACRL Board of Directors, and the Outreach Working Group of the Sunshine State Digital Network. In addition to baking, she enjoys playing pub trivia and board games with her husband and friends, going to in-person baseball games, movie theatres, and restaurants, and looks forward to being able to do all these things in the (hopefully) near future. (oif.ala.org/oif/?p=25865)

JUNE 2021

Katie Chamberlain, J.D., M.S.L.I.S., is adjunct faculty at the University of Illinois School of Information Sciences, where she serves on the Diversity Committee and has won awards for teaching excellence. Katie teaches graduate courses on information policy, information ethics, and libraries and society. Her research and publications focus on privacy, free speech, and copyright. For the Journal of Information Ethics, Katie authored a forthcoming article on aligning free speech with the social justice imperative and is the guest editor of a special issue on social justice.

Katie is a longtime advocate of intellectual freedom and privacy. She received the Gordon M. Conable Conference Scholarship to attend the Annual Meeting of the American Library Association in 2016 and served on the Freedom to Read Foundation Board of Trustees from 2017 to 2019, chairing the Conable Scholarship Committee. She was also a research associate at the Center for Information Policy Research at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she worked on an interdisciplinary research team with colleagues in the Netherlands.

Katie is licensed to practice law in Vermont and Illinois and is a registered yoga teacher. When she's not reading or studying French and German, she enjoys walking her miniature dachshund, Charlie Brown, baking Greek cookies with her spouse, and blogging at katiekritikos.com. (oif.ala.org/oif/?p=25955)

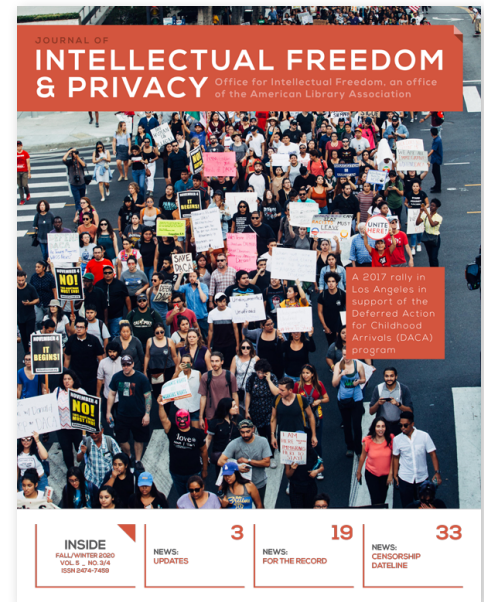
Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy

The Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy (JIFP) is a scholarly journal published by the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom. IFRT members receive a 50% discount on JIFP subscriptions as a membership benefit. (ala.org/aboutala/offices/oif/jifp)

JIFP articles are double-blind peer reviewed and cover topics including censorship, freedom of expression, data use and privacy. The journal also publishes case studies, commentaries, and book reviews on topics related to intellectual freedom. JIFP aspires "to be at the center of discourse on intellectual freedom and privacy." Submissions from practitioners and scholars in libraries, museums, archives, cultural heritage institutions, education, and other information environments are welcome.

With Shannon M. Oltmann as editor, JIFP is also a resource for keeping up with current developments in intellectual freedom. In the tradition of the ALA Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, JIFP publishes book bans and challenges in the "censorship dateline" column, court rulings in the "from the bench" column, legal controversies in the "is it legal?" column, as well as intellectual freedom "success stories."

Access to JIFP might also be available through institutional database subscriptions. For example, searchable, full-text access to JIFP is available through ProQuest's Social Sciences Premium Collection. Database access might offer email table of contents alerts as a value-added feature. Readers can enable this feature from the database publication homepage to receive mail notifications when new issues of JIFP are published. For more information, inquire with your local library!



LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund

Since 1970, the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund has provided support—monetary as well as personal—to librarians who:

- have been 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;
- have been denied employment rights because of defense of intellectual freedom: that is, 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, and the freedom of librarians to select items for their collections from all the world's written and recorded information.

THE MERRITT FUND

Providing Assistance to Librarians
Facing Discrimination or
Defending Intellectual Freedom

The Merritt Fund was established as a special trust in memory of LeRoy C. Merritt to provide direct financial aid to librarians faced with denial of these rights.

The Merritt Fund has made a huge difference for many people who have found themselves in difficult employment and defense of intellectual freedom situations.

Karla Shafer served as director of the Hooper (NE) Public Library for six and a half years before a controversy erupted in 2010 over the English classes she taught to immigrants in a nearby town on her days off. She resigned her position when the work environment became untenable. Three months later, her unemployment benefits were canceled, following an appeal from the city.

With money running out and few other options available to her, Karla turned to the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund for assistance. The Fund gave Karla \$5,000 to help pay her overdue bills and legal expenses. "What I perceived as harassment and punishment would have truly destroyed me had it not been for the Merritt Fund," Shafer said. "It is still hard to describe the emotional suffering of those months."

In 2011, Karla moved to Omaha and accepted a part-time library position. "It is very evident there comes a time for many of us when we need others—even strangers—to say 'Here, I'll help you. That could have been me!'"

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Merritt Fund, we are asking all IFRT members to consider making a donation. Your contribution will be there when a colleague needs help. Donations can be made at www.merrittfund.org.

The donation is not tax-deductible, but all funds are used to provide relief to our colleagues in need.

Members of the Merritt Fund Support Committee are Ma'Lis Wendt (chair), Nann Hilyard, Steve Norman, and Cyndi Robinson.

In addition to IFRT's Merritt Fund Support Committee, the Merritt Fund is managed by trustees elected every year. The LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund elections have just taken place and the 2021 trustees are Sara Dallas, Robert P. Holley, Steve Norman, and Julia Warga. Trustees meet to confidentially review applications and manage the Fund.

Immroth Award Winner: Martin Garnar

The 2021 John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award recipient is Martin Garnar, Director of Amherst College Library. Martin is an active leader of the ALA intellectual freedom community, having served the profession in every capacity imaginable. Throughout his career, Martin has served as a trustee and president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, chair of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, chair of the ALA Committee on Professional Ethics, chair of the IFC Privacy Committee, trustee of the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund, editor of the 10th edition and co-editor of the 9th edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual, and councilor of the IFRT.

Garnar is a tireless and influential champion of intellectual freedom who is well-respected by his colleagues. "Martin Garnar is a true advocate of intellectual freedom. Not only has he demonstrated his commitment to it professionally but has endeavored to instill what he has learned in others. He is truly deserving of the Immroth Award," said Peter Coyl, Library Director, Montclair Public Library, Montclair, NJ.

"Martin, without any doubt, embodies the principles of intellectual freedom and ethics. He generously shares his knowledge with us through his writing, presentations, and conversations. Through Martin's work, he has helped inform and educate others so that they too can continue to protect intellectual freedom and ethics," said Sara Dallas, Director, Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS), Saratoga Springs, NY.

Established in 1979, upon the death of John Phillip Immroth, 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. The award consists of a citation and \$500. John Phillip Immroth was a teacher, author, scholar, advocate, and defender of First Amendment rights. He was the founder and first chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table in 1973.

Read more about the Immroth Award and its past recipients. (ala.org/rt/ifrt/immroth)

Members of the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award Committee are: Chair Cyndi Robinson, Illinois Library Association; Johannah Genett, Hennepin County Library; Kristin E. C. Green, Penn State University Libraries; Dr. Linda Parsons, Ohio State University; and Lynda Poling, Long Beach Public Library.



Hodges Award Winner: Missouri Library Association

The IFRT Coalition Building Committee selected the Missouri Library Association (MLA) as this year's recipient of the Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Chapter Relations Award.

Proposed Missouri House Bill No. 2044, known as the "Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Act," sought to create "parental review boards" with the authority to remove items that it deemed to be "age-inappropriate sexual materials." This bill, if passed, would have withheld state aid from libraries failing to restrict access to materials and imposed criminal penalties on library personnel if they refused to comply with its provisions.

This legislation drew national attention, and the MLA responded quickly by working with its members to contact their state legislators. Through dialogue with public officials, they were effective in highlighting the role of library professionals in selecting materials. Support for the bill declined after state and national advocacy, and it ultimately failed to pass. When a similar bill was introduced in Tennessee, the MLA was able to support their colleagues by sharing strategies and advice.

The initial deadline for submissions was January 1st, but the committee later extended the due date to February 26th. The committee met in March to discuss nominations. In reviewing the MLA's entry, we noted how effectively the association was able to organize and focus the efforts of their members to address this unexpected issue. In working with their elected officials, they increased the visibility of their association and the values of intellectual freedom. Their work demonstrates the significant effort that is required to defend intellectual freedom and to keep our communities informed about how library materials are selected.

Cindy Thompson, President of the MLA, shared this statement on behalf of her association:

The Missouri Library Association will always stand against censorship and for the freedom to read, is grateful for the recognition of our efforts to fight legislation that compromised our principles. Thank you to Dan Brower, Cynthia Dudenhoffer, Erin Gray, Cindy Thompson, and the incredible number of Missouri Library Association members who successfully defeated Missouri House Bill No. 2044, known as the "Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Act." Missouri Library Association leadership provided incredible coordination and support to its members. Together we developed talking points, scheduled meetings, made phone calls, and wrote letters to representatives. Our united strengths created a basis for success in this instance and a stronger platform for advocacy in the future.

The Gerald Hodges Award recognizes an 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. The award is named after Gerald Hodges, an ALA staff member from 1989 to 2006. Chapter relations and intellectual freedom were his passions and he willed a portion of his estate to support those efforts. The award consists of \$1,000 and a citation and has been given since 2013. Read more about the Gerald Hodges Award and its past recipients. (ala.org/rt/ifrt/hodges)

Members of the Coalition Building Committee are: Chair Shane Roopnarine, University of Central Florida Libraries; Jeremy Brett, Texas A & M University Cushing Memorial Library; Ray James; Isabel Klein, Cuyahoga County Public Library; and Amanda Vazquez, Dubuque County Library.



Oboler Memorial Award to be Awarded Annually

The Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award, which honors a literary work or series of works in the area of intellectual freedom with a \$500 prize and certificate, will now be awarded annually. In the past, the Oboler Award was presented every other year, considering both books and journal articles in the same awards cycle. Beginning in 2022, the prize will be awarded annually, with a single article or thematically connected selection of journal articles considered in even years and book-length works in odd years. The Oboler committee will be seeking nominations for the 2022 journal article award in the fall of 2021. For more information on criteria of the award, past recipients or to submit a nomination please visit the Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award website. (ala.org/rt/ifrt/Oboler)

Members of the Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award Committee are Charles Kratz, Chair; Hannah Duff, Largo Public Library; Carole Nowicke, Indiana University; Eldon Ray James, Retired Librarian; and Angela Ocana, Eugene Public Library.

Membership Updates

FREE STUDENT MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

This spring, the Membership Promotion Committee embarked on a new initiative to increase membership of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. It offered free one-year memberships for students. Why? We believe that the Intellectual Freedom Roundtable is a valued resource for all library professionals throughout their careers, providing venues to discuss and debate topical issues and supporting those involved with censorship issues. We also know that during this pandemic, resources are stretched thin. To demonstrate IFRT's value, we offered free IFRT membership for library students with the belief that if a student becomes an IFRT member while in library school, they will see the value of this roundtable and become a lifelong member.

The campaign was incredibly successful in recruiting students—over 350 students requested membership in less than a week, and 150 new members were added! IFRT sponsored 113 current ALA members and 37 new ALA members.

It is now the job of IFRT leadership to engage these new members and demonstrate the value of an IFRT membership to ensure these new members renew their membership in 2022. We surveyed these new members to find out why they wanted membership and what will keep them as members (38 responded). This information is invaluable to find out what is driving new members.

When asked why they wanted to become a member, 39% said they do not feel knowledgeable enough about intellectual freedom and want to learn more; 29% said they are passionate about intellectual freedom; and 18% said they have concerns about how library workers embrace intellectual freedom and want to influence that.

When asked in what ways they plan to participate in IFRT in the coming year, 33% plan to attend virtual gatherings; 28% plan to advocate for intellectual freedom; 27% plan to engage in online discussions; and 9% plan to engage in committee meetings at the ALA Conference or Midwinter Meeting.

When asked what would influence whether or not they would renew their membership in 2022, 26% said that they would be influenced by the cost of an IFRT membership; 21% said the quality of online discussions; 19% said the quality of virtual gatherings; 17% said the cost of ALA membership; 9% said the quality of committee meetings; and 6% said their personal ability to influence the work of IFRT.

Finally, many thanks to these active and hard-working Membership Promotion Committee members: Jeremy Brett, Brittany Broz, Rhonda Evans, and Ray James.

Bylaws Updates

During the ALA Elections of 2021, three ballot initiatives were voted on by IFRT membership. All three items were approved. The changes to the by-laws are listed here:

- Ballot Item #1 proposed the name Programming & Events Committee to reflect the responsibilities of the committee. For the past couple of years, IFRT has had the Education Advisory Special Committee (a temporary ad hoc committee), in addition to the standing Program Committee. This amendment formalized the new standing committee name to represent the merger of these two committees to better streamline the work of planning all IFRT programs and events.
- Ballot Item #2 proposed a clarification to the process by which committee charges are made and updated. This amendment indicated that any change to the charge of a committee needs to be approved by the Executive Committee.
- Ballot Item #3 streamlined future changes to committee descriptions. The bylaws previously included a description of the charge of each standing committee. This amendment removed the standing committee charges from the bylaws. Standing committees remain named in the bylaws, and any changes to the committee charges must still be approved by the IFRT Executive Committee. Now charges and responsibilities of each committee are outlined in the IFRT Handbook which is managed by the Bylaws and Organization Committee and changes are not required to be approved during the annual election by the full IFRT membership.

Thank you to the Bylaws and Organization Committee for working to improve efficiency and recommending changes to the bylaws for IFRT: Trish Hull (chair), Stephanie Barnaby, Kristin Green, Clare Membiela, and Crystal Schimpf.

Publications & Communications Updates

In this past year, the members of the Publications & Communications Committee have worked hard to communicate with members through the IFRT Newsletter and our social media pages. IFRT's 1,542 Facebook fans and 1,821 Twitter followers frequently engage with the content our committee members share. Over the course of the year, our committee members have posted relevant content, and have so far made nearly 175 posts on Facebook and over 350 on Twitter. Many of these posts are sharing timely and interesting news articles related to intellectual freedom, but the committee has also created content for several ongoing campaigns.

- **Thoughtful Thursdays**—Monthly Twitter Chats on a variety of subjects which often tie into upcoming IFRT hosted events. Other topics from the past year include civic literacy, material challenges, privacy, and library advocacy.
- **IFToo**—Intellectual freedom goes far beyond book challenges and censorship. Weekly #IFToo posts highlight other issues that may not be top of mind in IF conversations, such as loyalty oaths, exhibits and performances of visual arts, or economic barriers, and directs readers back to the ALA Policy Manual for more information.
- **Member Spotlight**—IFRT would not be what it is without its amazing members. The monthly Member Spotlight highlights individual members of IFRT and explores their interests in librarianship, IFRT, and intellectual freedom.

Quarterly newsletters distribute information to membership about ongoing initiatives, upcoming programs, and resources related to intellectual freedom.

Roundtables are all about their members and providing a space for members to learn, converse, and grow together as professionals. The work of the Publications & Communications Committee to foster these conversations among members is vital to the development of the roundtable's members and is greatly appreciated.

Members of the Publications & Communications Committee: Amanda Vazquez (Chair), Kristin Anderson, Laren Anderson, Sarah Hartman-Caverly, and Andrea Puglisi.

Intellectual Freedom News

Staying up-to-date with intellectual freedom issues is easy with this "must read" newsletter from the Office of Intellectual Freedom. Subscribe to Intellectual Freedom News, a free weekly compilation of news which covers topics 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

(ala.informz.net/ala/pages/oif_ifnews_signup)



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 2020 IFRT Report is brought to you by the members of the Publications and Communications Committee:

— Amanda Vazquez (Chair)

— Sarah Hartman-Caverly

— Kristin Anderson

— Andrea Puglisi

— Laren Anderson