

## **Intellectual Freedom Committee Report January 2017 . Council Doc #19 (partial)**

IFC Chair Pam Klipsch presented her report (CD#19) that included revision of the form for reporting challenges to include hate crimes; six new library privacy checklists; a Q&A on makerspaces, media labs, and other forums for content creation in libraries; and guidelines to minimize the negative effects of internet content filters on intellectual freedom. A resolution on access to accurate information (CD#19.10) was amended upon a motion by Executive Board member Peter Hepburn to include “librarians and library workers of all types” in one resolved clause. The motion to amend passed, with the direction that further wordsmithing would be done by the ALA Executive Office to ensure consistent language. The motion to accept the IFC report as amended passed.

### **Revamped Challenge Reporting Form and Updated Challenge Support Pages**

The Office for Intellectual Freedom unveiled its redesigned reporting form and updated Challenge Support pages on the ALA website on Dec. 20. The new, simplified form reduces the number of questions by more than 60 percent and includes an entry to allow for the reporting of hate crime in libraries.

The Challenge Support pages on the ALA website, which include policy guidelines, FAQs and Library Bill of Rights interpretations, have been migrated from the Banned Books Week microsite to its own section in ALA’s Professional Tools. OIF’s goal in rolling out these new challenge reporting tools is to encourage educators to report censorship (an informal 2011 survey confirmed that only about 20% of challenges were reported to ALA) and offer a navigable resource where librarians can easily find support when responding to challenges and hate crimes.

### **Online Learning**

This fall, OIF offered three engaging and successful webinars. Academics Emily Knox, Joyce Latham and Candace Morgan reviewed the origins and evolution of censorship in “History of Intellectual Freedom and Censorship,” a webinar co-sponsored by OIF and the Freedom to Read Foundation. The next month, notable ACLU leader Emilio De Torre spoke on the complexities of student activism in the OIF webinar “Students Rights, Protests and Free Speech.” Finally, the office hosted a free webinar in January that introduced the new challenge reporting resources, walking participants through reporting forms, office resources and real-world censorship examples. This webinar received nearly 100 registrations.

### **Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy**

Michael Zimmer, associate professor at the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and director of the Center for Information Policy Research, has been appointed editor of the Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy (JIFP) through the fall of 2018. Shannon Oltmann, assistant professor at the School of Information Science, College of Communication & Information at the University of Kentucky will serve as associate editor, working with Zimmer on content and editorial guidelines for the journal. Martin Garnar, dean of

the Kraemer Family Library at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, has agreed to serve as production editor, managing article submissions.

The new issue of the Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy is now available at [journals.ala.org/jifp](http://journals.ala.org/jifp). It features Garnar's article "Professional Principles and Ethics in LIS Graduate Curricula," and includes additional features, book reviews, and opinion pieces in addition to the latest news on censorship challenges, court decisions, legal controversies and success stories.

### **OIF's 50th Anniversary Focuses on the Library Bill of Rights**

The Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Freedom Committee are both charged with upholding the Library Bill of Rights, their core document and the foundation for all their work. In honor of OIF's 50th anniversary, the office offered free pocket-sized, downloadable Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read Statements on its website. It also gifted packets of 50 to those who filled out an online request form.

In December, the office also unveiled an ALA- and OIF-branded Library Bill of Rights poster, now available at the ALA Store. First drafted in 1938 and adopted by ALA in 1939, the Library Bill of Rights was written to speak out against the "growing intolerance, suppression of free speech and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals." It's the only Library Bill of Rights-themed product on the ALA Store.

### **Privacy Subcommittee and Choose Privacy Week**

This fall, the IFC's Privacy Subcommittee partnered with the LITA Patron Privacy Interest Group to create seven checklists to provide libraries with practical guidance on implementing the Library Privacy Guidelines published by the Intellectual Freedom Committee in 2016. These include:

Library Privacy Checklist Overview

Library Privacy Checklist for Library Websites, OPACs, and Discovery Services

Library Privacy Checklist for Students in K-12 Schools

Library Privacy Checklist for Public Access Computers and Networks

Library Privacy Checklist for E-book Lending and Digital Content Vendors

Library Privacy Checklist for Data Exchange Between Networked Devices and Services

Library Privacy Checklist for Library Management Systems / Integrated Library Systems

The subcommittee submitted the checklists to the IFC, which approved all seven documents. They are attached as information items 19.1 – 19.7.

The Privacy Subcommittee has planned both a webinar and a series of blog posts to observe this year's Choose Privacy Week, which takes place May 1-7, 2017. The theme for this year's Choose Privacy Week is "Pretty Darn Good Privacy." As part of its preparations, the subcommittee is revamping and redesigning the Choose Privacy Week website to serve as a hub for privacy education and guidance for libraries and librarians seeking information on implementing best privacy practices.

The subcommittee will begin work on additional privacy guidelines and checklists to address a number of emerging privacy issues for libraries. These include assistive devices, the use of biometric identifiers, mobile applications, and the use of patron data for marketing. The subcommittee also plans to revise the existing document, "RFID in Libraries: Privacy and Confidentiality Guidelines" which was last revised in 2006.

## **ISSUES**

Hate crimes and challenges to library materials

Since 1990 – when ALA began formally documenting censorship – OIF has received an average of one challenge per day. Since November 2017, OIF began to observe an uptick in the number of hate crimes in libraries, prompting the office to begin documenting such incidents for the challenge database. Working with the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, OIF may be able to develop additional support for the field.

All reports submitted to the Office for Intellectual Freedom are kept confidential unless the challenge is reported in the media or if the person reporting the challenge has given permission to share information about the challenge. The following are public reports.

### **Material Challenges**

The following are a few notable cases of the public challenges OIF has documented since Sept. 1, 2016:

Accomack County Public Schools (VA) received a formal complaint from a parent against the use of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* due to their racial slurs. The books were retained.

Issaquah High School (WA) library received a formal complaint from a parent whose 14-year-old son brought home the comic book *Mangaman* by Barry Lyga. The book contains a sexual scene between two characters. The book was retained.

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky was challenged for "supporting illegal and immoral behavior" at Hempstead High School (IA). It was retained.

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *The God of Small Things* were withdrawn from Lemont High School (IL) after a parent submitted a complaint.

When an excerpt of *Wolf Boys: Two American Teenagers and Mexico's Most Dangerous Drug Cartel* by Dan Slater circulated in *Texas Monthly*, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Directors Review Committee read the book and decided to ban it because it contained "material on the setting up and operation of criminal schemes or how to avoid detection of criminal schemes by lawful authorities charged with the responsibility of detecting such illegal activity." Gabriel Cardona and Rosalio Reta, the subjects of *Wolf Boys*, are current inmates of TDCJ.

### **Author Disinvitations**

At Northumberland County School District (VA), author Steve Watkins was asked by a principal to read from another book at a middle school assembly because of his book's profanity. In a high school English class, the same principal interrupted Watkins' discussion to escort him from the building.

## **Hate Crimes**

Since November, OIF has documented nine hate crimes. These public reports include a patron threatening a library worker at the Salt Lake County Library's Columbus Branch, swastika vandalism at the Kansas City Public Library (MO) and Cottage Grove Public Library (OR), and vandalism at the Casa Guadalupe Literacy Center (WI) and Everett Public Library (WA).

## **Intellectual Freedom Q&As and Guidelines**

The Intellectual Freedom Committee approved "Q&A: Makerspaces, Media Labs and Other Forums for Content Creation in Libraries." The Q&A addresses uses, eligibility, liability and policies of content creation in libraries. It has undergone numerous legal reviews, including a vetting by FTRF general counsel Theresa Chmara. The document is attached as information item 19.8.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee also approved "**Guidelines to Minimize the Negative Effects of Internet Content Filters on Intellectual Freedom.**" The document is attached as information item 19.9. The IFC will continue elaborating on the guidelines with a Q&A, tools and practical examples supplement.

## **PROJECTS**

### **Banned Books Week**

The 2016 Banned Books Week (Sept. 25 - Oct. 1) theme was "Stand Up for Your Right to Read," featuring graphics centering on superhero icons and highlighting diverse authors and themes. For the ALA-led initiative, ALA collaborated with SAGE Publishing to host "Battling Bannings," a webinar on censorship from an author's perspective that included author Herthel, co-author of "I Am Jazz." OIF Assistant Director Kristin Pekoll also led a "50 Shades of Banned Books Week" webinar, outlining program and display ideas.

The Public Affairs Office tracked more than 1,176 articles/mentions of Banned Books Week, resulting in a circulation rate of more than 2.8 billion. Coverage highlights included Publishers Weekly, TIME, The Guardian (UK), TIME for Kids, National Geographic, CNN.com, Quartz, Bloomberg News, Washington Post, Houston Public Radio, Atlanta Public Radio, Voice of America Radio, and the New York Times.

The OIF blog published opinion pieces from several notable authors during Banned Books Week, including Chris Crutcher and Alex Gino. That week, the blog saw a 58% increase in views compared to the previous week. OIF's Thunderclap — a platform that releases an advocacy message on participants' social media accounts on the same day — reached an audience of 1.6 million people, prompting the hashtag #BannedBooksWeek to trend on Twitter Sept. 26.

ALA collaborated with the U.K. for the first Banned Book Week across the pond. London's Islington Library and Heritage Services partnered with the British Library and Free Word to host two speaker programs. According to Islington Library and Heritage Services, the organization was inspired by ALA to raise awareness about censorship.

## **Our Voices**

Our Voices – a Chicago initiative of OIF and ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services to promote the growth of diverse, quality content in library collections – established an Advisory Council, comprised of leaders from the publishing, bookselling and library communities. The Advisory Council made an appearance at the Chicago Book Expo on Nov. 8, where the panelists discussed independent publishing and diversity in literature trends. Our Voices is currently working with the Independent Publishers Group to set up an online submission form for writers to submit their work. The next steps are to recruit librarians to review the submissions for quality.

## **Intellectual Freedom Advocacy Bootcamp**

The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA) and OIF launched Advocacy Bootcamp, a new advocacy training geared for state chapter conferences. It focuses on the mentoring of new advocates, building an advocacy plan for individual libraries and creating consistent messaging for all types of libraries. Building on the momentum and resources of ALA's new public awareness and advocacy campaign, Libraries Transform, the bootcamp emphasizes four key messages:

- Libraries transform lives.
- Libraries transform communities.
- Librarians are passionate advocates for lifelong learning.
- Libraries are a smart investment.

OIF Director James LaRue and OLA Director Marci Merola have hosted two bootcamps and have seven more scheduled.

## **Resolution on Gun Violence**

The Intellectual Freedom Committee approved the substitute Resolution on Gun Violence Affecting Libraries, Library Workers, and Library Patrons, prepared by the Joint COL/IFC Working Group.

## **Resolution on Access To Accurate Information**

In 2005, Council adopted the resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation & the Destruction of Public Information, which presciently recognized the growing problem of disinformation and its impact on access to public information and civic discourse. Because of a growing trend over the past several years of not only information disappearing from the public domain, but also actual disinformation propagated across multiple media platforms, the committee felt this resolution should be reaffirmed and updated to reflect the current media environment.