Q&A with New IFRT Board Members:
Sharing Inspirational Moments and Favorite Banned Books

Q: What is the best part of being a member of IFRT/WLA?

Marta Magnuson: Knowing that there are so many other librarians out there that value intellectual freedom is definitely the best part of being a member.

David Nimmer: Being a member helps keep the idea of intellectual freedom on my mind as I make decisions for the library and the collection. Being an active member reinforces, in a very comforting way, the idea that you are not alone in the world defending intellectual freedom and, as importantly, that there are people out there and support mechanisms in place to help you out when the need arises.

Valerie Edwards: I think the best part of being an IFRT/WLA member is having the opportunity to connect with colleagues. It helps me to hear what is happening in other parts of the library world. It is incredibly valuable to have the chance to share experiences and exchange ideas.

Q: Why do you feel protecting intellectual freedom is important?

MM: We live in a country where there are so many different people who all have different beliefs, customs, lifestyles, and ideals. All of these unique voices have the right to be heard, and we all should have the right to hear them. Intellectual freedom allows this process of information access to continue. It’s a core American belief: we are all free, and we are all equal.

DN: It is so easy in a culture of fear or in a moment of moral outrage to decide to monitor what regular, law-abiding people are doing or to restrict access to specific ideas. It is possible for the few to govern and control access to ideas for the majority. It is scary to experience and dangerous for a democracy. Yet, on another level, the big problem is not just how wrong this can be but that a small group or individuals can decide

Continued on page 3

Inside this issue:

For more details of BBW events around the state, see page 8.

Case studies on social networking sites and ethics on page 11.

If a book gets challenged in your library, should you contact the book’s author? See page 14.

MySpace
Facebook

For full issue contents, see back cover
From the Chair
2008 Theme: IF and Youth

Elizabeth Buchanan, IFRT Chair, UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies

Welcome to the 2008 IFRT! I am very excited to serve as the Chair of this very important Round Table, in a time when intellectual freedom is surely, for better or worse, in the forefront of our professional and personal lives. From the Patriot Act to MySpace, we’re seeing intellectual freedom encompass more of our professional and societal attention.

I am honored to work with the folks on the Board, with the many IFRT members in particular, and with the WLA membership in general. I wish to thank Janice Rice, past Chair, for her dedication and energy this past year, and outgoing members, George Wagner, Rita Magno, and Mary Milinkovich. The IFRT Board welcomes Val Edwards, as Chair Elect, and Marta Magnuson and David Nimmer as Members-at-Large. The success of the Round Table depends on the commitment of our members, but more importantly, the success of our association, our profession, and our society depends on a strong and steadfast dedication to the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom. We hope you join with us as we embark on another year of exciting IFRT events.

This year, the IFRT has a number of planned activities, organized around the theme of “Intellectual Freedom and Youth: From Your Community to the World.” We adopted this theme for a number of reasons: We want to promote and instill IF as a core value in—and for—our future generations. Beginning with our children and young adults, and working from the local to the global holds great potential. Our young people deserve our commitment to protecting and affirming intellectual freedom, and deserve to know the basic rights we have known. Yet, as we know, intellectual freedom and youth is often a contentious discussion.

We hope to further this discourse in meaningful and productive ways over this next year. It does us, as a profession and as a society, no good to capitulate, to falter to demands from one parent who is angry about a book about a lifestyle different from their own, or to a group of people demanding our libraries prevent their children from using a social networking site based on what they saw on Dateline.

Issues like these are important to each and every community, and when questions and conflicts arise, we owe it to the citizens we serve to uphold and protect the principles of intellectual freedom so that individual concerns are given fair hearing and assessed in light of the needs and interests of the community as a whole.

Intellectual freedom, at its core, is about respect. Recall that “Intellectual Freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom encompasses the freedom to hold, receive and disseminate ideas” (ALA).

We continue to see challenges in our schools and public libraries, typically stemming from books or resources that are deemed “dangerous” to children or young adults. Meanwhile, we are seeing more teacher librarians and school media librarian positions cut or dramatically reduced. We are seeing some public libraries eliminate their children’s and YA librarians and replace them with gen-
and draw a specific line on what ideas should be restricted.

The one constant I keep experiencing is the variety and uniqueness of what a specific patron would like to ban or restrict access to. We can never be prepared for every type of challenge, nor can librarians be prepared to find materials for all patrons who want to make sure they only check out ideas that meet their specific criteria. But with due diligence, in protecting intellectual freedom on all levels, and through continued education on helping to provide access to specific materials, we as librarians can be prepared for the onslaughts against our freedom and also be prepared to try to help accommodate the personal needs of our patrons without restricting use for others.

VE: I feel it is important to protect intellectual freedom because it is the only means we have for encouraging creative thought. It offers the possibility for change and improvement.

Q: What has been the most inspirational moment (so far) for you as a librarian?

MM: I used to work as an online librarian at a university, and it was always exciting to see students evolve as information seekers. By the end of the year they knew where to go for specific types of information, and I could tell it made the task of writing papers and reports less stressful.

DN: In terms of intellectual freedom, it would have to be the successful completion of a challenged item. Many years ago, a patron took the time to challenge the movie Kiss of the Spider Woman because of the off-screen kiss between the two lead male actors. What was so inspirational about the event was that during the process nobody lost their cool, heated words were not exchanged, and the challenge was handled in the library and not in the press. When I returned our response that we were going to keep the item on the shelf, she thanked me for my time and remained a regular customer of the library. In this way I am inspired to work diligently to try to make the challenged items process respectful, transparent, easy to use and non-threatening while I try to remain calm and cool in the face of adversity.

VE: I am most inspired by watching students who fight school, turn it around and succeed. It happens every year.

DN: I have read some good books that have not yet been banned, and I sometimes wonder why. As I do read lots of books with my young son I was as surprised, as may of you probably were, when you first saw that a Where’s Waldo book had been banned. At first I thought maybe it might be someone offended by the overly stereotypical contents, but it ended up being a drawing of a topless sunbather. I have looked at these books in quite a lot of detail and have yet to see the offending image.

Every once and a while I return to reading a Kurt Vonnegut Jr. book. Not always the ones that were banned, but he is an author that I return to on occasion. I think I will pick up a copy of Galapagos again this week, or maybe look at the drawings in Breakfast of Champions for laughs.

Q: What is your favorite banned book(s) or author(s)?

VE: I cannot identify a favorite banned book or author, but the first was Judy Blume’s Forever. I actually read it after I saw the TV movie, complete with Fleetwood Mac singing “It’s the Right Time of the Night.”

MM: The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger and The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton were two books that I enjoyed reading as a teenager. I still read them every once in awhile to capture that feeling of being young again!

DN: The award recognizes the contribution of an individual or group who has actively promoted intellectual freedom in Wisconsin. Past winners include retired school library media specialist Helen Adams (2007, seen at right accepting her award at the WLA Awards Banquet), journalist Dee Hall (2006), Wisconsin Senator Russell Feingold (2003) and school library media specialist Irene Cooley (2001).

Anyone who has actively promoted intellectual freedom in Wisconsin is eligible for the award. Activities within the past five years are eligible for consideration. The award is administered by the WLA IFRT.

The nomination deadline is May 31, 2008.

For more information on the award, and to obtain the nomination form with instructions and criteria, go to http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/ifrt/wlasirs.html.
2007 WLA Conference Wrap-Up

Contributors: Megan Schliesman, IFRT Secretary, Cooperative Children’s Book Center & Janice Rice, IFRT Past Chair, UW-Madison College Library

The IFRT sponsored two offerings at last fall’s WLA Annual Conference in Green Bay, both of which gave Wisconsin librarians the stellar opportunity to hear from Judith Krug, Executive Director of the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom (ALA/OIF).

‘Interesting’ Times of Intellectual Freedom Indeed

About twenty-five librarians participated in the IFRT pre-conference “The ‘Interesting’ Times of Intellectual Freedom.” The half-day event on Oct. 16, 2007 began with Judith Krug speaking on some of the critical issues facing libraries and librarians today with regard to intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights of library users—and librarians themselves. From the internet and filtering (“format does not change our responsibility as librarians to provide access to information”) to the Patriot Act, she provided reminders, insights and revelations.

Among the most memorable of Ms. Krug’s examples of the challenges faced by librarians today was when she spoke about the case of the Connecticut librarians who were silenced by National Security Letters which placed them under gag orders under the Patriot Act. This happened in conjunction with a request for confidential information from their organization, Library Connection (a nonprofit consortium of 27 public and academic libraries in central Connecticut).

Krug underscored both the personal and professional stress the librarians were under until the gag order was finally lifted in May 2006. It was not until June 2006, at the ALA Annual Conference, that she learned not two, but four, librarians had been silenced. She wryly noted, however, that she had long known—and kept secret—the identity of one of them, because while the government had carefully blackened out all names on copies of depositions provided to

ALA/OIF in the court case brought by the librarians, *Doe vs. Gonzalez*, it had failed to blacken out information identifying one librarian as chair of the Connecticut Library Association’s Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Participants at the pre-conference also broke into small groups to discuss how they would handle three different scenarios in their libraries: one relating to internet filtering, one to privacy, and one to a book complaint. Bob Bocher of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and Helen Adams, retired school librarian and current online instructor at Mansfield University, joined the groups along with Judith Krug, offering their insights and perspectives on these issues.

Krug Scores in Packerland

Hundreds of librarians streamed into the auditorium to hear Judith Krug at the WLA program, “Intellectual Freedom Issues: Hot Off the Presses,” on Oct. 17. A standing room-only audience was spellbound as listeners heard stories about the ways in which intellectual freedom issues touch the lives of people every day. She spoke of children, censorship, favorite reads, banned books, social networking, obscenity, pornography, the internet, and the need for librarians to

Continued on following page
The specter of filters to social networking, materials challenges to self-censorship, librarians serving youth today face barriers to intellectual freedom on many fronts. What issues are of greatest concern to you as you navigate the sometimes murky territory where professional principles of intellectual freedom meet the pragmatics of practice?

Join us on Friday morning, May 2 (10:30-11:45), during the WAPL conference in Stevens Point for a panel program exploring these and other issues. Panelists include Helen Adams, online instructor, Mansfield University (retired school librarian); Elizabeth Buchanan, UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies; Svetha Hetzler, Head of Youth Services, Middleton Public Library; Megan Schliesman, Librarian, Cooperative Children’s Book Center; and Amanda Tuthill, Young Adult Librarian, Milwaukee Public Library, Washington Park Branch.

This IFRT program is co-sponsored by the Youth Services Section of WLA.
DVD Review, *This Film is Not Yet Rated*: Censorship and the MPAA Rating System

David Nimmer, IFRT Member-at-Large, W.J. Niederkorn Library Director

Kirby Dick, dir. *This Film is Not Yet Rated* (dvd). 2006. IFC. $19.95

You may have first heard about this informative 2005 documentary because of the director caught the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) making an illegal copy of his movie. Yes, the very association that fights so hard to protect the rights of the filmmakers (and copyright owners) got caught with their hands in the cookie jar—but that sensational news aside, there is much more to this movie than the fun of exposing the hypocrisy of the MPAA on illegal pirating.

The documentary looks at the history of government censorship in movies as well as how the MPAA rating system got started, what it tried to solve, and how the secret review board and equally secret appeals board make their decisions. There is a lot of in-depth information on the topics of censorship, ratings, copyright laws and protections, and possible explanations of the seemingly arbitrary ratings some movies receive.

One thing the documentary makes clear is that going back to the old-school, by-the-book government censorship of movies is not a good solution. Yet the contention of the filmmakers is that a secret panel of hand-selected citizens is not a great solution either. At least with government censorship, the First Amendment issues are subject to judicial review. With the MPAA ratings system, there is a designed lack of transparency with the review process.

The film clearly points out that requesting a MPAA rating is purely optional. The documentary itself turned down the imposed NC-17 rating they received and instead released an unrated version. But the reality for artists, directors, and producers trying to make money off their movie offerings, not having a rating is fiscal suicide.

With the challenges to the government censorship of movies in the late 1960s, with the release of *The Graduate*, *In the Heat of the Night* and the film version of the award winning play *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (which was fine for the American public in the play form but that would not have been approved for movie release), the time was right for a new solution. The MPAA was viewed as the end of government censorship. The documentary rightly explores whether the MPAA is, if fact, censoring movies and making moral judgments that arbitrarily allow similar scenes in some films to slide through while others get “slapped” with a tougher rating. The films spends a lot of time on these details—and rightly so.

The film predicts an emerging trend that has now reached its peak in the release of movies for purchase with a variety of ratings (let alone special editions for collectors). It is a strange dichotomy that ends up being a cash cow and a way of bypassing the MPAA rating and censoring restrictions imposed on the movie to get it into theaters. A new film released to DVD will now come in a multitude of versions, including the original rated edition, an unrated special edition and sometimes even a tamer Wal-Mart edition. This not only allows the directors and producers to put their project out as they originally intended, which is good, but also maximizes the profits for the producers by making available a version that is not available to the theater-going populace. There are even some new releases that only release an unrated version for sale.

For a librarian deciding which version to purchase, it can be tricky and costly, let alone difficult or impossible for a library whose board has decided not to offer any movies rated R or above (or heaven forbid an unrated edition), to purchase a copy. Take the example of the Oscar-nominated movie *American Gangster* or a title with a lot of requests at our library, *Good Luck Chuck*. In both cases, the regular theatrical version costs more than the unrated versions. And sometimes the only rated version is attached to the more expensive HD-DVD (now defunct)/ Blue Ray editions or special collectors’ editions. While the movie just hinted at the beginning of this trend, it has taken on legs of its own to become an unintentional frustration to librarians, a boon for collectors, and a cash cow for the producers.

The film covers a lot of ground and although quite a bit of time is spent, to our perverse glee, on the private investigators uncovering the identities of the MPAA board members, the film still delivers on the goods by discussing the core of the issues involved. Do not skip the extra features—they add a lot to the film.
In my position as Library Media Specialist, I do not have direct involvement in issues of cyberbullying. This is not the case in all or probably most schools; however, in my case, the Technology Director and Assistant Principal have primary responsibility. In order to gather information on our policies and processes, I spent some time discussing cyberbullying with my assistant principal. The frequency of cyberbullying reports has remained steady over time, although the mechanism for delivering threats has shifted from internal (use of student e-mail accounts) to external (use of MySpace or other e-mail accounts). This shift has limited the amount of control the school can exercise in addressing the bullying.

The majority of our students who do use their school-assigned e-mail accounts do so primarily because they do not have computer access from home. Other students have additional e-mail accounts, and these are the vehicles that are used to deliver threats.

When an incident of this nature takes place outside of school, the assistant principal will have a conversation with both parties and generally with their parents as well. In addition, if the situation seems volatile, teachers of the respective students will be informed to watch for potential disputes.

It is uncommon (at our school) for cyberbullying to take place in a situation where one party is clearly the victim. Almost always there has been an exchange of threats and behaviors that have resulted in heightened anger. Occasionally, the exchanges will be between one of our students and a student at another high school. In these cases, the assistant principal will contact the other school to make them aware of the situation.

On average, there is an incident of cyberbullying reported to him (and obviously not all of them are) every 1-2 weeks. Again, the majority of them involve vehicles of communication that are not under the control of the school. Approximately, once a month, there will be an incident that involves the school’s e-mail service. It is this, increasingly rare, situation that allows for direct action by the school. It is also the time when students may feel that their First Amendment rights are being compromised.

When the school’s e-mail is used to deliver a threat or any inappropriate content, the student’s account is suspended. The duration and degree of the suspension are dependent on each unique situation. Because the student who does not have computer access at home is essentially silenced by this outcome, there is cause for concern. At this time, we have about two dozen students with suspended e-mail accounts due to inappropriate use.

The twist here is that school e-mail accounts and other resources (electronic or not) have been provided to the students for academic purposes. The mission is not to provide resources for personal or recreational use particularly for potentially dangerous exchanges. Similarly, we do have materials on self-defense and martial arts; however we do not allow students to test their new knowledge on each other.

I am really not sure where I believe this leaves the school library and the protection of students’ First Amendment rights. Certainly, the majority of the material that I see addresses the identification and prevention of cyberbullying and teaching students how to be “safe” online. I would certainly welcome hearing others experiences, thoughts and beliefs on this matter.

What do you think?
Can we preserve First Amendment rights while also preventing cyberbullying? Have you had experiences with this issue? Share your thoughts by contacting Jennifer Snoek-Brown, IFRT Newsletter Editor, at snoekbrownj@uwplatt.edu, 608-342-1192 or fax 608-342-1645.

Online Resources

Cyberbullying 101—Georgia Library Media Association

Cyberbullying.us
http://www.cyberbullying.us/

cyberbully411.org
http://www.cyberbully411.org/

Cyberbullying.org
http://www.cyberbullying.org/

Cyberbullying—National Crime Prevention Council
http://www.ncpc.org/newsroom/current-campaigns/cyberbullying
Banned Books Week celebrations, displays across state

Madison

On Sept. 27, 2007, UW-Madison’s College Library and the ACLU of Wisconsin kicked off Banned Books Week with a public reading of banned books in the library’s Open Book Café. The event was emceed by John Nichols, contributing writer for The Progressive and the associate editor of The Capital Times, one of Madison’s daily newspapers.

Celebrated individuals from UW-Madison and the Madison community (including writer Fabu Carter Mogaka, pictured below) read brief selections from books on the ALA’s list of most frequently challenged books.

Promotional displays and posters for Banned Books Week were featured on every floor of College Library (seen at right). For more pictures online, see http://www.college.library.wisc.edu/news/expanded/bannedbooks07.

Kiel

On Oct. 4, 2007, the Kiel Public Library sponsored “An Evening with Author Matthew Rothschild,” at the Kiel Community Center. This event was part of the library’s celebration of Banned Books Week. Rothschild is the editor of The Progressive, author of the book, You Have No Rights: Stories of America in an Age of Repression, and political commentator who has appeared on C-SPAN, Nightline, and The O’Reilly Factor.

Rothschild shared his concerns about free speech at the public forum, which drew an audience of over 60 people. Stephen Groessel wrote in the Oct. 11, 2007, edition of the Tri-County News that, “Although the author, editor and lecturer painted a grim picture of U.S. citizens and non-citizen rights and liberties being threatened by the current administration’s policies, he suggested we not be afraid to exercise our rights, that we resist being subjects and fight back when these rights are being violated.”

Nanette Bulebosh, Director of the Kiel Public Library, said, “The privacy and freedom-of-expression issues he discussed were profound—and disturbing—indeed,” and that several audience members thanked her for inviting Rothschild to speak.

From all accounts, it was a successful event and one she hopes to replicate in the future.

Platteville

A BBW display at Karrmann Library, UW-Platteville


**Book Review**

LaRue’s New Inquisition

Marta Magnuson, IFRT Member-at-Large, UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies


Most librarians will face an intellectual freedom challenge at some point in their careers, and knowing how to handle these challenges is an important professional tool. The difficulty in challenges lies in the librarian’s dual role in both upholding the right to read and serving an increasingly diverse population of patrons. James LaRue considers these roles as he discusses his own practical theories and methods in his newest book, *The New Inquisition: Understanding and Managing Intellectual Freedom Challenges*.

LaRue advocates that librarians be proactive in all aspects of their libraries, including intellectual freedom. He chooses to view challengers not as enemies of freedom but as concerned citizens trying to protect their children, religion, and values. His impressive ability to understand the complexity of intellectual freedom challenges was honed from his work as director of the Douglas Country Libraries, Colorado, since 1990. He has also written a weekly column in his local newspaper for twenty years, in which he often discusses intellectual freedom issues, both local and national.

Opening the book is information on the history of censorship, the First Amendment, and the Bill of Rights. This provides the reader with the background material necessary for understanding how library challenges fit into the broader context of American history and law. LaRue then uses specific examples from his own library career to highlight various types of challenges and methods for dealing with them. These real-world examples are both engaging to read and helpful in understanding how to approach different types of intellectual freedom challenges.

One interesting example is his library’s decision not to buy Madonna’s 1992 book, *Sex*, which became a controversy when a local newspaper wrote a story about the book’s absence from local library collections. LaRue examines his own collection development process in explaining his decision not to buy the book. These reasons included its price ($49.99), patron demand (low), availability (interlibrary loan), and community standards (pornography). This example is interesting because it deals with challenges to a book not in the collection and discusses the process for evaluating a book. It highlights that librarians can still uphold intellectual freedom when they do not purchase certain materials as long as the specific reasons for their decision reflect a sound collection development process.

After these real-world examples, LaRue breaks down his own process for responding to challenges. He advocates diplomacy when dealing with challenges and believes there are often solutions that can leave both sides feeling better. This includes suggested guidelines that emphasize respect such as genuinely listening to the patron’s concern and not getting defensive. Examples of his own letters to patron’s can be found in the appendix.

In the final chapter, LaRue stresses the need for librarians to break out of the library and become a more active member of the community. The theory is that if the residents know the librarian and all of the good work the library does for the community, they will be more likely to support the library during intellectual freedom and budget challenges. It is an ideal way to end the book, emphasizing the need to be proactive with regard to intellectual freedom issues so that when concerns are raised, librarians have not only the skills and knowledge to handle challenges but also the support of the community.

**Words to Live By**

“In terms of altering sociological patterns, free speech, rather than being the enemy, is a long-tested and worthy ally. To deny free speech in order to engineer social changes in the name of accomplishing a greater good for one sector of our society erodes the freedoms of all.”

Nancy Kranich has a strong background in public policy, civic engagement, and intellectual freedom. During her tenure as President of the American Library Association (2000-2001) she led ALA’s Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) lawsuit against the government and attended both the District and Supreme Court hearings. She has also chaired ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee and currently serves on the Association’s Committee on Legislation. Nancy has appeared on the Today Show, the C-SPAN Washington Journal, Bill Moyers’s NOW and National Public Radio. She is currently a civic librarian in State College, Pennsylvania. I recently had the pleasure of asking her about her interest in public policy and intellectual freedom.

**MM:** Throughout your career, there is an underlining theme of intellectual freedom advocacy. How did you first get involved?

**NK:** Early in my career, I developed a keen interest in public policy. After completing an MPA, I got hired as the Assistant to the Dean of New York University (NYU) Libraries. Together, we worked closely with the ALA Washington Office and the Association of Research Libraries on various legislative initiatives.

While my official involvement began representing the Dean in various policy venues, I got appointed to various legislation committees, and then served on ALA President E.J. Josey’s special committee to establish a Coalition on Government Information. As chair of this 50-organization coalition for over 10 years, I promoted transparency and open access and opposed government secrecy. One day, I talked with a reporter from the New York Times about various concerns and mentioned a topic in passing—a visit by the FBI to my colleague at Columbia University Libraries. After the story wound up on the front page of the Times a few weeks later, I got called frequently by the press, including a reporter for NPR’s All Things Considered.

It was this blend of information policy, intellectual freedom, and media involvement that immersed me into advocacy for free expression rights. Although ALA was doing a fine job of documenting librarians’ concerns, it needed to tell a more compelling story that would galvanize public support. The Benton Foundation approached ALA and suggested we hire a media trainer. With Benton funding, we launched ALA’s first media training program in 1990; Pat Schuman attended the training, and then used our theme for her Presidential initiative. Thanks to Pat’s effort, advocacy training and public awareness about library policies and programs increased dramatically, culminating in the Campaign for America’s Libraries and the recent launch of ALA’s Office for Advocacy.

Prior to becoming ALA President, I chaired ALA’s Committee on Legislation when the Communications Decency Act was passed and overturned in the courts. Together with the Chair of the Intellectual Freedom and Public Awareness Committees, I helped draft the “Libraries and the Internet Tool Kit” [available online at http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/ftoolkits/ftoolkit].

While President, I fought passage of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and then spearheaded ALA’s legal challenge. Later, as chair of the IFC, I was instrumental in drafting ALA’s resolution against the USA PATRIOT Act, and compiling the “Privacy Tool Kit” [available online at http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/ftoolkits/toolkitsprivacy/privacy.htm].

In 2003-2004, I applied my intellectual freedom lessons toward a service as a senior policy fellow at the Free Expression Policy Project in New York.

**MM:** You have been a very active opponent of legislation that has the potential to limit IF such as the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) the USA PATRIOT Act. What have these experiences taught you?

**NK:** When ALA speaks, people listen. So it is imperative that we frame our positions in a way that resonate with the American public. But we cannot stand upon principle alone, and we must be ever vigilant. We must tell our story in a way that is compelling and that assures people that we understand their concerns about safety as well as freedom. It is easy for those who disagree with our positions to depict us in a negative way. Our challenge is to listen to them and find ways to recognize their concerns without sacrificing our own ideals. Often, that means convincing many within our own profession of the merits of our positions and the importance of our core values. We
cannot simply rest on our laurels, assuming others will understand. We must speak in a language that is clearly understood and empathetic to the underlying concerns of those who live in our communities. Strong advocacy can result in fewer laws harmful to civil liberties so we can rely less on the courts to safeguard our freedoms.

**MM:** What IF issues do you think are currently most critical for librarians and information professionals?

**NK:** Among the most critical issues facing us are national security and privacy. Technologies of freedom have provided us outstanding tools to extend access to many more people than previously imaginable. But those same tools also allow controls that jeopardize the very freedoms unleashed by digital telecommunications technologies. As librarians rush to adopt new applications like social networking and RFID technologies, they must also consider the privacy implications for their users. We must remain a trusted repository and source of knowledge for our communities, rather than a vehicle for “Big Brother” to watch over people’s shoulders.

**MM:** How can librarians become more involved in IF advocacy?

**NK:** Librarians can begin by getting involved with their state chapters’ intellectual freedom committees. These committees address issues close to home and are well connected to ALA’s national efforts. They should also be ever-vigilant in their local libraries, ensuring that policies and practices are consistent with the First Amendment and the Library Bill of Rights. ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Round Table provides librarians another good opportunity to learn about issues and work in tandem with other intellectual freedom advocates across the country.

**MM:** What types of resources do you use to stay informed about current IF issues? (such as specific websites, blogs, listervs, etc.)

**NK:** The Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) publishes outstanding resources to guide our work, ranging from the Intellectual Freedom Manual—a resource that should be in close reach of every library worker—to toolkits and policy interpretations available on the OIF web site [http://www.ala.org/ala/oif](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif). By subscribing to the IFACTION listserv [http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/ifgroups/ifan/ifactionb/ifaction.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/ifgroups/ifan/ifactionb/ifaction.htm), library workers can keep abreast of relevant free expression issues. The ALA Washington Office web site, District Dispatch, [http://www.wo.ala.org/districtdispatch](http://www.wo.ala.org/districtdispatch) and ALAWON electronic newsletter [http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/washnews/news.cfm#alawon](http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/washnews/news.cfm#alawon) are other useful tools for staying abreast of developments at the federal level. Internationally, FAIFE (Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression) [http://www.ifla.org/faife/](http://www.ifla.org/faife/) is IFLA’s (International Federation of Library Associations) initiative to defend and promote intellectual freedom around the world.

**MM:** Thank you Nancy! We really appreciate all your invaluable insights.

---

**Commentary**

**Social Networking, Ethics, and Responsibility**

Elizabeth Buchanan, IFRT Chair, UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies

We all know them. We may dread them. We may embrace them. But, they are here.

Social networking sites have found their ways into our libraries, our computer areas, our services—for better or worse. There are lots of users—LOTS: Myspace.com has 114,147,000 users, and counting; Facebook.com has 52,167,000 users and counting. Let’s begin with two scenarios:

**Case 1:** As with many public libraries, local teens were frequent visitors to the Treestown library, where they had unlimited access to use social networking sites. Mrs. Peren, the mother of a 14-year-old girl, came into the library one afternoon and demanded to speak to the director. “My daughter has been approached by predators in MySpace, and I want this stopped. She has received pornographic images in her account, and I want to be able to monitor her use. If she has this unlimited access in the library, however, I can’t watch what is going on. I believe you should either restrict access to these sites, or require users to be 18. Then, she would not be allowed to use it here.” The director responded with a long discussion of intellectual freedom principles, while...
Continued from previous page

also stating that age verification measures were pending but were not very sound in practice. “If you do not want your daughter accessing MySpace, that is a discussion you need to have with her, not with us, Ma’am,” the director replied politely.

Case 2: An academic librarian is called on the phone by a parent of a sophomore in college who has a personal Facebook account, as do all of his friends. A friend from high school, who is very computer savvy, took some of the young man’s pictures from his Facebook, added some of his own cut-and-pasted photos, and created a web blog that claims the boy is a pedophile and likes boys. He (the “friend”) pretends to be the young man, and posts commentary and pictures about his boy-love life. The site was created using “Wordpress.” The librarian checked the Wordpress website and it appears that they claim NO responsibility for the creations of individuals using their free software. The parent wants to know what the librarian recommends they do to have the page pulled off the web, and what they should do to prevent “future” repercussions from the page.

Beyond semi-fictional case studies, however, we only need to peruse the headlines to see how social networking sites impact the real world. We learned on November 29, 2008, a teen who was bullied on MySpace committed suicide. A 48-year-old woman created a fictitious account and pretended to be a teen boy to lure the 13-year-old girl into a “relationship.” The mother of the deceased girl had asked police if they could determine whether a MySpace account was “real”; they could not.

These headlines draw attention to the myriad of ethical and legal issues that can surround these virtual communities. Privacy, libel, truthfulness, trust, bullying, pornography, social responsibility, corporate responsibility, copyright/ownership/ attribution are all issues of importance to us as librarians and citizens.

Librarians are a key link in the safety net for all users. As our users are logging on and networking more and more, we have the responsibility to caution our patrons about ethical and legal issues in social networking sites.

Beyond semi-fictional case studies, however, we only need to peruse the headlines to see how social networking sites impact the real world. We learned on November 29, 2008, a teen who was bullied on MySpace committed suicide. A 48-year-old woman created a fictitious account and pretended to be a teen boy to lure the 13-year-old girl into a “relationship.” The mother of the deceased girl had asked police if they could determine whether a MySpace account was “real”; they could not.

These headlines draw attention to the myriad of ethical and legal issues that can surround these virtual communities. Privacy, libel, truthfulness, trust, bullying, pornography, social responsibility, corporate responsibility, copyright/ownership/ attribution are all issues of importance to us as librarians and citizens.

Librarians are a key link in the safety net for all users. As our users are logging on and networking more and more, we have the responsibility to caution our patrons about ethical and legal issues in social networking sites. Some areas of particular concern include cautioning patrons to: Protect personal information, manually enter logins, remember that they are in a public place, pay attention to advice on online scams, be aware someone will be using the computer after them, use headphones when listening to audio content, take advantage of privacy settings, be careful about adding strangers, not using auto-login “remember me on this computer” features, not post copyrighted images, as such violates legal terms and conditions of most social networking policies.

Furthermore, librarians should discuss policy initiatives among themselves, not only with their patrons. Discuss social networking in general—will you allow users to access and engage with them? Will you as a library use them yourselves? Define what kinds of social networking sites fall into your policies. There is more to social networking than MySpace! Discuss the philosophy of your library—is it a public commons? A place of sharing? Will you allow patrons to leave you online feedback—how far does the two-way communicative flow of information between users and the library go? Discuss rights, responsibilities, and privileges. Discuss legal ramifications of access, addressing potential liability issues, and denying access, which raises violations of intellectual freedoms. Specific areas to address in your social networking policies include: Obscenity, pornography, hate speech, libel, bullying/threatening speech, plagiarism, copyright/patent violations, and spam.

The question may be asked, why should libraries add this considerable burden to their responsibilities? What are the possible benefits for our patrons and communities? For what purposes can the library use social networking? Going back to the case studies mentioned at the beginning of this article, it is worth asking:

- How have you handled the situations?
- Are you anticipating them?
- Should libraries have discrete policies guiding social networking sites?
- Do you?
People & Places in the News

Elizabeth Buchanan
UW-Milwaukee, School of Information Studies

This coming fall, Dr. Elizabeth Buchanan, Associate Professor at the UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies, will spend the month of October in residency at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, as part of a National Centre for e-Social Science (NCESS) fellowship, awarded in December 2007. Elizabeth will spend the majority of her time at the Oxford e-Social Science Node (OeSS), which focuses specifically on the ethical, legal and institutional dynamics of grid-enabled e-sciences (http://www.ncess.ac.uk/research/social_shaping/oess).

During her fellowship, Elizabeth will engage with members of NCESS through joint research, publications, seminars, training and capacity building activities. She will contribute to the NCESS working papers series during her fellowship tenure.

In addition, she was invited by the executive director of NCESS to lead a workshop on internet research ethics literature. The main purpose of the workshop is to provide a forum in which the NCESS Hub and Node teams can benefit from her expertise.

Following her fellowship, she will then remain an honorary fellow of the institution. She also recently received a $26,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to expand her existing NSF-supported research on US-based institutional review boards and internet research ethics (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SOIS/cipr/irec.html)

Jennifer Snoek-Brown
UW-Platteville, Karrmann Library

Jennifer has joined the American Library Association’s Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) as a 16-month intern appointment.

The internship program began in 1988, and this program was designed to provide an avenue for interested members to become more easily involved in ALA activities and to introduce new people and ideas to ALA committee discussions and decision-making.

Submit items of interest by contacting Jennifer Snoek-Brown, IFRT Newsletter Editor, at snoekbrownj@uwplatt.edu, 608-342-1192 or fax 608-342-1645.

A Call to Contribute

The IFRT currently has over 200 members—and the strength of our newsletter is reflected in the strength of our members. Did your library have a successful IFRT-related program? Do you have news to share (about you or your library) with other IFRT members? Shine that spotlight and toot that horn! We would all like to celebrate each other’s accomplishments!

As part of her duties on the IFC, Jennifer will attend IFC sessions at the 2008 ALA Conference in Anaheim, Calif., the 2008 ALA Midwinter Conference in Boston, and the 2010 ALA Conference in Chicago.

Wisconsin is well-represented on the IFC, as Jennifer joins Helen Adams (Member, 2006-2008) on the committee. Helen, a retired school librarian, is an online instructor at Mansfield University and the 2007 recipient of the WLA ProQuest Intellectual Freedom Award.

UW-Milwaukee IF Event

Thinking Critically: Alternative Perspectives and Methods in Information Studies
May 15-17, 2008, UW-Milwaukee

Sponsored by the Center for Information Policy Research, the School of Information Studies, and the UW-Milwaukee Libraries

Registration Fee: $150/$75 (students); online registration available

This conference will explore critical theories as grounded in and by alternative methodological perspectives and issues in intercultural information studies. Information studies as a field has become more disciplinarily, culturally, and methodologically diverse. This conference is intended to help advance the extension of traditional inquiry in this field into the important exploration of, and linkages to, such theoretical perspectives and approaches as feminism, disability studies, post-structuralism, queer studies, post-colonialism, post-modernism, semiotics, critical race theory, hermeneutics, and others, as we face technological, legal, cultural, and global transformations.

For more information, see http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SOIS/cipr/conference08.html
What IF Forum

Contacting Authors of Challenged Books

Megan Schliesman, IFRT Secretary, Cooperative Children’s Book Center

Question:

Recently, we had a challenge to a book, and a colleague suggested that I contact the author. I ended up running out of time and never did it, and the outcome was fine (the book was kept in the library), but I’m wondering if you think this would have been a good idea.

Response:

We know that sometimes librarians and teachers do think of contacting an author when that individual’s book is being challenged. And many authors and artists have web sites that include information about their books that go beyond promotional materials. But in most instances, the type of information and support that will be most helpful in dealing with a challenge to materials in a library or classroom will not come from the author or artist of the book in question.

Think first about the fact that challenges are local issues. As a result, support for challenged materials, and for the principles of intellectual freedom, needs to come first and foremost from within the community where a challenge occurs, not from beyond it. So focus your energy on obtaining and building that support within your own community. If you are in a school and a school board hearing will be taking place, for example, make sure colleagues, parents, and students know what is happening and what they can do. You can also build support in the broader community. Start with your local public librarian. The press can be your ally as well, because media representatives know the importance of First Amendment Rights (ALA has tips for “Dealing with the Media” on its web site at http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/challengesupport/dealing).

These local voices can and should have far more influence on the outcome of this local issue than the voice of the author, unless that author also happens to be a member of the community in which the challenge occurs and wishes to speak as a citizen (rather than as the author of a work about which they understandably cannot be impartial).

It is also important to remember that it is everyone’s right to question materials, and it is important to respect that right and the process in place to address the concern. If there are policies and procedures in place and being followed that allow for due process and fair consideration of a request for reconsideration, we don’t think anyone’s local question about a book should become a national issue.

Think also about the information needed to defend any book’s role in a library or curriculum: professional materials that speak to the book’s merit and usefulness, and information on how the book fits into the selection policy in that specific library, or meets that specific district’s curriculum and classroom goals. You will want to obtain professional assessments: reviews in professional library and education journals, and information or recommendations from other professional sources that have the purpose of evaluating materials with library and curriculum needs in mind. This information can usually help support the librarian or teacher’s rationale for how the book fits into the selection policy or curriculum. (If you are a librarian or teacher in Wisconsin, contact the CCBC’s Intellectual Freedom Information Services at 608-263-3720 to obtain this type of information.)

Finally, in these days of instant access to information, blogs, and more, it’s also important to keep in mind that news travels quickly but not always reliably. If, at the time of an initial complaint, an author is contacted, that individual may, with the best of intentions, spread the word. The facts of a case can become quickly distorted or misunderstood as the information travels.

What if you are contacted by an author who has heard about a complaint against their book in your community or at the school where you work? Make sure they have the facts straight, thank them for their concern, and let them know you will keep them apprised of the outcome. Assist them—assuming this is true—that the library or school has policies in procedures in place that are being followed and that a defense that aligns that book with the selection policy or curriculum guidelines is being prepared. Are there exceptions? Absolutely, but rarely. An author may be able to provide a piece of factual information or perspective not available elsewhere that directly relates to the complaint expressed. But in most instances, at least for an initial reconsideration process, professional assessments and a defense that aligns the book in question to the library or district selection policy is what is needed, along with support from within the community.

If a book is censored—perhaps because there were no policies and procedures in place that provided for due process and fair consideration of the concern in light of the principles of intellectual freedom, or because reliable policies and procedures were not followed—then voices from beyond the borders of the local community can support those within the community.

Continued on following page
From the Chair  continued from page 2

eral reference librarians. The havens of the school library, or the refuges of the children’s area, are being undercut.

Children and young adults need to see a commitment to IF in their schools and their public libraries, and when we eliminate the individuals most closely associated with it, we diminish the symbolic importance—and the practical importance—of intellectual freedom. As we lose seemingly small amounts of ground in individual schools and individual communities, we are indeed losing in much larger ways. The local does impact the global. Thus, I encourage you to make a commitment at both the personal and the professional levels, at the local and the global levels, to the core value of intellectual freedom.

There are so many ways to articulate this commitment: Work with the IFRT; sponsor a community read around a banned book; discuss workplace speech at a staff meeting; hold learning sessions for parents, library boards, and trustees about social networking sites and filtering; talk to your children about it; protest vocally and write to your local library boards, town officials, and newspapers when a children’s or YA librarian position is “folded into” a general reference position; write a letter to your elected officials about the importance of IF; sponsor talks at your libraries about current issues in IF; include a commitment to IF in all of your job announcements; bring IFRT members into your classrooms or staff meetings and role play IF debates. The list goes on! The IFRT Board is open to your suggestions and, of course, open to your horror stories. If you need professional consultation around an IF issue, let us know.

This year, the IFRT has proposals for sessions at most of our WLA-related conferences, and we hope you will join us for our sessions. We will be exploring such issues as social networking, current trends in banning, self-censorship, and workplace speech. We will embrace the local and the global and look at issues in human rights and intellectual freedom. We will also be promoting IF as a core principle on some new Post-it notes—watch for our new swag at the conferences!

Intellectual freedom is never a dull issue. I look forward to our year ahead, and am sure we will have a great time together while we uphold our responsibility to protect IF in theory and practice for all. Our future generations depend on us.

Of course, just as any citizen has the right to question materials in a library or school, any other citizen, authors included, has the right to speak up on behalf of a specific book or the broader principles of intellectual freedom, and many authors have written articulately and passionately about those principles. We applaud their voices. But the most essential support at the time of an initial complaint or challenge will always come from the voices of the citizens of the community where the challenge occurs.

This column highlights questions and responses from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center’s “What IF... Questions and Answers on Intellectual Freedom” forum, at http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/freedom/whatif/default.asp.
Inside this issue:

- Q&A with New IFRT Board Members 1
- From the Chair 2
- IF Award Nominations 3
- WLA Conference Wrap-up 4
- IFRT Spring Programs 5
- DVD Review: This Film is Not Yet Rated 6
- Cyberbullying in School 7

- BBW Celebrations 8
- Book Review: The New Inquisition 9
- Q&A with Nancy Kranich 10
- Social Networking, Ethics, and Responsibility 11
- People & Places in the News 13
- IF Event 13
- What IF Forum 14

The IFRT theme for 2008 is “Intellectual Freedom and Youth: From Your Community to the World”

For more information, see the “From the Chair” column on page 2.