

**Intellectual Freedom Committee**  
**Report on Law for Librarians**  
**ALA Seminar - Chicago, IL, April 4-6, 2006**  
**Michael Greenlee, Chair**

The American Library Association held a special Law for Librarians seminar in Chicago, IL, on April 4-6, 2006. ALA received a grant from the Ford Foundation that allowed it to cover all the expenses incurred to invite the Intellectual Freedom Committee chairs and representatives from all 50 states. Law for Librarians provided information about the legal fundamentals underpinning the First Amendment, intellectual freedom, and privacy in order to help ensure that library policies and practices across the country are consistent with the First Amendment, legal precedent, and the Library Bill of Rights. In return, IFC chairs and representatives committed to offering two similar training opportunities in their respective states/regions over the next two years.

The following topics were covered at the seminar:

**First Amendment and Libraries:** this session covered the legal precedent that has been established concerning libraries as a public forum, patron behavior policies, and meeting rooms and display cases.

**Religious Issues and Libraries:** provided an overview of the religion clauses of the First Amendment, the use of library meeting rooms by religious organizations, and the labeling of religious library materials.

**Internet, CIPA, and Sexual Harassment:** discussed the types of unprotected speech (obscenity, harmful to minors, child pornography), the history of CIPA and other related internet filtering laws, guidelines for developing internet use policies, and library policies governing sexual harassment and hostile work environments.

**Labeling:** a brief discussion of the difference between viewpoint neutral and prejudicial labeling, genre labeling, enhanced content in catalog records, rating systems, reading programs, ethnic or language group labeling, and a framework for evaluating labels and rating systems.

**Meeting Rooms, Exhibit Spaces, and Literature Distribution:** First Amendment principles and the designation of libraries as a public forum, creating library policies to designate certain areas of the library for specific uses, and case studies from three Alaskan public libraries.

**Challenges to Library Resources:** creating collection development and materials review policies, selection procedures for library materials, guidelines for responding to challenges, banned books week, and legislative efforts to restrict resources.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** how to conduct a privacy audit of your library, FERPA and State confidentiality laws, responding to law enforcement requests, USA Patriot Act, protecting patron privacy, and special privacy concerns.

**Youth Access to Information:** legal precedent dealing with youth access to information, perspectives on how much information youth should have, the information needs of youth, age based restrictions on youth access, unattended youth in libraries, reading programs, and creating policies, procedures, and attitudes that enhance youth access.

**Putting Together Trainings for Your State:** discussed the key elements for planning, developing, and rolling-out intellectual freedom trainings in your state/region.

**Being an Active Resource and Building Capacity:** tracking challenges to library resources; building relationships with attorneys; e-lists, blogs, online classes; keeping up to date; library related legislation; and developing future leaders.

**Advocacy and Media Relations Outreach:** building and maintaining relationships with constituents, trustees, policymakers, and the media.

In addition to the print handouts received for each session, each participant received a CD-ROM containing additional materials related to each session and a copy of the new 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual. The handouts from each session will also be made available on the ALA Law for Librarians web site. I plan on looking through the materials provided on the CD-ROM and asking Mike Samuelson to post the more useful material on the IFC web site.

At the end of the seminar, IFC chairs and reps from the same region had planning sessions to discuss what to do next. Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska made up the Pacific/Northwest region. We decided our major goal would be to hold a training seminar as part of an upcoming PNLA conference, perhaps in 2007(Alberta) or 2008(Idaho). This could develop into a pre-conference workshop.

Other goals include holding trainings in each state as part of their annual/regional conferences; compiling lists of resources, people, speakers, etc. for each state; publishing an intellectual freedom related article in state library publications and/or in the state bar association publication; investigate funding/grant resources from State Library agencies.

Overall, I think the seminar was a success. ILA has already addressed some of these topics over the past three or four years at regional and annual conferences (USA Patriot Act, Privacy, Confidentiality, Censorship, CIPA), so all we need do is to continue addressing these same types of issues. Also, most of the goals listed above are already part of the Intellectual Freedom Committee goals in the ILA Strategic Plan. I'm checking with Cathy Gray if there is still room available at the 2006 annual conference for an intellectual freedom session.