

Intellectual Freedom Committee Report (#17) December 2008

Sent emails out to various NDLA members asking them to serve on the IF Committee.

IF Committee Members for 2008-09:

Steve Axtman, ND State Library

Sandi Bates, Chester Fritz Library-UND

Kathy J. Cline, Beulah High School

Aubrey Madler, Rural Assistance Center-UND Center for Rural Health

Paulette Nelson, Minot Public Library

September-December 2008 Activity:

Challenge 1: The dvd "Triplets of Belleville" (French animated feature film) was challenged at a public library. A parent reported that the dvd is not appropriate for the children's department, having strange animation and inappropriate subject matter. Research done: Library director spoke to two staff members who viewed the film. It has received great reviews, has a wonderful soundtrack and was featured at Bismarck's Cinema 100 film series. MPAA rating: Rated PG-13 for images involving sensuality, violence and crude humor.

Outcome: The dvd was retained, but moved from the children's dvd collection to the adult dvd collection.

Challenge 2: The book "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" by John Berendt is being challenged at a high school library. Challengers cite the promotion of murder and sexual scenes as reasons for removing the book. The challengers did not read the book in its entirety. Their challenge is based on the two chapters and back cover they read. The school principal questioned the librarian about past challenges in the state. I provided the librarian with statistics on past challenges in the state including the library type/outcome to share with the principal.

Outcome: This challenge has not been resolved.

Challenge 3: The audio book "Full Court Press" by Mike Lupica was challenged at a public library. A child checked this out and the parent objected to the use of swearing and requested that the audio book be removed from the children's collection. Mike Lupica has written books for children, teens and adults. Apparently this title, written for adults, was mistakenly cataloged for the children's collection.

Outcome: The audio book was retained, but reclassified for the adult audio book collection. The library director wrote a letter to the patron thanking her for contacting him about this and apologized for the error in cataloging.

Other:

I gave intellectual freedom information to NDLA Archivist, Rachel White, to add to the NDLA archives. Information included correspondence from 1980-1999, the first edition (and only copy) of the ND Intellectual Handbook for Libraries and a copy of the updated 2008 edition.

I sent out an informational email to NDLA members about the newly published book, "Obscene in the Extreme: the Burning and Banning of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath" by Rick Wartzman.

Bismarck High School English teacher, Andrew Fischer, contacted me about banned books in North Dakota. His students are reading "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" which prompted a few class discussions on banned books. Students were interested in banned books in ND. I provided Mr. Fischer with a few examples (names of persons and libraries not included for confidentiality) of incidents in the state over the past few decades. Mr. Fischer was pleased with the information and looked forward to sharing this with his students. I praised Mr. Fischer and his students for having discussions on intellectual freedom and banned books. I told him to feel free to contact me if he has any other questions regarding intellectual freedom.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Kujawa