

# Intellectual Freedom Workshop

Report by Ray N. Moore

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The North Carolina Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee held a pre-conference workshop on problems facing librarians in the new guidelines set by the June 21 Supreme Court ruling on obscenity decisions. The workshop was held at Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, October 31, 1973.

The state workshop is the second step in a nationwide effort set by the American Library Association to introduce librarians, trustees, and other individuals to the concept of intellectual freedom.

ALA's first step in the program was its prototype workshop. It was designed to serve as a model that could be redesigned and refined to meet needs and expectations of different audiences throughout the country.

The third step, hopefully, will be workshop participants' involvement in community programs directed not only toward librarians, but also toward civic leaders, educators, and interested citizens.

Participation reached two hundred thirty-six. The members included librarians, trustees, and library school students throughout the state. They came from universities and colleges, junior colleges and technical institutes, public, school, and special libraries, and Appalachian State, North Carolina Central and University of North Carolina Schools of Library Science.

There were several areas of activity that stimulated interest in a statewide intellectual freedom workshop for North

Carolina librarians. The overall purposes were:

1. To inform and exchange ideas on the subject.
2. To examine different book selection policies of various libraries.
3. To encourage librarians to act.
4. To make available methods to use the Intellectual Freedom Committee in resolving censorship and related problems.

Two prime objectives resulted from the first meeting of the Committee:

1. To propose that NCLA work out a firm statement on intellectual freedom compatible to SELA and ALA statements.
2. To encourage all librarians to adopt a written book selection policy or re-evaluate and up-date standing policies to conform to intellectual freedom guidelines.

The attempted censorship of books in Buncombe County Schools, which surfaced March 24, further emphasized the prime objectives and the need for an active committee on intellectual freedom.

The June 21 Supreme Court's ruling on obscenity decisions, which flared anew in October with an accusation by the four dissenting justices that the court had fashioned rules too vague to follow, gives vital concern to members of the library profession.

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Libraries are functioning and will continue to operate on the basis of the new guidelines which rely on local community standards. This definitely places the action at the state level.

The NCLA/IF Workshop opened with an invocation by George R. Linder, director of Durham City-County Library. Ray N. Moore, chairman NCLA/IFC welcomed all participants and introduced committee members. Robert May in charge of local arrangements interpreted the schedule of events for the day and gave general instructions on local arrangements for the workshop.

The first session of the workshop began with an address by R. Kathleen Molz, chairman, ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee. She reiterated that ALA's policy is anti-censorship, but it should not be interpreted that ALA is pro-obscenity. Ms. Molz talked with much poise and positiveness about what she called "The Test Of Civilization." Her closing statement revealed that all of us are dealing ultimately with social injustice — that personal justice is the greatest concern, with obscenity as just a small part of the whole problem.

The question and answer period followed. Suggestions she made in answer to questions were:

1. That the NCLA representative to ALA Legislative Committee should contact N. C. legislators and inform them on NCLA's concern.
2. That NCLA not advocate a state obscenity bill until it is carefully examined, and if it is the only solution available.
3. That all librarians keep informed of state activities in intellectual freedom area via the NCLA/IFC, and Judith Krug of ALA/OIF.

The second part of session one was a detailed explanation of an actual censorship case stemming from the county school libraries. "What Really Happened In Buncombe County?" was a personal experience by Ainsley A. Whitman, librarian

of UNC — at Asheville (see page 12). It was the Buncombe County Case that prompted the immediate preparation for a workshop at the state level in North Carolina.

The second session was a buffet luncheon with a guest speaker: Attorney Alex P. Allain, president of the Right To Read Foundation and winner of the Robert P. Downs 1973 award for his excellent accomplishment in the area of intellectual freedom. In his talk entitled "This Is The Law," Mr. Allain outlined historical Supreme Court obscenity rulings. He pointed out that librarians could easily be put in plural jeopardy in the problem of removing or not removing "questionable" books. The Court's ruling, to Mr. Allain, is the most serious and fundamental threat to the right to read in the history of the country. He concluded his talk by saying it was important, in any area, to strike before a law becomes a law.

The third session which involved every participant was designed to offer some practical help when censorship problems arise. Neal Austin, director of High Point Public Library and ALA Representative, spoke on the topic "Censorship: Preparing A Positive Response." He explained a positive response to censorship requires considerable advance preparation. He concluded his talk with the question — "Are librarians their own enemy?"

The group then was divided into thirteen small groups which were instructed to return to the group at large with reports of their discussion. The essences of the individual group reports were as follows:

Librarians should be made familiar with legislative actions through local IFC. They should consider what is the likely result and consider potential action librarians can take. Staff members should be included in this information retrieval system.

Librarians should help in the long-range education of children to increase awareness of the value of libraries and things they hold. Define in writing the

library's stand on censorship and book selection.

NCLA should take whatever initiatives it can to rid the state of entrapment laws.

An information packet should be sent to all N. C. libraries about the new federal law and its implication, updated as new events take place. NCLA should consider appointing a "trouble shooting" committee to aid librarians in need, approaching the problem as a profession with all sections of NCLA working together. The Association should communicate with other groups in the state that are interested in same problems, (e.g., ACLU).

After reports from the individual groups, two suggestions were presented to the committee:

A. That a resolution of commendation be made to A. A. Whitman for his handling of the Buncombe County case.

B. That

1. NCLA urge the adoption of a written book selection policy by all libraries; and that NCLA-IFC draft and distribute sample book selection paragraphs that deal with censorship in order to aid in the preparation of written book selection statements.
2. NCLA-IFC prepare immediately to give aid and advice to all libraries which become involved in censorship problems and to keep all libraries in the state informed on censorship legislation.
3. NCLA make common cause with all groups in the state which oppose censorship laws and be willing to cooperate with these groups for any cause which concerns censorship.

Winston Broadfoot moved that these three suggestions be accepted by the work-

shop participants. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. George R. Linder then moved that the approved motion be set forth before the NCLA executive board. It was seconded and approved.

Dr. Gene Lanier thanked Mrs. Moore and the committee for the work done in making the workshop a success.

A special meeting of NCLA/IFC was held immediately after the conclusion of the Octboer 31 workshop.

Those attending were as follows: Neal Austin, Winston Broadfoot, Judie DeJonge, George R. Linder, Robert May, Ray N. Moore, Annette Phinazee, and Ainsley A. Whitman.

At this meeting the committee drafted the following resolution:

#### INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM RESOLUTION

Resolved:

As concerned citizens in a democratic society and as librarians of the North Carolina Library Association, we express our concern to the growing problem of censorship. We reaffirm our support of intellectual freedom consistent with the official position of the American Library Association.

To combat and answer fully the unofficial censor, we urge that all libraries adopt a written book selection policy that clearly sets forth lines of authority for acquisition and disposal of library resources.

To oppose public censorship, whether by legislative act or local ordinance, we make common cause with those national and local organizations whose fundamental opposition to censorship is consistent with our own. To implement this resolve we charge the Intellectual Freedom Committee to keep membership of the association informed of current and pending issues of censorship throughout the state. To the extent that all available resources permit, the association shall lend specific aid in local situations.

The resolution was presented to a called meeting of the NCLA executive board on Thursday, November 1. Elizabeth Copeland presented the recommended resolution to NCLA membership at the general session on Friday. It was approved unanimously by the body. Copies of the approved resolution were distributed at the Friday evening banquet.

Attempted censorship of books in Asheville, books and periodicals in Raleigh, a bookstore in Greensboro, and movies in Charlotte and Burlington are typical examples of the problem. Such attempts are wide spread enough in North Carolina to encourage all librarians to think and act before the attack.

Personnel responsible for the interest and excellent response of NCLA/IF Workshop were:

Mrs. Ray N. Moore, Chairman; Assistant Director, Durham City-County Library, Miss Mary Canada, Registration; Assistant Head, Reference Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Mrs. Clara J. Crabtree, Treasurer; Director of Libraries, Durham County Schools, Mrs. Judie DeJonge, Publicity; Assistant to the Director, High Point Public Library, Mrs. Ophelia Irving, Promotional Materials; Assistant Chief, Information Services Section, Department of Cultural Resources, North Carolina State Library, Raleigh, Mr. Robert May, Local Arrangements; Head, Reference Department, Forsyth County Public Library System, Winston-Salem, Mrs. Edith Wiley, Selection Policies; Director of Libraries, Lenoir County Schools, Kinston, Miss Elizabeth Copeland, President NCLA; Director, Sheppard Memorial Library, Greenville.

### Resource Librarians

Mr. Neal Austin, NCLA Chapter Representative to ALA Council; Director, High Point Public Library, Mr. Winston Broadfoot, Director, Flowers Collection

Perkins Library, Duke University, Dr. Gene D. Lanier, Vice President NCLA; Department of Library Science, East Carolina University, Mr. George R. Linder, State Advisory Council on Libraries; Director, Durham City-County Library, Dr. Annette L. Phinazee, ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee; Dean, School of Library Science, North Carolina Central University, Mr. Herbert Poole, Editor, *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES*, Librarian, Guilford College.

### Guest Speakers

Mr. Alex P. Allain, Attorney; President and Chairman of Board, Freedom to Read Foundation,

Mrs. R. Kathleen Molz, Chief Planning Staff, U. S. Office of Education, Bureau of Library Science and Educational Technology; Chairman ALA/Intellectual Freedom Committee.

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