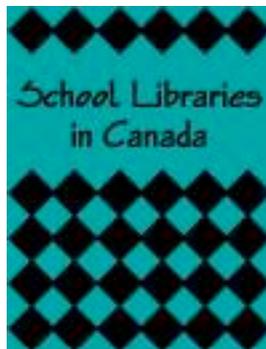


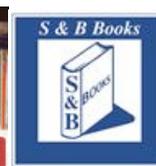
SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

A Journal of the Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL)
A Division of the Canadian Library Association



Intellectual Freedom & Social Responsibility

Volume 24 Issue 4



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

About SLIC

School Libraries in Canada (SLIC) Online is a journal of the *Canadian Association for School Libraries*. CASL's mission is to provide national support for the development and maintenance of excellence in Canada's school libraries, media centres, and school library personnel.

Founded in 1980 (Volume 1 Issue 1), SLIC is a national forum for teacher-librarians in Canada and promotes articles of interest on a broad range of topics from collaboration with the classroom teacher to information technology/literacy skills needed to prepare students for life-long learning.

SLIC was published in print format until Volume 23 Issue 2. Since then, SLIC is published as an online journal. Older print copies are available at university libraries across Canada and recent online issues are available in our archives section.

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School Libraries in Canada (SLIC) Online est le journal professionnel du *Canadian Association for School Libraries*. La mission de CASL est de fournir un support à l'échelle nationale pour le développement et l'entretien de l'excellence dans les bibliothèques scolaires, centres médiatiques et pour le personnel travaillant dans les bibliothèques scolaires.

Fondé en 1980 (Volume 1 Édition 1), SLIC est un forum pour les professeurs bibliothécaires du Canada et publie des articles d'intérêt sur des sujets variés allant de la collaboration avec l'enseignant en classe aux compétences en alphabétisation et en technologie de l'information qui préparent les étudiants à l'apprentissage pour la durée de leur vie.

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We are always interested in hearing your feedback on our site. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Welcome!

The 21st century climate of privatization, media conglomeration, cutting of teacher librarian positions and other threats to libraries, censorship and self censorship, impermanent and restricted access to purchased electronic records, academic freedom, and human security indicates the need for our increased awareness, understanding, and advocacy of the core library values 'intellectual freedom' and 'social responsibility'. Contributions to this SLIC issue prompt us to be mindful of the historical, political, social, legal, and economic contexts of information and resources used both formally and informally, both consciously and unconsciously, in schools and libraries. The intention is to heighten the sensitivity of practitioners, policy makers, and stakeholders to the many interrelated issues demanding our monitoring, opinion, action, and coalition.

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Letter from the Guest Editor (extended length)

Toni Samek

Toni Samek is Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta. Her teaching, research, and service focus on intellectual freedom. For more information, see <http://www.ualberta.ca/~asamek/toni.htm>.

I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions. -- Lillian Hellman, subpoenaed to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee, 1952.

The books that the world calls immoral are the books that show the world its own shame. -- Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891.

Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime. -- Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting *Ginzberg v. United States*, 383 U.S. 463 (1966)

Free societies...are societies in motion, and with motion comes tension, dissent, friction. Free people strike sparks, and those sparks are the best evidence of freedom's existence. -- Salman Rushdie

WARNING: I would like to extend my deep thanks to this issue's contributors. Their collective words are raw and piercing, evoke powerful images, question assumptions, trigger deep thought, raise needling questions, present challenges, and compel action. That's precisely why they were selected! I encourage you to read their words – and then to read them again!

As librarians, educators, and citizens of the 21st century we are not unaccustomed to issues of information and ideas, such as intellectual property, the global tightening of information and border controls; and censorship powers of national customs departments. But historical antecedents to the present context are equally important to recognize. For example, in light of "the pillage and burning of Iraq's National Library in Spring 2003", the October 2005 Library History Seminar XI: Libraries in Times of War, Revolution & Social Change (sponsored by the Library History Round Table of the American Library Association (ALA)), will examine "urgent historical issues" such as "books and libraries as agents of cultural memory to be protected, appropriated or obliterated; library collections and services as instruments of political power in providing, restricting or withholding access to information; libraries as places of refuge, solace and practical help in times of social disruption; libraries and their contents as cultural heritage and as booty; the nature of the revolutionary cultural and political regimes in which libraries are situated with regard to literacy and learning; [and,] the responsibilities of the international community in creating and enforcing policies and procedures of protection, reconstitution and restitution of cultural artifacts, including books and libraries." [i] These issues raise implications for library work, intellectual freedom, social responsibility, and human rights.

Issues of human rights violations have received increased attention in the 21st century and the events of September 11, 2001, which "triggered the adoption of legislation, policies, and practices in the United States and around the world,



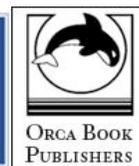
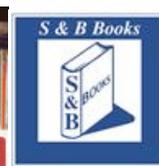
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including Canada, the European Union, China, Russia and various African countries. The consequences of such initiatives are relevant not only to individuals and institutions in those countries but have broader and more far-reaching impacts as well. In particular, such legislation, policies, and practices have tremendous implications for such issues as access to information, privacy, civil liberties, and intellectual freedom.”[ii]

The inherent connection between human rights, librarianship, and freedom of expression is underscored in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions’ (IFLA) *Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom* (approved by the Executive Board on 25 March 1999), which references Article 19 of the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR)*. Article 19 states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.[iii] Through its Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Committee (FAIFE), launched in 1997, IFLA aims to promote and further intellectual freedom “in all aspects, directly or indirectly, related to libraries and librarianship.” FAIFE “monitors the state of intellectual freedom within the library community worldwide, supports IFLA policy development, co-operates with other international human rights organisations, and responds to violations of free access to information and freedom of expression.” In recent years, this has had a heavy emphasis on technology and the information society.[iv] Furthermore, as Shiraz Durani noted, “the rules developed at the World Trade Organisation, especially in the context of TRIPS (trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights),” caused IFLA to express concerns over threats to “not for profit libraries”, intellectual property, and cultural diversity.[v]

As such, FAIFE “helped advocate the role of libraries in the information society and the inclusion of Article 19 of the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* as a core value of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) declaration.” Two key IFLA policy statements prepared by FAIFE: (1) *The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom* and (2) the *Internet Manifesto* are referred to in IFLA’s WSIS contributions underlining the federations’ commitment to intellectual freedom.[vi] Both documents push for human rights and emphasize the inherent connection between human rights and intellectual freedom.[vii] The *Internet Manifesto*, for example, states that “unhindered access to information is essential to freedom, equality, global understanding and peace”, pushes for “richness of human expression and cultural diversity in all media”, demands that “access to the Internet and all of its resources should be consistent with Article 19, and that “access should neither be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor to economic barriers.”[viii] These aims are also reflected in *UNESCO’s Public Library Manifesto*[ix], which in turn reinforces UNESCO’s statement on *Human Rights Research*. This latter statement emphasizes “the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, especially the right to education, the right to take part in cultural life and the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications.” In essence, it stresses “the indivisibility, interdependence, interrelation and equal importance of all human rights (civil, cultural, economic, political, and social).”[x]

By extension, and in light of contemporary library core values (such as those expressed by ALA (e.g., **Access, Confidentiality/Privacy, Democracy, Diversity, Education and Lifelong Learning, Intellectual Freedom, Preservation, The Public Good, Professionalism, Service, Social Responsibility**[xi])), it is librarianship’s responsibility to promote and defend Article 19, but also other UNDHR articles of particular relevance to information work. The International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE), equally draws attention to: Respect for the dignity of human beings



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(Art. 1); Confidentiality (Art. 1, 2, 3, 6); Equality of opportunity (Art. 2, 7); Privacy (Art. 3, 12); Right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Art. 27); and, Right to the protection of the moral and material interests concerning any scientific, literary or artistic production (Art. 27).

Rhetoric and policy development on librarianship and human rights is of great value to librarians in their opposition to threats to intellectual freedom and their commitment to the protection of civil liberties and civic identities. It opens doors for them to: (1) take a stand in the enduring dilemma about what constitutes library work; (2) use the concept of intellectual freedom as a viable means to taking a professional interest in social and political issues such as war and peace, torture, destruction of cultural resources, and government intimidation"[xii]; and, (3) conceive the library as a point of resistance.[xiii] Our *CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom* (1974-) directs that "Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of [our] responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups." [xiv] In my reading, the phrase "should resist" implies an activist agenda.

Librarians around the world urge information society to be mindful of the interrelated contexts (e.g., historical, epistemological, political, social, ideological, legal, economic) of information, recorded texts, cultural records, and ideas used both formally and informally, both consciously and unconsciously, in institutions of civil society such as schools, libraries, archives, museums, and media centers. As such, librarians act on threats to intellectual freedom in the local, national and international arena. In recent years, for example, librarians have "taken part in protest actions at World Trade Organization summits; taken positions against expanding copyright legislation, threats to free access to libraries, and the privatization of education; resisted censorship and apartheid ... other issues include patents, vigorous attacks on fair use copying, impermanent and restricted access to purchased electronic resources, restrictions on end-users and facilitation of electronic micropayments, also termed "daylight robbery". [xv] In essence, librarians struggle for "unfettered cultural records" for all people within the powerful contexts of globalization; heightened legalistic atmospheres; competing ideological, political and economic agendas; and emergent communications technologies.

In these contexts, an ever-expanding set of issues reads like a catalogue: post 9-11 surveillance; library disaster relief; cultural destruction; hate speech; Internet access and child protection; pressures arising from family values and community standards; censorship; imposed technologies (e.g. RFIDs); public access to government information; privatization; self censorship (or inside censorship); negative catalogue entries and descriptors; media conglomeration; the politics of public space; attacks on fair use copying; legislation; information rights; right to read anonymously; impermanent and restricted access to purchased electronic records; academic freedom; freedom of expression on professional and policy issues, systemic racism; international relations; labour; outsourcing; GATS; cutting of teachers librarian positions; intellectual property; serving the poor, homeless, and people living on fixed income; socially responsible investing; anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality; humane library space; human security; national security policies; the global tightening of information and border controls; transborder data flow; censorship powers of national customs departments; and so on.

In closing, Will Weaver (Professor of English, Bemidji State University , Minnesota) recently posted the following to American Library Association's SRRT listserv:



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"The Bemidji , Minnesota , school board hearing on *Plainsong* was held last night. A packed house, a three hour meeting, lots of passionate testimony. It was a general victory for free access to reading, though with some loss: the book was removed from the 9th grade classroom but retained for 10-12. Its place in the school library was secured as well. However, the book challenge was a wake up call to those of us in this community who take good books--and freedom to teach them--for granted.

Nowadays everything is political and ideological. Past freedoms that we assumed must be re-visited and re-articulated. This whole incident has had a galvanizing effect on we who write and teach. We will be increasingly watchful of candidates for ANY elected office--especially school and library boards."[xvi]

These words are an important reminder that library work is part and parcel of its social context. How we negotiate issues of intellectual freedom and social responsibility is deeply enmeshed in the politically charged and enduring debate about what actually constitutes 'library work'. What I believe, from studying library activism worldwide, is that our potential for the development of human rights depends upon such conditions as:

- intention,
- ability to publicly finance our work,
- freedom of expression within our own ranks,
- increased support for teacher and librarian employees who take risks in the defense of academic freedom and intellectual freedom,
- respect for cultural distinctiveness, cultural literacy (in all its forms), and cultural democracy,
- desire to redress omissions, absences, and negations in history, memory, human legacy, and cultural and civic identities, and
- progress in opposing commodification of information, "corporate globalization, privatization of social services, monopolization of information resources, profit-driven destruction (or private appropriation and control) of cultural artifacts and the human record." [xvii]

Toni Samek

If your library is not 'unsafe', it probably isn't doing its job. -- John Berry, *Library Journal*, October 1999.

[i] <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/conferences/LHS.XI/papers.pdf>

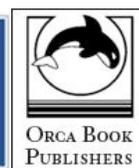
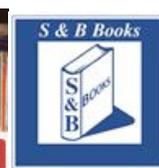
[ii] Dr. Nadia Caidi, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto . Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Government Information Quarterly* on "National Security Policies and Implications for Information Flow".

[iii] <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

[iv] <http://www.ifla.org/faife/faife/presen.htm>.

[v] Submission to Culture, Media and Sport Committee. Session 2003-04. 26 October 2004. New Inquiry: Public Libraries. By Shiraz Durrani. 19 November 2004.

[vi] www.ifla.org/faife/faife/ar2003.htm, page 12.



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[vii] Ibid.

[viii] Ibid., pages 1-2. ("IFLA is an organization of worldwide scope representing more than 1600 members in almost 150 countries all over the world. IFLA was founded in Edinburgh in 1927. It is the first and largest international non-profit, non-governmental organization aiming to further the cause of librarianship.")

[ix] Hellen Niegarrd, "UNESCO's 1994 Public Library Manifesto", page X. 60th IFLA General Conference – Conference Proceedings – August 21-27, 1994.
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla60/60-nieh.htm>. pages 6-7.

[x] http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3515&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[xi] ALA Core Values Task Force II Report (Summer 2004). [Has direct influence on Canadian librarianship.]
<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/corevaluesstatement/social>

[xii] Ibid., 1.

[xiii] Ibid.

[xiv] <http://www.cla.ca/about/intfreed.htm>

[xv] Colin Darch, "Progressive Librarianship: Oxymoron, Tautology, or the Smart Choice" *INNOVATION* 22 (June 2001), page 7-8.

[xvi] From: Jgehner23@aol.com. Date: Tue, 15 Mar 2005 12:26:56 EST. Subject: [SRRTAC-L:16117] Report on Bemidji PLAINSONG Challenge. To: SRRT Action Council srrtac-l@ala.org. Reply-To: srrtac-l@ala.org. Sender: owner-srrtac-l@ala.org.

[xvii] Rosenzweig, "What Progressive Librarians Believe," 5.



A Poem

Carin Bringelson

Betty Fitzpatrick is a teacher and language arts consultant in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. She has published three children's novels: *Melanie Bluelake's Dream* (1995), *Bay Girl* (1998), and *Whose Side Are You On?* (2000). She hopes to have a fourth manuscript completed this summer!

Poster

My 16 year old daughter has a lockermate Who hangs a poster in their metal box. A poster to keep their coats company.

A poster that Questions Challenges Disturbs notions about War.

A poster of (the top half) Planes pooping bombs. A poster of (the bottom half) That famous photo of A girl, naked, Vietnamese, Running, crying, hysterical. In between the two halves is A pointed question Statement: "No connection. Gook."

It is a poster with a racial slur. A poster in a locker of two white girls Trying to figure out something called racism. Two girls who do not know that four-letter word: Gook.

Someone sees the anti-war poster with a Racial slur. Someone fears the poster will offend others in the Racially charged school environment. Someone removes the poster to avoid Offense. Someone removes it first, Asks questions later.

Like the poster, the lockermate is Questioned Challenged Disturbed Hung. She is expected to be the adult The rational one With answers. She is accused of Offending someone. Ironically, she is the social activist committed to saving the world Without Offending Anyone.

The poster is removed. The lockermate is questioned. There is no dialogue to teach and learn about Racism or War. There is only a required apology Explanation Made by lockermate-articulate-social-activist Over the loud speaker. There is only shame Embarrassment.

So in this alternative school that Wants to teach about the very issues of Racism and War, There is no dialogue. No room for intellectual growth. No freedom to explore powerful symbols and words. No intellectual freedom. Just metal boxes. And lonely coats.

--Carin Bringelson, February 2005



Queer Perspectives on Social Responsibility in Canadian Schools and Libraries: Analysis and Resources

Alvin M. Schrader and Kristopher Wells

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(alvin.schrader@ualberta.ca, kris.wells@ualberta.ca)

Dyke. Fag. Faggot. Queer. Fairy. Sissy. Fruit. Lesbo. That's so gay.

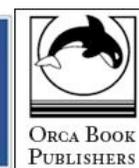
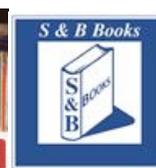
These and similar slurs have become fixtures of "cool" in teenspeak all across Canada and the United States. From utterances too shameful to say aloud, in little more than a decade these words have emerged as throwaway schoolyard idiom.

Are they "just words" and harmless banter as some students and teachers might suggest? Or should they be more accurately understood as hurtful name-calling and bullying that act as preludes to sanction homophobic harassment, abuse, and violence? Or perhaps they serve teens as clever deconstructions and challenges to homophobia and heterosexism through satirical nuance. Or yet again, perhaps they are instances of symbolic violence that perpetuates negative stereotypes through desensitized repetition, thus maintaining the marginalized leper status of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer[i] (LGBTQ) youth in Canadian society.

Whatever the surface meanings, however playful and benign some speakers might regard such language, the deeper truth reveals that regardless of context these words are invoked to signal difference. These words label, situate, categorize, define, delimit, and reinforce the positioning of sexual minorities as "other". These words also insult, demean, and harm. Indeed, a report on LGBTQ youth, conducted by the McCreary Centre Society of British Columbia, indicated that 80% of youth surveyed reported hearing their peers regularly making homophobic remarks at school (1999, 20). Surprisingly, these verbal assaults were not limited to students, with 28% of LGBTQ youth reporting that they also hear their teachers making homophobic comments (20).

For a particular subset of young people, as well as for their families and friends, these labelings are not at all metaphoric, and certainly not benign. Each utterance reaffirms their social standing outside the mainstream, beyond heteronormative experience and understanding, and undermines effective functioning, ambitious learning, and social well being at school and in the community.

Contemporary research and personal testimonies paint a disturbing picture of denial and indifference among those entrusted with the emotional health and physical safety of young people (Grace and Wells 2001; Wells 2004). Other quantitative Canadian-based studies place hard statistics behind these anecdotal stories. For example, the adolescent health survey mentioned above revealed that lesbian and gay youth, when compared to their heterosexual peers, face a significantly higher risk of emotional distress, physical abuse, and verbal harassment (McCreary Centre Society, 1999).



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These forms of assault can often result in LGBTQ youth internalizing this violence, which often leads to destructive behaviours such as substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide (5). Significantly, almost 50% of the youth surveyed reported suicide attempts and over 50% also indicated a history of sexual and/or physical abuse (5-6). This abuse was not limited to the family, with 17% of LGBTQ youth stating that they have been physically assaulted at school within the past year (22). When asked specifically about their school environment, many LGBTQ youth stated that they often felt like outsiders in their schools, with 37% suggesting that they hated or disliked school (20).

LGBTQ youth are very clear that their schools have failed to provide them with safe and nurturing learning environments. When asked where they found sources of support, youth reported that they primarily turn to close friends and female family members (5). This lack of institutional support is further emphasized when only 39% of youth surveyed stated that they felt comfortable enough to tell a teacher or school counselor that they were lesbian or gay (6).

Canadian society can no longer ignore the pressing health needs and safety concerns of LGBTQ youth and still cling to the expectation that such youth will grow up unaffected, invisible, and passive in the face of discrimination, abuse, and violence. For many youth, invisibility and silence are not an option that they are willing to endure. These youth want to live proud, open, visible, and confident lives based upon who they are, rather than what their schools and communities tell them they should be.

The home page of the website for *No Name-Calling Week* states that,

Words hurt. More than that, they have the power to make students feel unsafe to the point where they are no longer able to perform in school or conduct normal lives (No Name-Calling Week 2005).

No Name-Calling Week is a nationwide project in the United States inspired by James Howe's young adult novel *The Misfits* to stop name-calling of all kinds in middle schools and to eliminate bullying in local communities. In Canada, the first Wednesday of June has been designated as the National Day Against Homophobia. On June 6, 2007 this National Day Against Homophobia will target the field of education. In a description of their forthcoming focus on education the bilingual website states:

All participants in the education field have a role to play in combating homophobia. By applying the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they have the legal obligation to intervene and to counteract discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as for other forms of discrimination (Fondation Emergence 2005).

The National Day Against Homophobia has been endorsed by many provincial and national organizations, which include the Quebec National Assembly, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Vancouver School Board, the Canadian Psychological Association, Parents Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Canada, Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE) Canada, and the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition.



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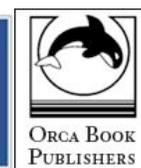
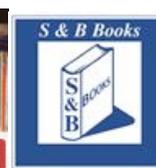
A recognized National Day Against Homophobia in schools is clearly needed. Study after study demonstrates that gay and questioning youth are two to three times more likely than their heterosexual peers to attempt suicide, drop out of school, abuse alcohol and other drugs, engage in prostitution, run away from home, or be rejected by parents and forced out of the family home (Ryan and Futterman 1998; Schneider 1997). A 1995 report revealed that "Canada has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world . . . of all teens who commit suicide, about one third appear to be homosexual in orientation" (Kroll and Warneke 1995).

Feeding on larger cultural values in the United States and Canada, the culture of fear created within public schools does not stop with graduation and the receipt of a high school diploma. Lifelong patterns of prejudice emerge seamlessly to ensnare post-secondary students in every discipline and profession; medical students, for example, are particularly vulnerable (Habib 2000, C12), as are teachers (Dowler-Coltman 1995; Grace and Wells 2004) and school counselors (Tsutsumi 2004).

In the United States, this culture of fear is enabled at national and state levels: 75% of America's students still do not have legal protections in place against homophobia and discrimination (Jennings 2004). Over and over, national surveys of American schools show that name-calling and bullying are experienced widely by students at all grade levels including lower elementary. Moreover, young people regard verbal taunts as a bigger problem than drugs, alcohol, racism, HIV/AIDS, or pressure to have sex, and they consider taunting to have as much negative impact as acts of physical bullying (Kosciw, Diaz, Colic, and Goldin 2005, 3).

Given the pressing health and safety needs of LGBTQ youth, school officials have been found to be legally and financially liable when they ignore anti-gay abuse. In 1996 in the first U.S. federal case challenging anti-gay violence in public schools, Jamie Nabozny of Ashland, Wisconsin was awarded nearly \$1 million ("Taking Schools to Task" 2000, 16). In 2004 a California school district settled a harassment suit for \$1.1 million brought by six lesbian and gay students; although not an admission of wrongdoing, school officials agreed to annual training of all employees, from administrators to custodians, to prevent harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation, and to training for all seventh and ninth grade students ("Calif. District" 2004; Pogash 2005). Other lawsuits will inevitably follow unless school officials begin to take preventative action by adopting proactive training measures and LGBTQ inclusive anti-discrimination policies.

Notably, Canadian educators have not been immune to prosecution. Human rights complaints against schools that have failed to protect LGBTQ students from abuse and discrimination have been filed in several provinces across Canada. In an important 1996 case, Azmi Jubran filed a human rights complaint against a North Vancouver School Board of Trustees, alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the Board's failure to protect him during his school years (School District No. 44 (North Vancouver) v. Jubran, 2005 BCCA 201). For more than five years, from grade eight to high school graduation, the student experienced repeated harassment, homophobic name calling, threats of being dipped in acid, and overt physical assault by other students that included being spit upon, kicked, punched, having his shirt lit on fire, his tent urinated on during a school field trip, and nails and grapes thrown at him. In its 2002 decision, the BC Human Rights Tribunal found that the board had ultimately failed in its duty to provide the student with his constitutionally protected right to participate in an educational environment free from discrimination and harassment, and also failed to address the underlying



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homophobia and heterosexism found in the school and among the actions of students. The Tribunal ordered the board to cease its contravention of the *BC Human Rights Code* and to take steps to refrain from and prevent a similar act from reoccurring.

Like classroom teachers and school administrators, school and public librarians have urgent and crucial roles to play in confronting homophobia and heterosexism in schools and communities. Unfortunately, as with the general response of their educational colleagues and community and national leaders, the call for more substantive advocacy by school and public librarians to eliminate homophobia and heterosexism has fallen largely on deaf ears.

This paper is constructed in two parts. The first is a legislative, policy, and ethical framework for social justice advocacy that can be utilized by teacher and public librarians to improve the social climate and everyday experiences of LGBTQ youth. The second section identifies key educational resources for administrators, counselors, teachers, school and public librarians, parents, and students to help them develop a critical literacy knowledge base of LGBTQ issues as key components of intellectual freedom and social responsibility.

Part I – Ethical and Legislative Framework for Social Justice Advocacy in Schools and Libraries

In Canada, the social and cultural climate towards LGBTQ persons is changing rapidly and, some would argue, more favourably than in the United States. Canada's climate of social responsibility and inclusiveness has its roots in a rich tradition of multiculturalism and a history of incremental legal precedents that support LGBTQ inclusion. Specifically, these landmark judgments have included the decriminalization of homosexual sex acts in 1969, the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, and the adoption of human rights legislation at federal and provincial levels over the past several decades, with the notable "reading in" of sexual orientation into Alberta's human rights statute by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1998 (*Vriend v. Alberta*, [1998] 1 S.C.R. 493). Each of these decisions represents influential judicial waypoints on the path to social inclusion and full citizenship. Indeed, as Bev Lepischak (2004, 87) notes, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled on more than two dozen *Charter*-based equality challenges involving sexual orientation over the last fifteen years, almost all favourably.

Moreover, on *Charter* grounds, same-sex marriage has been permitted since June 2003 through court litigation, and is now available in most provinces, representing more than 80% of Canada's population. Courts have also ruled that trans people are protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* although the only Canadian jurisdiction at the time of writing that provides explicit protection in its human rights legislation is the Northwest Territories (Marchildon 2004, 3).

Through two recent cases the Supreme Court of Canada has pushed back discriminatory practices in both schools (*Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36*, [2002] 4 S.C.R. 710) and the federal customs agency (*Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium v. Canada (Minister of Justice)*, ([2000] 2 S.C.R. 1120[ii]). Importantly, in the *Chamberlain* case the Supreme Court sent a clear message to educators, parents, and communities when it stated,



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Learning about tolerance is therefore learning that other people's entitlement to respect from us does not depend on whether their views accord with our own. Children cannot learn this unless they are exposed to views that differ from those they are taught at home.... Tolerance is always age appropriate (at para. 66, 69).

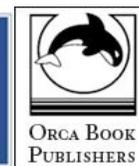
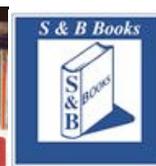
Following the lead of the courts, many Canadian provincial teachers' associations and federations have undertaken important initiatives to advocate for quality, human rights, and respect for LGBTQ students and teachers. Notably, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) (*A Vision and Agenda for Public Education, 2000; Teaching in Alberta, 2001*) and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (*Members' Guide To The BCTF, 2003-2004*) both include explicit provisions prohibiting discrimination based on the grounds of sexual orientation against teachers and students. In 2003, the ATA became the first teachers' association or federation in Canada to include gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination in a code of professional/ethical conduct (Grace and Wells 2004).

Clearly, these examples are representative of the broad legislative and ethical framework within which all educational personnel including teacher librarians are required professionally to act. For public librarians, the framework is less explicit, mandated under different provincial legislation, and comprised within a less regulated professional environment. Nevertheless, the larger constitutional framework of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and human rights legislation applies to the professional conduct of all public librarians.

There is also an international context that stipulates that the provision of school and public library services must occur without discrimination. This nondiscriminatory framework is clearly articulated by Laurel (Anne) Clyde in a paper presented to the 2003 world library and information congress held by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in Berlin .

This international framework includes the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), the IFLA/UNESCO *School Library Manifesto*[iii] (2000), and the IFLA/UNESCO *School Library Guidelines* (2002). IFLA has also adopted several other policies of interest. These include the 1999 *Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom*, the 2002 *Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom*, which explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of "sexual preference", and the 2002 *IFLA Internet Manifesto*, which also explicitly mentions sexual orientation. In addition, the 1994 IFLA/UNESCO *Public Library Manifesto* was prepared in cooperation with IFLA. Even when sexual orientation is not specifically identified, all of these international documents enjoin librarians to provide inclusive services to "all people", and to avoid discriminatory censorship practices. International and national association documents on codes of ethics echo these principles of inclusivity and respect.

This is similarly true of the Canadian Library Association's 1985 *Statement on Intellectual Freedom* and the American Library Association's 1996 *Library Bill of Rights*. Moreover, the latter also adopted a position statement in 1993 on *Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation*, which clearly states the responsibilities of librarians to strive for inclusiveness in services and resources (American Library Association 1993). As well, the American Library Association is home to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT), founded in 1970 as the Task Force on Gay



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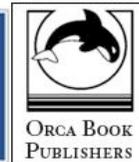
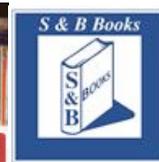
Liberation and considered the first gay, lesbian and bisexual professional organization. Its activities include annual book awards, programs at the annual conferences of the American Library Association, a quarterly newsletter, a clearinghouse of resources, and a website of policies and information of special interest to lesbians and gay men including: service to library users policies; library collections, programs and facilities policies; library employees policies; American Library Association activities; collection development policies; evaluating the treatment of gay themes in books for children and younger adults; classification schemes for lesbian/gay materials; hate crimes pathfinder to selected resources; bibliography for gay teens; bibliography of GLBT resources for children; gay holocaust resources; resources on religion and spirituality 1950-2005 for gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals; same-sex marriage resources; and more (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table 2005).

Taking note of the broad context of international and national principles, Canadian school and public librarians should revisit their collections and assess the services being provided for and about their various LGBTQ communities. In particular, relevant resources for young people are significantly under-represented in school and public library collections. These critical absences are often more acute in conservative and rural communities. Reference services, access and search terminologies, and library collection holdings all serve as sources of systemic concern in both rural and urban school and public libraries. When these concerns are coupled with the gradual disappearance of qualified teacher librarians from schools it becomes increasingly difficult to develop inclusive resources and to effect positive change (Canadian Coalition for School Libraries 2004; Canadian Library Association 2000; Haycock 2003; "National Coalition" 2002).

Among the most troubling concerns is the quality of school and public library reference services provided to LGBTQ students. A recent study by Ann Curry (2006 forthcoming) is particularly illuminating. In her leading edge research, Curry staged an unobtrusive reference encounter using a "mystery shopper" style of evaluating reference service. A female proxy appearing to be a teenager visited twenty public libraries throughout the greater Vancouver area. At each library she explicitly asked for information about starting a gay-straight student alliance, and other similar groups, relevant school and community issues, and a good novel for the group's discussions.

Although Curry found that "definite censure" was communicated by public librarians to the proxy customer in only three out of the twenty interactions, she also noted considerable room for improvement in most other areas. The study identified these areas as (1) library and information studies curricula, (2) professional self-assessment by practicing librarians of attitudes towards LGBTQ youth, (3) awareness of LGBTQ youth concerns and their information needs, and (4) familiarity with local resource centres and other information sources for referral.

These considerations echo the findings of groundbreaking survey research a decade earlier by James Carmichael and Marilyn Shontz, which found no consistency in approach to the treatment of social issues generally and sexual minority concerns specifically in the Master's curricula in either Canada or the United States, with nearly half of survey respondents receiving no information about lesbian issues in their library education programs (Carmichael and Shontz 1996, 25, 48). They concluded that formal education and professional values were not ideologically cohesive on women's issues, lesbigays, or the relationship between social responsibilities and professionalism (21). In particular, general issues of lesbigay status and questions about lesbigay materials in the library were by far the most volatile of the issues covered by their survey (48), thus foreshadowing the findings



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of a great deal of subsequent empirical research on a variety of library service dimensions including reference quality addressed by Curry (2006 forthcoming).

One particularly troubling finding of Curry's study comes to our attention when the proxy student revealed that she would not return to twelve of the twenty public librarians in the Vancouver area (including of course the three who conveyed censure). The proxy reported experiencing negative physical reactions from the public librarians, such as raised eyebrows or frowns, she encountered abrupt or very hurried communication from them even when no one else was around waiting for service, and she received no positive closure thus making her feel that the librarians had "sent her away". Not surprisingly, these behaviours violate all standards and expectations of service and professionalism in the field of Canadian public library practice.

Given such attitudes, which ranged from cold indifference to outright antagonism, it should come as little surprise to learn that LGBTQ publications are significantly under-represented in both school and public library collections in Canada and the United States . Using a title checklist method of investigation, Paulette Rothbauer and Lynne (E.F.) McKechnie (1999) found "great variation" in the holdings of gay and lesbian fiction for young adults in medium and large Canadian public libraries. Only library systems in Halifax , Edmonton , and London held more than 75% of the checklist collection of relevant titles (34). The authors concluded that only a minimal number of institutions were doing a sufficient job of providing such materials, and that access to gay and lesbian fiction for young adults was "somewhat limited and certainly inconsistent even when one accounts for size of library" (36).

A similar checklist study conducted by Alex Spence (1999) undertook an examination of the gay young adult fiction owned by Canadian and American public libraries, with findings paralleling those of Rothbauer and McKechnie (1999) – a wide and inconsistent range of holdings across surveyed libraries in both the titles held and the copies made available per capita. In yet another checklist study, this one involving LGBTQ-related children's picture books, Spence (2000) once again found large differences in holdings among Canadian and American public libraries.

Researchers have put forth a number of factors to explain the influence of collection decisions and services. The presence and nature of reviews in mainstream reviewing media was repeatedly identified as one such critical factor. Rothbauer and McKechnie (2000) studied 158 reviews of 32 gay and lesbian fiction titles for young adults in five prominent journals. The researchers found that, while many of the selected titles were reviewed and most of them were commented on favourably, there was still considerable reviewer ambivalence noted. For example, "cautions and warnings" were often included in reviewer's descriptions, in some cases the books were cast as "problem" novels, or they were simply described as a means to an important life lesson. Based on the study's findings Rothbauer and McKechnie concluded,

A tension seems to exist between the desire to provide access to gay and lesbian fiction and to serve gay and lesbian teens and other young adults who might be interested in this topic, and the difficulties potentially associated with providing material that might be regarded as sensitive or inappropriate by others in the community (14).

Based on these findings the researchers state that clear, concise, and unbiased book reviews play a significant and determining role in responsible collection development by school and public librarians. Difficulties in identifying relevant



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publications were also identified as another source of noteworthy concern. For example, many LGBTQ titles are published by small presses with little marketing, limited distribution of new title catalogues (if they have them), and little or no access to the major mass market reviewing media that librarians typically use for acquisition decisions. Correspondingly, in a study of 35 young adult fiction titles with LGBTQ content published between 1998 and 2002, Michele Hilton Boon and Vivian Howard (2004, 135) found significantly fewer reviews than for a control group of young adult fiction.

Other important factors that should not be discounted entail a librarian's fear of controversy, criticism, and censure. Several years ago the Calgary Board of Education faced considerable pressure by a group identifying itself as Parents Rights in Education to remove two titles they targeted for "pornographic" (read: homosexual) content. A spokesperson for the group said, "It's not just the pornography that's at issue, but the question has to be asked: If a book is violating the values of a parent ... should that book be there?" (Griebel 1998, 6). Not surprisingly this same group called for a review of the Calgary Birth Control Association's anti-homophobia educational program because they did not like "the idea of homosexuals going into schools" (Ketcham and Stewart 1998).

This is not an isolated case limited only to Canadian libraries. The Office for Intellectual Freedom in the American Library Association (ALA) reported that four of the ten most challenged books in 2004 were cited for homosexual themes, the highest number in a decade. These books included *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones, *King & King* by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (American Library Association 2005a).

Indeed, ALA also reported that several LGBTQ-positive books were among the top 100 most frequently challenged titles throughout the 1990s, with *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* listed in second and third place, and *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Lesléa Newman ranked eleventh. All tallied, more than 500 of the almost 6,400 complaints reported to ALA were about homosexual themes or the perceived "promotion" of homosexuality (American Library Association 2005b). The chilling effect of these cumulative pressures to censor school and public library collections should not be underestimated or ignored.

Regardless of the quality of collections serving LGBTQ students in school and public libraries, appropriate subject access and index terminology are also important accessibility factors. Clyde and Lobban (2001, 27) noted that library catalogues often fail to assign a subject heading such as "Homosexuality—Fiction". When this omission occurs titles of interest to LGBTQ students remain invisible on the shelf -- and in the closet. They also observed that almost nothing is known about school librarians' knowledge of such books or about how they make purchase decisions related to them, posing a number of important questions:

Although there seems to be a relationship between censorship and access to these books in libraries, how strong is this relationship, how does it work, and does it affect some places and people more than others? How are these books catalogued in school libraries and how does the cataloguing affect access to them? (Clyde and Lobban 2001, 28)

Ellen Greenblatt (1990) in her influential study also examined library classification systems by documenting a century of evolutionary history revealing how



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homosexuality has been represented in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) system, which is the most influential and commonly used subject headings system in the world. Her extensive examination revealed "a clear paradigm of bias and non-responsiveness to current usage" (77). She also noted the troubling and recurring trend that witnessed the absence of subject headings that were not created until years, and in some cases even decades, after given terms had entered into mainstream usage (95-96). She concluded that "prejudicial terminology" had compromised and restricted access to relevant resources (96). (See also Gough and Greenblatt 1992.) These observations echo those of Sanford Berman (1993), long-time advocate for improved subject access by the Library of Congress for publications about LGBTQ people, among other marginalized groups. More recently, Carmichael (2002) examined access to LGBTQ materials more generally under the subject heading "homosexuality", "gay men", and "gays", observing in part the intractable problem of identifying headings that would cover everything of interest on LGBTQ issues while also achieving specificity. Grant Campbell (2000) has also pointed out that assigning meaningful subject headings is a complicated task that negotiates between universalizing and constructivist viewpoints.

In a more contemporary study, Boon and Howard (2004) found that the subject heading access to 35 LGBTQ titles of interest to young people published between 1998 and 2002 was inconsistent and inadequate. The LGBTQ content of these publications was consistently identified in subject headings for only 14 of the 35 titles, and in many cases the LGBTQ content "was being disguised in subject headings such as prejudice, identity, interpersonal relations, friendship, female friendship, and best friends-fiction" (137). However, even when LGBTQ content was accurately identified, the subject terms were inconsistently applied, for example, sometimes "gay men" was used, sometimes "bisexuality", and sometimes "homosexuality" (137-138).

Nonetheless, Rothbauer (2004) found in a qualitative study of the role of voluntary reading in the lives of self-identified lesbian or queer young women that none of them used the term "homosexuality" in their search queries, suggesting (as argued by Campbell 2000) that a "deeper, more contextually relevant subject classification" is required for effective access through library catalogues to relevant materials (99).

In addition to library catalogues and classification systems, another increasingly important source of information for students is the Internet. By 2001 almost 60% of all surveyed school-aged children aged 5 to 17 in the United States had used the Internet. Among teens aged 15-17 the reported usage was 95%. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, three-quarters of older teens had sought health information online particularly on topics related to sexual health issues (Rideout 2001, 3, 14).

Internet access is even more important to LGBTQ, questioning, and rural youth, who often need to maintain anonymity in seeking out sources of information and support to help them come to terms with a wide array of sexual feelings, questions, and concerns. Young people are "coming out" at much earlier ages than previous decades. The average coming out age for gay men and lesbians has dropped to age 15 or 16 (Ryan and Futterman 1998). Some observers suggest this is due in large part to the immediate availability of unprecedented amounts of supportive LGBTQ content on the Internet.

Given the significant impact that the Internet plays in the lives of LGBTQ and questioning youth, it is astonishing to learn that by 2002, 73% of American schools had employed some sort of Internet filtering software (Rideout, Richardson, and



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Resnick 2002, 3). It is assumed that similar levels of censorship are evident in Canadian schools. Moreover, a 2004 survey revealed that 54% of American families with teenagers reported using filters to limit online access, which was up 13 percentage points from a similar study conducted four years earlier (Lenhart 2005, i). Current filter usage in Canadian homes is unknown. However, a 2000 study commissioned by the Media Awareness Network found that only 17% of Canadian homes reported using Internet filtering technologies[iv] (Media Awareness Network 2000, 4).

Many research studies have demonstrated that Internet filters frequently, incorrectly, and, at best, with limited accuracy block millions of completely legitimate websites on an almost inconceivable array of topics. These serious filtering weaknesses are explained in part by the limitations of the technology itself. The personal biases of designers and the nature of language and culture are also other major factors contributing to the egregious levels of error found in study after study of Internet filtering effectiveness (Schrader 2000, 2002).

Given these levels of inconsistency and error, what do filters have to do with a young person's ability to access relevant LGBTQ content on the Web? The short answer is... everything! LGBTQ content is singled out for censorship by many of the most prominent filters used in school and public libraries. Many of these filters contain a pervasive anti-gay bias in filtering results. This censorship is not simply attributable to the blocking of sexually explicit sites. In fact, almost all filters go far beyond offensive sexuality in the topics that they censor. For example, many LGBTQ and related sexual health sites are commonly blocked by a wide variety of software filtering products. Of note, a 2002 Kaiser Family Foundation study tested access to health information sites for teens by surveying seven commonly used filters (*CyberPatrol*, *Symantec*, *BESS*, *8e6*, *SmartFilter*, *Websense*, and *AOL Parental Controls*). The study found that even at the least restrictive level, the filters incorrectly blocked 10% of sites that conveyed information related to safer sex, condoms, and health issues pertaining to lesbians and gays.

At the most restrictive settings, the filters were found to have a major impact on access to general health information with 25% of general health sites blocked. For topics on sexual health, such as safer sex, the blocking rates were as high as 50% (Rideout, Richardson, and Resnick 2002, 12). When lesbian and gay health information sites were examined for accessibility, 60% of the sites were censored (Rideout, Richardson, and Resnick 2002, Chart 3). These included sites such as a female condom site (www.femalehealth.com), the well-known Columbia University sexual health information site (www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/), an HIV site (www.hivchannel.com/prevention/safesex/), Planned Parenthood's teen site (www.teenwire.com), and information in Spanish on herpes found on the Boston Children's Hospital site (www.youngwomenshealth.org/spherpes) (Rideout, Richardson, and Resnick 2002).

Filtering options on free and commonly available search engines are also a source of concern. For example, Google's *SafeSearch* filter, which claims to block sites based on the one criterion only of "explicit sexual content", in fact systematically targets LGBTQ Internet content (Rideout, Richardson, and Resnick 2002, 21; Edelman 2003). In similar research Edelman concluded that website exclusions by *SafeSearch* appeared to be arbitrary and went well beyond Google's stated sole criterion of "explicit sexual content". He also noted that "this apparent arbitrariness extended to a large number of search terms including searches about sexual health and gay rights".



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These efforts to keep LGBTQ content off the Web should not be surprising. Many filters block based on LGBTQ keywords and others have a subject category that targets sexual minority sites and information. For example, one of *CyberSitter's* filtering categories is "sites promoting gay and lesbian activities and lifestyle." In response to criticism about blocking homosexual sites, a representative of the company provided this stereotypical response, "We filter anything that has to do with sex. Sexual orientation is about sex by virtue of the fact that it has sex in the name". Other filtering categories, as identified by their product owners, are designed to target LGBTQ content by utilizing these phrases:

- "sex education/sexuality", described as sites dealing with topics in human sexuality. Includes sexual technique, sexual orientation, cross-dressing, transvestites, transgenders, multiple-partner relationships, and other related issues;
- "alternative lifestyle", described as information promoting adultery, infidelity, same gender and/or transgender relationships; and
- "gay or lesbian or bisexual interest and lifestyles, including online shopping".

Concluding Perspective

New understandings and representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer persons and their communities have emerged over the last fifty years as one of the most challenging arenas of cultural dissonance and controversy in Canada and the United States . Fortunately, critical developments in Canadian culture, politics, and law have served as key catalysts, which have taken us increasingly away from the shallow rhetoric and discriminatory practices of our southern neighbours.

As our respective societies progress towards more just, more inclusive, and more equitable goals, important social institutions such as education and librarianship are still lagging behind legal, ethical, and professional mandates that require them to develop more socially responsible practices. Clearly, both professions share an ethical responsibility to do no harm to their young charges. Unfortunately, this ethical responsibility is too often violated when it comes to respecting the needs and concerns of LGBTQ youth in school and public libraries.

Ethical responsibilities require more than neutrality. Individual practitioners and organizations in both education and librarianship need to reflect critically and re-examine absences in service and harmful practices that alienate LGBTQ youth from their fundamental rights to access information and to have supports that reflect the diversity of their lived experiences. In librarianship this ethical and professional responsibility must occur on several fronts, which include acquiring current and age appropriate materials, relevant indexing access, and positive, respectful reference and interloan services to aid in retrieving information and materials. Equally important is a need to revisit the traditional claims to librarian "neutrality" with respect to ideology, which ignores the postmodernist view that neutrality itself represents a definite point of view (Carmichael 1998). In education, changes must be made to develop a more inclusive curriculum, enhanced policy development, intergenerational mentoring, and improved counseling services that are pivotal to the creation of safe, caring, and inclusive educational environments for LGBTQ students in public schools.



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For both school and public librarians this social responsibility begins with critical self-reflection that invites teachers and librarians to examine their feelings, attitudes, prejudices, and biases toward LGBTQ persons. It is the complex combination of diverse knowledges, compassionate attitudes, and a caring orientation to professional service that can provide a lifeline of support for LGBTQ youth. Next to the family, school and public libraries can serve as one of the most important refuges of safety from an otherwise hostile and uninviting world. Only when the words of symbolic violence listed at the beginning of this article have disappeared from the schoolyard, the classroom, the hallways, and the libraries, will the true acceptance of sexual minorities be within our grasp. Visionary leadership in both teaching and librarianship requires nothing more, nor less, than the simple will to reach out and make a difference in a young person's life.

Much work remains to be accomplished, both in terms of cultural awareness and inclusive policy development in these two professions, if schools and libraries are truly to become safe havens and oases against the vast deserts of homophobia and heterosexism. However, this transformation will have to be accompanied by yet another important project in the arsenal of social justice. Freedom from sexual oppression and harassment must also be linked to confronting misogyny and dismantling patriarchy. Unfortunately, sexism is still the popular weapon of homophobia (Pharr 1997). The modern definition of gayness, frequently defined as "sissy", as "effeminacy", and hence as weakness, is rooted in male superiority (Russo 1987, 4), and in the harsh sexism of male privilege, power, and hegemony.

There can be no hierarchy of oppression. If we fight against one form of injustice we must strive to fight against them all. Ignorance is based in fear that leads to violence (Grace 2001). Our call in this policy paper is toward the development of a personal and professional ethical responsibility for school and public librarians to create an environment where diversity is embraced as our greatest strength, rather than feared as our worst enemy.

Part II – Selected LGBTQ Educational Resource List

The following annotated resources are designed to assist educators, school and public librarians, parents, and students to develop a critical literacy knowledge base that explores lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer (LGBTQ) issues as key components of intellectual freedom and social responsibility. This collection of resources has been divided into the following reference categories:

- Elementary/Primary,
- Junior and Senior High School/Young Adult Readers
- Educational Videos,
- Professional Resources,
- Curriculum Development,
- Censorship and Educational Texts, and
- Canadian LGBTQ Education-Related Websites.

In the past decade we have witnessed a burgeoning volume of literature and educational resources that have addressed LGBTQ realities. However, many of these resources have been primarily American-based. More recently a small, yet growing collection of LGBTQ-inclusive Canadian-based resources have been developed to speak to Canada 's uniquely multicultural and pluralistic mosaic. While this



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annotated resource list is not exhaustive, it does give primacy to contemporary Canadian resources. Outstanding resources from other parts of the international community are also included as key contributions to the field of LGBTQ inclusive education. All Canadian-based resources are denoted with an asterisk (*).

Elementary/Primary

Arnold, Jeanne. 1996. *Amy Asks a Question--Grandma, What's a Lesbian?* Racine, WI: Mother Courage Press. ISBN 0-94130-028-5 When Amy's grandmother Bonnie and partner Grandma Jo decide to come out at a gay pride parade, Amy asks them about gay pride and what a lesbian is.

Atkins, Jeannine. 2003. *A Name on the Quilt: A Story of Remembrance*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks. ISBN 0-689-85998-8 An emotional story of young Lauren and her family's attempts to come together to remember Uncle Ron who passed away from HIV/AIDS. This picture book features beautiful illustrations and photographs from the AIDS Quilt. A portion of the book's sales are donated to The NAMES Project Foundation.

Combs, Bobbie. 2000. *ABC: A Family Alphabet Book*. Ridley Park, PA : Two Lives Publishing. ISBN 0-9674468-1-3 A book that celebrates same-gender parented families as it teaches children the alphabet.

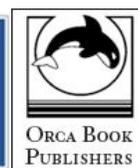
de Haan, Linda and Stern Nilland. 2000. *King & King*. Berkeley, CA : Tricycle Press. ISBN 1-58246-061-2 The story of a royal Prince whose mother, the Queen, decrees that he must be married by summer's end. Princesses from far and wide converge on the palace. The Prince finds his match when he first lays his eyes on his potential bride's brother, another Prince! They become married and live happily ever after as King and King. This simple picture book has emerged as one of the most frequently banned books in North America .

de Haan, Linda and Stern Nilland. 2004. *King & King & Family*. Berkeley, CA : Tricycle Press. ISBN 1-58246-113-9 In this book, labeled as the further adventures of King & King, the newlywed couple takes a honeymoon trip to a far away jungle land. During their trip, King & King see all kinds of different families and long for a family of their own. Upon their return home a surprise pops out of their suitcase and their fondest wishes are fulfilled.

*Elwin, Rosamund and Michele Paulse. 1990. *Asha's Mums*. Toronto: ON: Women's Press. ISBN 0-88961-143-2 Asha's main concern is going on a field trip that she almost misses because her teacher demands that only her biological mom sign her permission slip.

Fierstein, Harvey. 2002. *The Sissy Duckling*. New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0-689-83566-3 A beautifully illustrated picture book about Elmer, a sissy boy duckling, who likes to bake cakes, build forts, and put on puppet shows. This book teaches children and adults to embrace their differences as they learn to celebrate their special identities and talents.

Newman, Lesléa. 1989. *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Boston, MA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-180-X This illustrated story describes how Heather begins preschool and soon realizes that there are no other children with same-gender parents.



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Newman, Lesléa. 2004. *The Boy Who Cried Fabulous*. Berkeley, CA : Tricycle Press. ISBN 1-58246-101-5 A wonderfully illustrated book that follows the adventures of a boy named Rodger who uses the word "fabulous" to describe everything he sees. Despite his enthusiasm, Rodger's parents attempt to ban his use of the word. Rodger uses his creativity to find another way to express the wonder that he sees around him and in the end his parents come to see the fabulous nature of his ways! Newman's marvelous rhymes are a highlight in this truly *fabulous* book for all ages.

Pittar, Gill. 2002. *Milly, Molly and Different Dads*. Gisborne, New Zealand. ISBN 1-86072-021-0 A story of acceptance and diversity, which unfolds as an elementary class describes their dads' differences. This book helps to demonstrate that all families are different, yet special.

*Settingington, Ken. 2005. *Mom and Mum are Getting Married!* Toronto: ON: Second Story Press. ISBN 1-896764-64-3 Rosie and her brother Jack help Mom and Mum get married at the cottage. One of the first picture books to recognize and celebrate the realities of same-sex marriages in Canada .

Skutch, Robert. 1995. *Who's In a Family?* Berkeley, CA : Tricycle Press. ISBN 1-8883672-66-X A picture book that has representations of a diverse array of families, including single-parent, same-gender, extended, childless, and other examples.

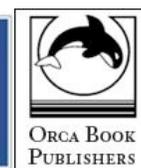
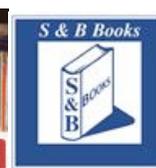
Valentine, Johnny. 1991. *The Duke Who Outlawed Jelly Beans and Other Stories*. Boston, MA : Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-199-0 This collection contains five fairytales featuring gay and lesbian parents and their children who undertake a series of fantastical adventures.

Valentine, Johnny. 1994. *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads*. Boston, MA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-253-9 An illustrated picture book featuring dads of different colours and sexual orientations. In the books conclusion, young readers are encouraged to discover that perhaps their dads aren't so different from one another after all.

Vigna, Judith. 1995. *My Two Uncles*. Morton Grove, ILL : Albert Whitman. ISBN 0-80755-507-X Illustrated picture book told from the viewpoint of a young girl named Ellie, who copes with family tensions when Grandpa refuses to visit his son, her Uncle Ned, and his partner, but finally waves from the car.

Willhoite, Michael. 1990/2000. *Daddy's Roommate*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-178-8 The tenth anniversary edition of one of the most celebrated and controversial picture books to depict gay families. *Daddy's Roommate* has been banned, censored, and defaced for its simple efforts to describe a boy who lives with his mom during the week and his dad and Frank on the weekends. The boy discusses with his mom what the word *gay* means and learns that being gay is just another form of love.

Willhoite, Michael. 1993. *Uncle What-Is-It Is Coming to Visit!!* Boston, MA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-205-9 Two youngsters dream up wild images about what gay is when their mom tells them their gay uncle is coming to visit.



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

Willhoite, Michael. 1996. *Daddy's Wedding*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-350-0 The book is the sequel to *Daddy's Roommate* and illustrates the further storied experiences of Dad and Frank as they prepare for their commitment ceremony surrounded by supportive friends and family.

Junior and Senior High School/Young Adult Readers

Bass, Ellen and Kate Kaufman. 1996. *Free Your Mind*. New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-06-095104-4 A practical and user-friendly guide, which includes chapters on self-discovery, developing friendships and intimate relationships, and negotiating family, school, and community environments.

Bauer, Marian Dane, ed. 1994. *Am I Blue? Coming Out of Silence*. New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-06-440587-7 A wonderful anthology of short stories written for gay and lesbian youth by noted young adult authors. An inspiring book that celebrates differences as our greatest strength.

Benduhn, Tea. 2003. *Gravel Queen*. New York : Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0-68984-994-X All the magic and passion of first love between two girls. Rare instance in young adult literature of an interracial relationship, but the tale remains colour blind for the most part. A love story without explicit lesbian identity or labels or even labels of what love is or is not.

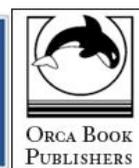
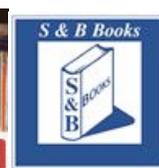
Block, Francesca Lia. 1989. *Weetzie Bat*. New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-06-073625-9 The classic book that started the *Weetzie Bat* series. A quirky, humorous novel that has been described as a modern day fairytale with off beat characters, including some that are gay and lesbian. Other books in the series include *Beautiful Boys* and *Goat Girls*.

*Brett, Catherine. 1989. *S.P. Likes A.D.* Toronto: Women's Press. ISBN 0-88961-142-4 Ninth-grade Stephanie deals with her leadership role in school at the same time as she experiences her first crush on another girl. Positive portrayal with supportive family and likeable friends including an older lesbian couple, although not entirely convincing narrative of lesbian teenage life.

Cowan, Thomas. 1996. *Gay Men and Women Who Enriched the World*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-391-8 A collection of short biographies that provides insight into the often hidden and sometimes public lives of famous lesbian, gay, and bisexual people from the past and present.

*Dunnion, Kristyn. 2004. *Mosh Pit*. Calgary, AB : Red Deer Press. ISBN 0-88995-292-2 Dunnion describes her novel as a "queer punk rock love tragedy" in which she evocatively explores the experiences of a teenage girl coming to terms with her sexuality. Contains some profanity and may not be suitable for classroom use.

Feinberg, Leslie. 1996. *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*. Boston, MA : Beacon Press. ISBN 0-8070-7941-3 Feinberg takes readers through a historical journey that identifies men and women who have challenged conventional understandings of gender expression from the recent present to the distant past.



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*Francis, Brian. 2004. *Fruit*. Toronto, ON: ECW Press. ISBN 1-55022-620-7 Protagonist Peter Paddington is a grade eight 13-year-old. Comment of Dan Savage on back cover: "All gay teens bargain with their own bodies, bodies they feel betrayed by, but rarely is the bargaining and the cover-up so moving and so funny. *Fruit* is a beautiful story."

Garden, Nancy. 1992. *Annie on My Mind*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre Publishing. ISBN 0-374-40414-3 A classic young adult novel that has been banned, censored, and celebrated since its debut in 1982. Reissued in 1992, Garden's story demonstrates how love can triumph over ignorance as two teenaged girls come to terms with their feelings for one another and the reaction of their friends and family members. Garden's romantic and compassionate novel represents one of the first fictional accounts designed to challenge the depiction that being gay or lesbian meant a life of depression and despair.

Harter, Brent. 2003. *Geography Club*. New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-06-001221-8 This coming-of-age novel powerfully portrays the coming out and coming to terms experiences of gay, lesbian, and bisexual teens as they struggle to deal with issues of homophobia, peer pressure, and the daily trials of adolescence. In an attempt to find a safe space in their school, a group of gay, lesbian and bisexual teens disguise their gay-straight student alliance as the Geography Club—a club that they think no other student would want to attend!

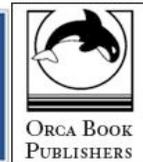
Heron, Ann, ed. 1995. *Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth*. Los Angeles, CA : Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-282-2 In their own words lesbian and gay teenagers write about their lives, feelings, and coming-out experiences. This collection includes some stories from Canadian youth.

Hugel, Kelly. 2003. *GLBTQ: The Survival Guide for Queer and Questioning Teens*. Minneapolis, MN : Free Spirit Publishing. ISBN 1-57542-126-7 A stylish and contemporary resource with great youth appeal. This book features chapters on homophobia, coming out, life at school, friends, relationships, sex, religion, trans issues, and work and college life. A valuable resource that every queer and questioning youth should read.

*Huser, Glen. 2003. *Stitches*. Toronto, ON : Groundwood Books. ISBN 0-88899-578-4 In this award-winning novel of self-discovery and empowerment, Huser allows his characters, along with the reader, to uncover difficult truths as two resilient outcasts struggle to survive being different in a small town. With subtle, yet confident prose and an offbeat sense of humor, Huser's story makes it impossible not to care. Winner of the 2003 Governor General of Canada's literary award for excellence in children's literature.

Jennings, Kevin. 1994. *Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay and Lesbian History for High School and College Students*. Boston, MA : Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-254-7 Jennings' text provides for a unique contemporary high school reader in gay and lesbian history. Each chapter is accompanied by a series of study questions and student activities. A great resource to help make LGBTQ history visible in the curriculum.

Levithan, David. 2003. *Boy Meets Boy*. New York: Knopf Books. ISBN 0-37582-400-6 Starting point for the narrative is that it is a safe world in which to be gay, with high school student Paul and friends situated in a "gaytopia".



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Marcus, Eric. 1999. *Is It a Choice?* New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-06025-162-3 Presented in a question-and-answer format, the author answers 300 of the most commonly asked questions about what it means to be gay or lesbian.

*McCormack, Derek. 1996. *Dark Rides: A Novel in Stories*. Toronto: Gutter Press. ISBN 1-89635-606-0 McCormack's first novel about a gay teenager describing life in a small town in 1952. From the cover: "Unable to voice his forbidden desires to himself or anyone else, Derek moves like an automaton through a world that notices him only when he self-destructs." Fifteen stories, five of which are original to this volume.

Myracle, Lauren. 2003. *Kissing Kate*. New York: Penguin Group. ISBN 0-14-240241-9 Lissa, the teenage protagonist, learns to explore her desires and sexual identity as she falls in love after a fateful first kiss.

*Nielsen, Susin. 1991. *Snake*. Toronto, ON: J. Lorimer. ISBN 1-55028-368-5; 1550283707 Degrassi series. Boy learns his older brother is gay and struggles with his feelings.

Peters, Julie Anne. 2004. *Luna*. New York : Little Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-73369-5. A groundbreaking novel that sensitively explores the challenges and rewards of embracing one's true gender identity. A book that belongs in every collection of young adult literature.

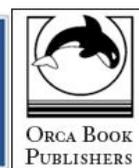
Rashid, Norrina and Jane Hoy. 2000. *Girl 2 Girl: The Lives and Loves of Young Lesbian and Bisexual Women*. London, UK : Diva Books. ISBN: 1-87374145-6 Great collection of first hand accounts of coming to terms with alternative sexual identities; large format paperback with illustrations, non-linear layout of text, prose and poetry, letters etc.

*Rooney, Francis, ed. 2004. *Hear Me Out: True Stories of Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia*. Toronto: ON: Second Story Press. ISBN 1-896764-87-8 Member's of Planned Parenthood Toronto's T.E.A.C.H. program share their personal stories of negotiating sexual and gender identities. A great Canadian resource that explores the challenges of growing up queer in Toronto.

Sinclair, April. 1994/2000. *Coffee Will Make You Black*. New York: Harper Collins. ISBN 0-380-72459-6 Sinclair's novel tells a young girl's coming-of-age story set in Chicago's South Side during the civil rights movement. The author highlights interesting similarities and differences in the experiences of ethnic and sexual minority youth. Awarded the 1994 American Library Association Book of the Year.

Singer, Bennett L., ed. 1994. *Growing Up Gay/Growing up Lesbian: A Literary Anthology*. New York: The New Press. ISBN 1-56584-103-4 The first literary anthology of stories, poetry, autobiography, and oral history written specifically for gay and lesbian youth. This collection includes stories from famous gay and lesbian writers such as James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, and Rita Mae Brown.

Summer, Jane, ed. 2004. *Not the Only One: Lesbian and Gay Fiction for Teens*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-834-0 A diverse collection of twenty lesbian and gay themed short stories written by contemporary writers for a young adult audience.



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*Wieler, Diana. 1989. *Bad Boy*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. ISBN 0-88899-083-9 When a friend finds out that his best friend and teammate is gay, his whole world spirals out of control when he can't keep his fear and anger from coming out on the ice. A Governor General of Canada's literary award winner.

*Withrow, Sarah. 2001. *Box Girl*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood. ISBN 0-88899-407-9; 0-88899-436-2 Thirteen-year-old Gwen's father is gay and has a partner.

Educational Videos

*Central Toronto Youth Services. 1997. *Pride and Prejudice: The Life and Times of Gay and Lesbian Youth*. Toronto, ON. This Toronto-based production chronicles the stories of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth as they speak about the issues unique to their diverse lives and experiences. 30 minutes in length.

*Halton Anti-Homophobia Committee. 2001. *Queer Voices: An Educational Video on Homophobia*. A short video featuring music and text that explores the impact of homophobia and hate on the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer youth in Ontario schools and communities. Available from the Halton Organization for Pride in Education at URL <http://www.haltonpride.org>

Lesbian and Gay Parents Association. 1994. *Both My Moms' Are Named Judy, Children of Lesbians and Gays Speak Out*. New York, NY. This video was produced as part of an in-service program for elementary educators. Children talk about who is in their family, how it feels to be teased about their parents, and how classroom silence about sexual orientation impacts their lives. 11 minutes in length.

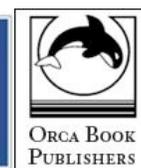
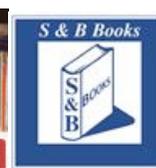
*National Film Board of Canada. 1995. *OUT: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth*. Montreal, PQ. Lesbian and gay youth from Ontario talk about their struggles with personal identity, societal, family, and cultural conflicts. 39 minutes in length.

*National Film Board of Canada. 1997. *School's Out!* Montreal, PQ. Activist and writer Jane Rule and five members of T.E.A.C.H. (Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia) discuss sexuality and sexual orientation issues in Canadian schools and society. 24 minutes in length.

*National Film Board of Canada. 2000. *One of Them*. Montreal, PQ. A school-based production that raises questions about homophobia and discrimination. This dramatization prompts viewers to reflect on their own biases and advocates for the creation of a safe, caring, and inclusive school environment for all students. Includes liner notes for teachers. 25 minutes in length.

*National Film Board of Canada. 2001. *Sticks and Stones*. Montreal, PQ. This documentary explores how homophobic language affects the lives of nine children, aged 5 to 12. Includes liner notes for teachers. The two major themes explored are family and name-calling. 17 minutes in length.

*National Film Board of Canada. 2001. *In Other Words*. Montreal, PQ. This video provides a tool for teachers, counselors, and youth who wish to explore the homophobic language heard on and off school landscapes—the words, their origins, how young people feel about them, and how to overcome the hurt and anger that they cause. 27 minutes in length.



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*National Film Board of Canada . 2003. *Apples and Oranges*. Montreal. PQ . This video features the stories of elementary classroom students, which come alive through animation to illustrate how derogatory names can hurt. Recommended for youth aged 8-12. 19 minutes in length.

*Productions la Différence. 2004. *Moi, c'est moi... C'est ça la différence!* Tracadie-Sheila, NB. "Moi, c'est moi... c'est ça la différence!" is a Francophone LGBTQ educational activity kit composed of an information binder, educational modules, a CD Rom, bookmarks, posters, and a twenty-seven minute video documentary. Available from Productions la Différence at URL <http://www.prodifff.ca>

Rajski, Peggy. 1998. *Trevor*. Charlottesville, VA : Water Bearer Films. A 1994 Academy Award-winning film that focuses on a gay teens struggle with self-esteem and identity. This film inspired the Trevor Project, which promotes tolerance for lesbian and gay youth and suicide prevention through its national 24-hour telephone hotline. A simply remarkable and unforgettable film. 23 minutes in length.

Walton, Pam. 1995. *Gay Youth, An Educational Video*. New York, NY . This video contrasts the suicide of 20-year-old Bobby Griffith with the remarkable life of 17-year-old Gina Guiterrez. The video demonstrates how information, acceptance, and support can have an enormous influence in the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified youth. 40 minutes in length.

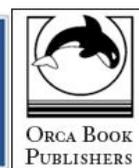
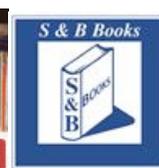
*Weissman, Aerlyn. 2002. *Little Sister's vs. Big Brother*. Vancouver, BC : Moving Images Distribution. This documentary explores the censorship battle between Little Sister's bookstore and Canada Customs. The video features interviews with international writers and activists who speak out in defense of freedom of speech. The video contains graphic depictions of sexuality and may not be suitable for classroom viewing. 71 minutes in length.

Women's Educational Media. 1996. *It's Elementary*. San Francisco, CA. An Academy Award-winning film that demonstrates how elementary schools can successfully address homophobia and heterosexism and teach respect for all students. 78 minutes in length.

Women's Educational Media. 2000. *That's a Family!* New York, NY . Children speak about their unique family structures, explaining such concepts as adoption, mixed-race families, divorce, single-parent households, and same-gender families. Accompanied by a curriculum guide, lesson plans, and suggestions for facilitating classroom discussions at different grade levels. 30 minutes in length.

Professional Resources

* Alberta Teachers' Association and The Orlando Books Collective. 2002. *Safe and Caring Schools for Lesbian and Gay Youth: A Guide for Teachers*. Alberta Teachers' Association. This booklet serves as an essential teacher resource for understanding and accommodating lesbian, gay, and bisexual students in Alberta schools. The guide booklet provides background information about the lesbian and gay community, including terms and common misconceptions, and also explores effective classroom and school-wide strategies for creating inclusive school environments. Other guidebooks on gay-straight student alliances, and information for school counselors, and administrators are available in the series. Visit the ATA



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Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Educational Website for further information.

Baker, Jean. 2002. *How Homophobia Hurts Children: Nurturing Diversity at Home, at School, and in the Community*. New York: Harrington Park Press. ISBN 1-56023-164-5 A book designed specifically for educators, which explores inclusive practices and policies to help create safe and caring classrooms and schools for LGBTQ youth. Chapters include addressing myths and fallacies, understanding identity development, exploring the coming out process, school climate surveys, advice for mental health professionals, and supports for transgender youth.

*Canadian Teachers' Federation and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. 2002. *Seeing the Rainbow: Teachers Talk About Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Two-Spirited Realities*. Ottawa, ON : Authors. ISBN 0-88989-338-1 *Seeing the Rainbow* provides a practical knowledge resource for all teachers who strive to recognize and respect diverse realities within school settings. This resource details useful information and strategies designed to help concerned educators focus on the responsible, caring, and respectful treatment of sexual minority teachers and students in education and society.

Cart, Michael. 2004. "What a Wonderful World: Notes on the Evolution of GLBTQ Literature for Young Adults." *ALAN Review* 31.2 (Winter 2004): 46-52. A critical overview of trends in publishing and content of young adult literature dealing with same sex representations.

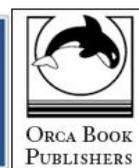
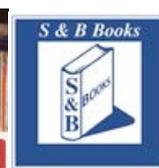
Casper, Virginia and Steven Schultz. 1999. *Gay Parents/Straight Schools: Building Communication and Trust*. New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN 0-8077-3824-7 This book explores the educational realities and needs of same-gender parented families. Themes explored include such issues as homophobia at school and at home, cooperative curriculum planning, communication between lesbian and gay parents and school staff, and gender and gender-role differences.

Clyde, Anne L and Marjorie Lobban. 1992/1996. *Out of the Closet and Into the Classroom: Homosexuality in Books for Young People*. Melbourne, Australia: D. W. Thorpe. ISBN 1-875-58986-4 A comprehensive bibliography of gay and lesbian themed books in young adult and children's literature. A valuable goldmine of information. Listings current to the beginning of 1995.

Day, Francis Ann. 2000. *Lesbian and Gay Voices: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Literature for Children and Young Adults*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. ISBN 0-313-31162-5 This book provides a comprehensive review of hundreds of lesbian and gay themed books, classifying them into quick reference categories that include picture books, books for librarians, educators, parents, and other adults. The book also includes a series of recommended guidelines for helping to review and select appropriate books for schools and libraries.

Epstein, Debbie and Richard Johnson. 1998. *Schooling Sexualities*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press. ISBN 0-355-195369 This book provides a multi-layered engagement that explores the universalizing "common sense" and "stereotypical understandings" that construct our notions of sexuality and gender and how they are lived out on the landscape of schools.

Epstein, Debbie and James T. Sears, eds. 1999. *A Dangerous Knowing: Sexuality, Pedagogy and Popular Culture*. New York, NY: Cassell. ISBN 0-304-33966-0 This edited collection provides an international perspective that explores the many



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different pedagogies of sexuality—how sexualities have been constructed, reconstructed and imparted—within different international, cultural, political, and social contexts. The contributors seek to deconstruct contemporary “master narratives” of sexuality and answer the question of how we might create a “dangerous knowing” that critically examines sexualities.

*Erlandson, Cheryl Ann. 2002. *Safe Schools: Breaking the Silence on Sexual Difference*. Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Resources for teachers dealing with sexual orientation issues in the classroom, including interviews with lesbian and gay students.

Fairchild, Betty and Nancy Hayward. 1998. *Now That You Know: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Their Gay and Lesbian Children* (3rd ed.). Fort Washington, PA: Harvest Books. ISBN 0-1560-06057 A popular guide written by parents to help other parents understand the coming out experiences of their lesbian and gay children. An important and thoughtful resource for parents who are coming to terms with their children's sexual identity.

*Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC). 2004. *Creating and Supporting a Gay/Straight Alliance* (2nd ed.). Nelson Park, BC: Author. This unique resource is the first of its kind in Canada specifically designed to help students and teachers create and sustain gay-straight student alliances (GSAs) in Canadian schools. The guidebook features important background information, practical tips, advice from successful GSAs, and a listing of useful resources, videos, websites, and supportive educators/organizations who can be contacted for more information. Available for free download from the GALE-BC website at URL <http://www.galebc.org>.

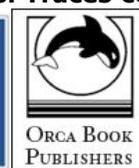
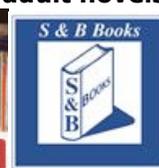
Griffin, Carolyn, Marian Wirth and Arthur Wirth. 1996. *Beyond Acceptance: Parents of Lesbians and Gays Talk About Their Experiences*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin. ISBN 0-312-16781-4 Written by heterosexual parents for other parents and educators who seek to better understand lesbian and gay youth.

Griffin, Pat. 1998. *Strong Women, Deep Closets: Lesbians and Homophobia in Sport*. Campaign, IL: Human Kinetics. ISBN 0-88011-729-X A critical analysis of discrimination and prejudice against lesbians in athletics. This book brings to light the experiences of lesbian coaches and athletes in their own words.

Harbek, Karen, ed. 1992. *Coming Out of the Classroom Closet: Gay and Lesbian Students, Teachers, and Curricula*. New York: Harrington Park Press. ISBN 1-56023-013-4 A collection of essays written by leading pioneers in the field of lesbian and gay educational studies. These essays include discussions of school-based intervention models, gay and lesbian educators, textbook representations, HIV/AIDS, and identity development.

Harris, Mary, ed. 1997. *School Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Youth: The Invisible Minority*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press. ISBN 1-56023-109-2 A collection of research and professional commentaries on the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth in the classroom.

Jenkins, Christine. 1993. "Young Adult Novels with Gay / Lesbian Characters and Themes 1969-92: A Historical Reading of Content, Gender, and Narrative Distance." *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* 7.1 (Fall 1993): 43-55. Study of 60 books with gay / lesbian characters or themes between 1969 and 1992 that were available in the United States and published and marketed as young adult novels. Traces content



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changes over 23 years through demographic factors of race, class, gender, appearance, narrative distance, location, and vocation. Appendix contains a chronological bibliography of the 60 titles.

Jenkins, Christine. 1998. **"From Queer to Gay and Back Again: Young Adult Novels with Gay / Lesbian / Queer Content, 1969-1997."** *Library Quarterly* 68.3: 298-334. Comprehensive bibliography and critical analysis of queer literature for youth, extending her earlier research (see above) to include novels published from 1993 to 1997. Introduces a women's historiographical model of patterns and trends in textual representations of gay / lesbian people viewed through the lens of queer studies. Beginning with the first young adult novel to specifically address homosexuality in the lives of young adults, John Donovan's 1969 *I'll Get There: It Better Be Worth the Trip*, an appendix lists 99 titles published over the next 29 years to 1997.

Jennings, Kevin, ed. 1994. ***One Teacher in Ten***. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-263-6 Lesbian and gay educators tell their stories of coming out in their schools, classrooms, and communities. A powerful anthology.

Jennings, Kevin, ed. 1998. ***Telling Tales Out of School: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals Revisit Their School Days***. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-418-3 A compelling collection of essays in which gays, lesbians, and bisexuals look back at their school days—some with humor, others with acknowledged pain and hope for the future.

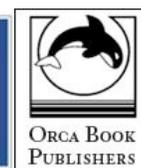
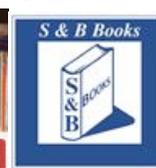
*Khayatt, Madiha Didi. 1992. ***Lesbian Teachers: An Invisible Presence***. Albany, NY: State University Press. ISBN 0-7914-1172-9 A critical ethnographic examination that explores the history of women in teaching and the lived experiences of 19 lesbian teachers.

Kissen, Rita, ed. 1996. ***The Last Closet: The Real Lives of Lesbian and Gay Teachers***. Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann. ISBN 0-435-07005-3 This book tells the stories of over 100 lesbian and gay teachers and the homophobia that they have encountered. Includes descriptions of daily life in the classroom, common problems and issues, and suggests survival strategies for lesbian and gay educators.

Kissen, Rita, ed. 2002. ***Getting Ready for Benjamin: Preparing Teachers for Sexual Diversity in the Classroom***. Lanham, MD : Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 0-7425-1677-6 A timely and important collection of essays written for teacher educators, pre-service and practicing teachers, and school administrators who wish to build spaces where the personal and pedagogical intersect in a concerted effort to create safe and welcoming schools and classrooms for LGBTQ students and their families.

Kumashiro, Kevin, ed. 2001. ***Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education***. Lanham, MD : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 0-425-0190-6 A critical anthology that explores the educational, cultural, and social experiences of queer youth of colour. This book features essays written by, for, and about queer young people of colour within the context of education.

Letts, William and James T. Sears, eds. 2000. ***Queering the Curriculum: Advancing the Dialogue in Elementary Schools***. Lanham, MD : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 8-476-93686 A collection of thoughtful articles that explore issues related to curriculum, cultures, and sexualities within the elementary school context.



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Lipkin, Arthur. 1999. *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools: A Text for Teachers, Counselors and Administrators*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press. ISBN 0-8133-2534-X This book is designed to help readers understand the significance of gay and lesbian issues in education by examining strategies designed to make schools more affirming and inclusive for sexual minority youth. A comprehensive guidebook that will be of interest to anti-homophobia educators, administrators, and counselors.

Lipkin, Arthur. 2004. *Beyond Diversity Day: A Q&A on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools*. Lanham, MD : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 0-7425-2034-X Designed as a handbook for teachers, counselors, school administrators, parents, and other professionals who seek to build safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools for sexual minority youth. Presented in a user-friendly style, readers will find a wealth of current information and resources.

*MacDougall, Bruce. 2000. *Queer Judgments: Homosexuality, Expression, and the Courts in Canada*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press. ISBN 0-080-200951-4 This book explores Canadian judicial responses to homosexuals and homosexuality in five specific contexts: terminology, censorship, educational silences, homophobic expression, and outing.

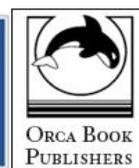
*McNinch, James and Mary Cronin, eds. 2004. *I Could Not Speak My Heart: Education and Social Justice for Gay and Lesbian Youth*. Regina, SK : Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina Press. A uniquely Canadian resource that explores the experiences of LGBTQ students and teachers across the prairies. This text has been designed for pre-service and practicing teachers, social service providers, researchers, and other individuals who work with youth.

Perrotti, Jeff and Kim Westheimer. 2001. *When the Drama Club Is Not Enough: Lessons from the Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students*. Boston, MA : Beacon Press. ISBN 0-8070-3130-5 A comprehensive guide highlighting the experiences and educational strategies of the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students. The book provides resources, model policies, and educational strategies.

*Rothbauer, Paulette. 2002. "Reading Mainstream Possibilities: Canadian Young Adult Fiction with Lesbian and Gay Characters." *Canadian Children's Literature* 108 (Winter 2002): 10-26. A bibliographical essay gathering together fifteen Canadian young adult works of fiction with lesbian or gay characters, concluding that lesbians and lesbian experience are barely represented and gay male adolescent characters generally function to support the characterization of their heterosexual friends.

Ryan, Caitlin and Donna Futterman. 2001. *Lesbian and Gay Youth: Care and Counseling*. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN 0-231-11191-6 A handbook on the care, counseling, and support needs of LGBTQ youth. Recipient of the 1998 Book of the Year in Psychiatric Nursing, American Journal of Nursing, and the 1999 Distinguished Book Award, American Psychological Association, Division 44. A book that every school counselor and health practitioner should read.

*Schneider, Margaret, ed. 1997. *Pride and Prejudice: Working with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth*. Toronto, ON: Central Toronto Youth Services. ISBN 0-921708-18-1 This classic book, which is based on the longstanding community service work of the Central Toronto Youth Services organization, was written for educators and



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social service professionals who work with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. Chapters include information on working with street involved youth, addressing the needs and concerns of HIV positive youth clients, understanding the needs of youth in care, and recognizing the unique concerns of bisexual youth.

*Spence, Alex, comp. 2001. *Gay Canada: A Bibliography and Videography, 1984 to 2000*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press. ISBN 1-55130-206-3. Annotated checklist of Canadian works on issues and events identified and extracted through examination of citations in a large number of indexes, catalogues, and bibliographies. Sections include: literature in its major forms; literary criticism; biography, autobiography, interviews; the arts in major forms; videos and films; education and schools; youth issues; history; religion; law, judiciary, and civil rights; immigration; medicine and health; AIDS/HIV, safe sex; psychology; sociology and anthropology; social services and social work; employment, labour, and benefits; politics and politicians; censorship; journalism, publishing and bookselling, and mass media; libraries and archives; sports; military; transsexuals and transgendered; bisexuals; internet; business; and Canadian gay and lesbian periodicals. Follows the first and second editions of *Homosexuality in Canada: A Bibliography* (by, respectively, Alex Spence, Pink Triangle Press, Toronto, 1979; William Crawford, Canadian Gay Archives, Toronto, 1984).

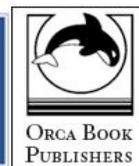
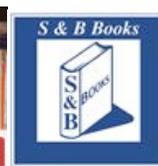
Unks, Gerald, ed. 1995. *The Gay Teen: Educational Practice and Theory for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adolescents*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-91095-1 A collection of educational research articles, which explore issues related to educational theory and practice regarding lesbian, gay and bisexual adolescents. *The Gay Teen* also showcases how pioneering safe-space educators have created model schools, outreach programs, lesbian and gay youth groups, and gay-straight student alliances.

Woog, Dan. 1995. *School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications. ISBN 1-55583-249-0 A book that puts a human face on homosexuality in schools. It includes real-life stories of students and teachers as they try to educate and change attitudes in an attempt to make their schools safer for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students.

*Wells, K. 2003. *Building Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students: Professional Development Workshop Series for Alberta Teachers*. Edmonton, AB : Alberta Teachers' Association. This series of three professional development workshops is intended to stimulate a critical dialogue that examines the attitudes, dispositions, and beliefs that surround sex-and-gender differences. Workshop 1 helps teachers begin to build an awareness and understanding of the everyday lived experiences, safety, and health concerns that many sexual minority students face in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Workshop 2 assists teachers in understanding the professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities that ensure the equitable and safe treatment of LGBTQ students. Workshop 3 explores specific strategies and resources that teachers can use to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students and their families.

Policy Development

Bacon, J. 1999/2002. *Creating Safer Schools for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth: A Resource for Educators Concerned with Equity*. Toronto, ON: Education Wife Assault. This document provides a framework designed to assist educators in challenging the institutional systems of oppression that are embedded within their schools. The resource highlights common misconceptions, practical strategies, legal



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rights and responsibilities, community-based supports, and sample policy documents for teachers, counselors, and administrators who are concerned with the negative impacts of homophobia and heterosexism.

Gough, Cal and Ellen Greenblatt. 1990. *Gay and Lesbian Library Service*. Jefferson, NC : McFarland. ISBN 0-89950-535-X

Macgillivray, Ian. 2004. *Sexual Orientation and School Policy: A Practical Guide For Teachers, Administrators, and Community Activists*. Lanham, MD : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN 0-7425-2508-2 The author explores a case study of a school district's attempts to create and implement non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation. The author also examines the factors that facilitate and impede LGBTQ inclusive policy development.

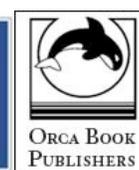
Vancouver School Board. 2004. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit and Questioning Policy*. Retrieved June 10, 2004, from URL <http://www.vsb.bc.ca/NR/exeres/15E02F7B-A8EE-456B-80AD-59D566FC9D78.htm>. A groundbreaking policy designed to address the safety, health, and workplace needs of LGBTQ students, teachers, and same-gender parented families. The policy includes specific recommendations and action plans designed to support safe and welcoming school environments where hate crimes, harassment, and discrimination are vigorously addressed.

Winnipeg School Division No. 1. 2002. *Human Rights/Anti-Homophobia Resource Guide*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. This outstanding resource provides a comprehensive and detailed listing of recommendations, strategies, and exemplary practices for schools and individual teachers to use in creating inclusive working and learning environments. Practical suggestions and interventions are also provided to empower teachers with the skills necessary to confront discrimination, which can come from students, employers, and colleagues.

Curriculum Development

*Dhawan, Anita, Mark Duwyn, Lauren Meichenbaum and Sherry Ramrattan Smith. 2004. *Imagine a World That Is Free From Fear: A Kindergarten to Grade Eight Resource Addressing Issues Relating to Homophobia and Heterosexism*. Toronto, ON: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. This resource develops lessons using children's and young adult's literature to explore four interrelated themes: (1) pride and self-respect, (2) safe schools and safe communities, (3) anti-bullying and conflict resolution, and (4) relationships. Nine lessons, at a variety of grade levels, have been developed for each theme. Each lesson centers on a focus book or video. Four of the books highlighted are French language. Many of the books discussed are included in this reference list.

*Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC). 2004. *Challenging Homophobia in Schools* (2nd ed.). Nelson Park, BC: Author. This revised manual, written by teachers for teachers, provides a rationale explaining why educators have a legal, professional, and ethical obligation to address homophobia and heterosexism in their classrooms and schools. The resource includes extensive background information and suggestions to help teachers challenge homophobic language, stereotypes, and common misconceptions. This resource can be ordered directly from the GALE-BC educational website at URL <http://www.galebc.org>.



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* Toronto District School Board. 2002. *Rainbows and Triangles: A Curriculum Document for Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism in the K-6 Classroom*. Toronto, ON: Authors. This resource provides elementary teachers with useful terminology and definitions, a list of frequently asked questions that students might ask about LGBTQ persons and issues, specific LGBTQ inclusive lesson plans with direct linkages to the Ontario Curriculum, and concludes with an annotated bibliography of educational books and videos.

* Toronto Board of Education. 1997. *Safely Out: Activities to Challenge Homophobia in Schools*. Toronto, ON : Author. This document begins by providing a history of anti-homophobia initiatives at the Toronto School Board, which highlight the obstacles and opportunities of building inclusive school communities that challenge and confront homophobia and heterosexism. The document also includes terms and definitions, inclusive curricular strategies, and implementation models.

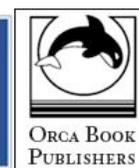
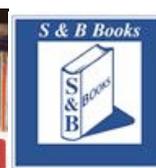
Censorship and Educational Texts

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table (GLBTRT), American Library Association. GLBTRT website of policies and information of special interest to lesbians and gay men including: service to library users policies; library collections, programs and facilities policies; library employees policies; American Library Association activities; collection development policies; evaluating the treatment of gay themes in books for children and younger adults; classification schemes for lesbian/gay materials; hate crimes pathfinder to selected resources; bibliography for gay teens; bibliography of GLBT resources for children; gay holocaust resources; resources on religion and spirituality 1950-2005 for gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals; same-sex marriage resources; and more. URL: http://calvin.usc.edu/~trimmer/ala_hp2.html

Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Young adult Services Association. 1996. *Hit List: Frequently Challenged Books for Young Adults*. Chicago, IL : American Library Association. ISBN 0-8389-3459-5 A short guidebook designed for public and school librarians to help them defuse potential confrontations with accurate and thoughtful responses that support intellectual freedom. The guide highlights 26 of the most frequently challenged books and provides title-specific strategies to help librarians and/or school administrators address a myriad of potential concerns and issues. Includes several gay and lesbian themed texts.

Reichman, Henry. 1993. *Censorship and Selection: Issues and Answers for Schools*. Chicago , IL : American Library Association and American Association of School Administrators. ISBN 0-8389-0620-6 This text provides a survey of school censorship controversies and provides practical advice for educators seeking to develop selection policies, address complaints, and respond to book challenges. While the controversial books discussed may be dated, the framework provided is still essential to understanding the principles of intellectual freedom and social responsibility.

Scales, Pat R. 2001. *Teaching Banned Books: 12 Guides for Young Readers*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association. ISBN 0-8389-0807-1 The text reviews 12 commonly "challenged" books, provides tips for introducing the topic, includes discussion guides, and contains an annotated bibliography of related fiction and non-fiction books. While none of the books described are gay and lesbian themed novels, the author provides a critical reading framework and a series of discussions that can



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be transferred to any "controversial" material.

Canadian LGBTQ Education-Related Websites

Alberta Teachers' Association's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Educational Website This website was the first of its kind to be developed and hosted by a teachers' association or federation in Canada. The comprehensive resource features frequently asked questions regarding LGBTQ educational issues; suggestions and guidelines to address homophobia and heterosexism in schools; community educational notices and events; research articles, background papers, teacher narratives, a safe spaces initiative, and many other educational resources. <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Issues+In+Education/Diversity+and+Human+Rights/Sexual+Orientation/Index.htm>

AlterHéros AlterHéros is a bilingual (French and English) website that strives to increase public awareness about issues related to sexual orientation and homophobia by (1) informing and educating youth, parents, family, and friends through the sharing and dissemination of information, (2) providing aid and support by posing, clarifying and responding to questions and by creating a mutual-aid network, and (3) creating a community in which youth can share, exchange information, contribute, make contacts and connect with others. <http://www.alterheros.com>

Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) was established in 1973 to aid in the recovery and preservation of lesbian and gay histories. Its mandate is to acquire, preserve, organize, and provide public access to information and materials. To support this function, CLGA also maintains major non-archival collections, including a research library, international subject files, and an international collection of lesbian and gay periodicals. <http://www.clga.ca>

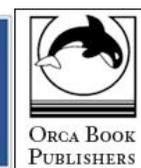
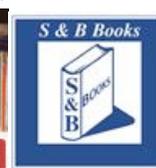
Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association (CLGSA) The primary objective of CLGSA is to encourage and promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirit, intersexed and queer studies in Canada through the production of research, service, and teaching. <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/%7Eclgsa>

Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition The Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition (CRHC) is a community-based movement dedicated to improving the emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental health and wellness of people who have experienced significant inequities based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. CRHC has been funded by Health Canada to meet the primary health care needs of LGBTQ people in Canada. <http://www.rainbowhealth.ca>

Egale (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere) Canada Egale Canada is a national organization that advances equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified people and their families across Canada . Includes the popular Egale Educators Listserv. <http://www.egale.ca>

Family Pride Canada National online resource centre with a Canadian focus for queer parents, partners, children, families, and allies. Includes legal resources. <http://familypride.uwo.ca/index.html>

Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia (GALE-BC) The Gay and Lesbian Educators of B.C. has a comprehensive educational website dedicated to providing LGBTQ educational resources for Canadian educators and



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students. <http://www.galebc.org>

Homophobia and Heterosexism Action Group The British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) has established this action group to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in schools and to make teachers and social justice activists aware of some of the resources available. <http://www.bctf.ca/social/homophobia>

National Day Against Homophobia This Quebec-based website provides resources to help combat homophobia in Canadian schools and society. The website is the home for the annual National Day Against Homophobia campaign, which is sponsored by Quebec 's National Assembly, Canadian Teachers' Federation, and many other organizations. Resources are available in French and English. <http://www.emergence.qc.ca/homophobie>

PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) Canada PFLAG Canada promotes the health and well being of LGBTQ persons, their families, and friends through education and support in order to end discrimination and secure equal human rights for all persons regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. <http://www.pflagcanada.ca>

The Pride Library The Research Facility at the University of Western Ontario for Gay and Lesbian Studies. <http://www.uwo.ca/pridelib/library.html>

Queer McGill Queer McGill is a sociopolitical, information, and support service organization for LGBTQ students and their friends. This website provides an excellent listing of Canadian queer educational online resources and links. <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/queer>

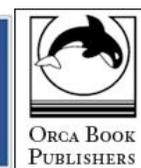
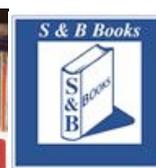
Rainbow Resource Centre The Rainbow Resource Centre is based in Winnipeg , Manitoba . The Centre's website offers educational brochures and resources for LGBTQ youth as well as trans-specific resources. <http://www.mts.net/~rainbow8>

Sexuality and U Devoted to sexuality education and information, this site provides credible and reliable information on such health topics as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), contraception awareness, healthy lifestyle choices, and techniques for talking about sex. It also provides guidance and advice on developing and maintaining a healthy sexuality. The website is administered by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada. <http://www.sexualityandu.ca/eng>

Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities The mission of the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC) is to encourage home, school, and community practices that teach, model, and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviors, so that living and learning can take place in a safe, caring and inclusive environment. The SACSC's website features many diversity and LGBTQ educational resources. <http://www.sacsc.ca>

Supporting Our Youth Addresses the recreational lives of LGBTQ youth, working outside of schooling and partnering with many community agencies. <http://www.soytoronto.org/>

The Triangle Program The Triangle Program is Canada 's only classroom for LGBTQ youth. The Triangle Program is committed to (a) providing a classroom where LGBTQ youth can learn and earn credits in a safe, harassment-free, equity-based environment, and (b) developing and teaching a curriculum that includes and



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celebrates LGBTQ literature, history, persons, and issues. <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/triangle/index.html>

YouthSafe.Net This Calgary-based website provides resources and information on sexual orientation and gender identity issues for youth. <http://www.youthsafe.net/>

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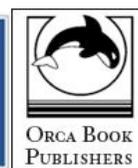
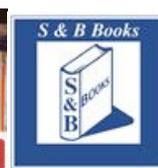
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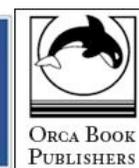
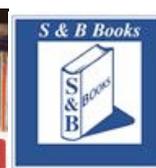
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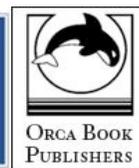
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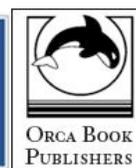
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Centre, University of Regina

End Notes

[i] The etymological origins of the word queer can be traced to the word "across - it comes from the Indo-European root – *terwekw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist)" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. xii, italics added). Queer "derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has become linked to accusation, pathologization, [and] insult" (Butler, 1993, p. 226). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified persons have actively sought to reclaim the word queer as a source of pride and as a way to refute the historical discursive and performative function of the word that seeks to enact narrow minoritizing identity categorizations based upon a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. As Kumashiro (2001) suggests "queers do not ignore the harmful history of ignorance, discrimination, hatred and violence carried with the term" (p. 3), rather they use the term as an urgent and insurgent way of reclaiming and re-storying history in an attempt to transgress and disrupt heteronormativity and homophobia. In this sense, queer is claimed as much as a personal identity as it is a political marker. In instances where cited authors use other terminology, such as "lesbigay", we adhere to their usage.

[ii] Also see "Little Sister's and the Supreme Court of Canada" at <http://www.littlesistersbookstore.com/court.asp#documentary> the 2002 feature documentary film "Little Sister's vs Big Brother" written and directed by Aerlyn Weissman.

[iii] The International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) endorsed the *School Library Manifesto* at its 2002 annual general meeting (Clyde 2003, 1-2).

[iv] A directory of Internet access policies adopted by Canadian school, public, and post-secondary libraries is maintained at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta ; some policies indicate whether a filter is used or not (Schrader 2005). An article by Joan Miller in earlier issue of *SLIC Online* discusses the nature of acceptable use policies for schools and school libraries (Miller 2004).



Children's Rights in the Library

Valerie Thomson

This presentation was originally created in winter 2004 by Valerie Thomson and Keri Molberg for LIS 592: *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in Libraries*, a course offered by the School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS), University of Alberta. The presentation was then adapted for the Alberta Library Conference 2005 (Jasper, Alberta) and presented by Valerie Thomson and Jenny Ryan, both graduates of SLIS. The following is a written adaptation of the Jasper presentation, edited for length and content.

The focus of this presentation is children's rights in the library and how these rights can affect intellectual freedom by restricting and compromising children's access to information. Intellectual freedom means that no one has the right to tell you what you can and cannot see, read, hear, or say. This freedom can only exist if society ensures you have unrestricted access to all information and ideas, while allowing you to express yourself however you choose, regardless of what you have to say, or how you choose to say it.[1] Intellectual freedom directly impacts on the rights of children in the library, and this presentation will highlight some of the major areas where children's rights may be compromised according to this meaning of intellectual freedom.

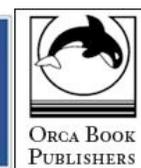
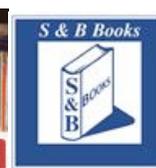
There are two sections from the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* that can be applied directly to libraries:

Article 13 – Freedom of Expression The right of the child to freedom of expression includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of the child's choice.

Article 17 – Access to appropriate information In recognition of the important function performed by the mass media, States are required to ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her well-being and health.[2]

It is interesting to compare the UN's stance on children's rights with libraries' stance on intellectual freedom. These are excerpts taken from the Canadian Library Association's position on intellectual freedom and we can see how it upholds the UN's position.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable...It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them... Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.[3]



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Theoretically, libraries are following the UN with this intellectual freedom position statement and have created a noble ideal. And, theoretically, by striving for intellectual freedom, we should be supporting the rights of children. But how do you ensure you are upholding this ideal and supporting children's rights while still respecting Federal and Provincial law, parental rights and expectations, community beliefs, *and* still make sure that everyone gets their coffee break?

One of the major issues of children's rights in the library is that of privacy. Privacy and confidentiality are rights that we take for granted as adults, and we would expect a library to keep our personal information and borrowing records confidential. However, children are often denied these rights. A parent assumes they have the right to know what books their kids have out – usually not for any other purpose but to keep track of the books and their due dates – but should this information be freely given out at the circulation desk? A child normally cannot get a library card without parental consent, but does that eradicate a cardholder's rights to privacy? According to Janet Hildebrand, the question becomes whether the librarian is responsible to the child as the cardholder or the parent as the responsible party.[4]

Policies surrounding children's privacy rights vary greatly according to the library, the province or state, and the country. In Alberta, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* was created to protect privacy rights. With regards to libraries, the only consideration the Act makes is "whether a parent was acting in the place of his/her minor children, (with the age of the child being one consideration), and if that is not the case, consider whether it would be an unreasonable invasion of the child's privacy to disclose the information." [5] The Act does not define "unreasonable invasion", which implies that Alberta law is up for interpretation by both the parent and library staff.

In California, the law is quite different and is free from interpretation. In order to guarantee privacy for each individual, California state law mandates confidentiality of registration and borrowing records. At Contra Costa County Library in California, a policy of privacy for children was adopted in 1991 that absolutely protects the privacy of a child's circulation record. At the circulation desk, library staff could indicate that the child has overdue items, but must ask the child for permission to reveal the titles. Looking at the Contra Costa website today shows that the policy still seems to be in place. They provide the parent of a child with a letter that lays out this policy. It states:

In order to guarantee privacy for each individual ... [l]ibrary staff cannot give any information about a patron's registration and circulation record to anyone other than the patron, no matter what the age or relationship to the patron. For example, a parent cannot be told what material a child has checked out on the child's card without the child's consent.[6]

Looking at these two examples alone, we can see that there is a wide range of policy that exists among libraries. Every library must use its own judgment, balancing the law with the rights of the parent and the rights of the child. The fact that there is no unanimous agreement as to how to handle privacy policy shows what a contentious issue this is.



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Another more recent example of a privacy issue is in relation to children's privacy rights on the Internet. The RCMP has recently been promoting a website on Internet Safety and the protection of children, which is a great resource with some useful information and tips. However, there is one suggestion on the website that might spark a bit of controversy where privacy of the child is concerned. Under the suggestions section provided by the RCMP, one tip suggests:

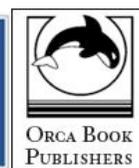
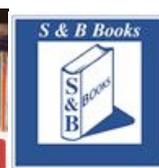
Block access to chat rooms or accompany your child when visiting a chat room. You can also consider routing your child's email into your own email account first in order to screen any unwanted email messages.[7]

It is surprising that the suggestion of reading another person's email is being made when it is a federal offense to look at someone's paper mail. Reading someone's mail is a direct invasion of privacy, whether it is paper or electronic. If a parent is concerned about their child opening unwanted email, then perhaps that child should not have their own email account. Perhaps in that case the parent and child should *share* an account. Unfortunately, email is still such a relatively new technology, that it will be some time before standards are in place as to the ethics of electronic privacy, for children or adults.

Another major influence on children's rights is library staff and the role that we play in either helping or hindering children's rights. One of the biggest influences we may have is the risk of self-censorship. As librarians, we may not always be aware that we are self-censoring, which is why it is important to assess this issue periodically in our selection decisions. Self-censorship means choosing to not select or deselect a book based on reasons other than basic selection criteria. According to Lester Ashiem, the difference between censorship and selection is that censorship is negative and seeks to exclude materials from a library; selection is positive and seeks to include materials wherever possible, after determining honestly if it meets the library's selection policy.[8]

These are some of the main motives behind a librarian practicing self-censorship, identified by Kenneth Donelson[9].

1. **Advocacy for "high standards".** This librarian does not give the child the freedom to read, but only the freedom to read whatever they consider "good" books.
2. **Fear.** This librarian may not acquire something because they are afraid that it, and they, will be challenged.
3. **Denial.** This librarian will just ignore censorship, hoping it will go away. They think that if they don't acknowledge it, it won't exist. This trap is also based on the motive of fear.
4. **Cowardice.** In order to satisfy everyone, this librarian may obtain potentially controversial books, but will keep them on a reserve or closed shelf, essentially making them inaccessible, but nevertheless still *present* in the library. This keeps them from having to answer to any group.
5. **Class Censorship.** This librarian figures that if the child really wants the material, they can go out and buy it. This discriminates against class, however, because it assumes that the child can afford to purchase the material.
6. **Censorship of the left.** This librarian may believe they are morally good by eliminating books that may be perceived as racist or sexist, but in actuality they are still creating an unbalanced collection tailored to their own views of



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what is acceptable and what is not.

7. **Lack of knowledge.** This librarian may not actually intend to censor, but we have included it as a trap of self-censorship because it creates similar effects. In this case, the librarian may exclude materials of an advanced nature because they may not acknowledge the intellectual levels of some children.

The major effect that self-censorship can have on children is that they may stop using the collection altogether. If the material that they are seeking is consistently not there, many will conclude that the library has nothing that interests them and stop going. Since we are often unaware of self-censorship it is important to remind ourselves periodically of the motives behind it and create our own checklist to prevent ourselves from unwittingly practicing self-censorship.

A more visible role that library staff can play that affects children's rights is the creation of language barriers. For example, signage, catalogue terms, and library jargon used at the reference desk can hinder a child's access to library services and collections. Another area of language barriers in the library is computers. This includes both the signage that surrounds the computers and the Internet policies that appear on the acceptance screen. The policies in particular are often written in legal jargon, making it difficult for children to understand and interpret these on their own. This is a common problem in many libraries' children's sections, and it may prove to be a complicated issue to correct. But ideally (using the CLA's intellectual freedom position statement as our goal) incorporating more child-friendly language everywhere in the children's department can make the department more accessible in general.

Another issue of accessibility is the physical barriers that children find in some libraries. Take a moment to imagine yourself as a small child. Consider some of the barriers that you may encounter in a simple trip to the library to take out your favourite book. For some children, access to transportation is not a possibility, as many are dependent on their parents and guardians and have no control over their own socioeconomic status. Children also encounter physical barriers within the library. They often can't reach books on high shelves, computer desks, or the circulation desk. In addition they sometimes are not strong enough to open library doors or lift their books to the counter. Fortunately, legislation addressing accessibility issues for the physically challenged also works to benefit children's accessibility issues. However, some libraries have been unable to address these issues due to lack of funding or space, leaving some children out in the cold (sometimes literally).

Children may also face intellectual barriers, such as having access to controversial or challenged material. The majority of book challenges the library receives are for children's books. According to the ALA, during the 1990s, 70% of all book challenges were aimed at materials in schools or school libraries.[10] Library cards can also pose a problem, as most memberships require parental consent and parents often retain lending rights for themselves by not acquiring library cards for their kids. They may also limit or deny library use to their children as a result of late fees or because of their own reading values. Some of these issues are faced by adults as well, but the majority are barriers unique to children.

In summary, we would like to suggest that staff should be educated on the policies of their library and the rights of the child. Staff should know how to deal with requests that could possibly undermine children's rights in the library. Children should also be educated on how to use the media resources available in the library



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and learn to critically judge material rather than be denied access. Librarians should be aware of their tendency to self-censor and be prepared to deal with book challenges. Each library should review its privacy and confidentiality policies to ensure children's needs are being met and review its physical space for child accessibility barriers such as high counters and shelving, and heavy doors.

Libraries have been great advocates for children's rights, and librarians have created many opportunities for children that were inconceivable only a century before. We hope that this presentation has motivated you to remember the rights of the child and reevaluate your library policy, services, and collections for opportunities to improve. This presentation is intended as a reminder of the rights of those small patrons who may be forgotten in the midst of our hectic days in the library.

[1] Definition adapted from the Armenian Library Association definition of intellectual freedom.

Armenian Library Association. "Definition of Intellectual Freedom." 2004. ALA. 25 Mar. 2005. http://www.ala.nla.am/workshop/workshop_a_2.html.

[2] Detrick, Sharon . *Children's Rights Glossary*. Florence: Innocenti, 2000.

[3] Canadian Library Association. "Statement on Intellectual Freedom." 1985. CLA. 25 Mar. 2005 <http://www.cla.ca/about/intfreed.htm>.

[4] Hildebrand, Janet. "Is Privacy Reserved for Adults? Children's Rights at the Public Library." *School Library Journal* 37.1 (1991): 21-25.

[5] Government of Alberta. "Frequently Asked Questions for Public Libraries." 2003. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. 25 Mar. 2005. http://www3.gov.ab.ca/foip/faq/public_libraries.cfm.

[6] Cain, Anne. "General Information on Library Cards." 2005. Contra Costa County Library. 25 Mar. 2005. <http://ccclib.org/youth/forparents.html>.

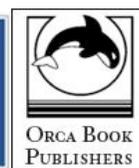
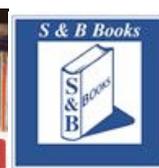
[7] Royal Canadian Mounted Police. "Protecting Your Child – Internet Safety." 2005. RCMP. 25 Mar. 2005. http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb/webpages/internet_e.htm.

[8] Ashiem, Lester. "Not Censorship, But Selection." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 28 (1953): 63-67.

[9] Donelson, Kenneth. "The Enemies Within: Teachers and Librarians as Censors." *Top of the News* 35 (1979): 233-236.

[10] American Library Association. "Challenged and Banned Books." 2005. American Library Association.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/challengedbanned/challengedbanned.htm#wcb>.



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Contemporary Implications of Individual Authenticity: An Academic 'Rant' -- Is 'Win/Win' a Pipe dream for Public School Libraries?

TDL Turner

Watching a video-formatted version of "A Beautiful Mind", based on the life of Nobel Prize mathematician John Nash, my husband the Psychology major/ Philosophy minor, said suddenly "A beautiful mind was sabotaged by the body!!"

I made a written note of this, including time and date[1] as we thought of the many people, and I of the numerous women in the book of women scientists I misplaced when we moved, and other women geniuses, Artemisia Ghentilisi, Edmonia Lewis, Frida Kahlo, Romaine Brooks[2] and Emily Carr, part of a list too long for this commentary. Early state-funded schools were intended primarily for the few (male) students seen as deserving of education.[3] The elitist, non-democratic view was that children of farmers and labourers did not need formal education-- "State" funds were wasted when interfering with society's rigidly dictated family-based cheap labour system.[4]

Even after increased public demands for more affordable education by the early 1840's, the growing consensus was that "government-controlled public school systems . . . would serve to improve, and control, the quality of both citizenship and labour" as long as the curriculum for the "masses" remained "limited to what those in power, rather than the local communities . . . defined as useful knowledge".[5]

Consequently, girls' education would train them for "subordination within the family, rather than for paid work and independence." [6] This is even more evident within many First Nations, African-Canadian [and some other ethnic or immigrant] communities, "for whom separate . . . more oppressive , schools were established and operated for . . . decades." [7]

"Linda Gordon (1989), who examined social work records documenting family violence in Boston [Massachusetts] between 1880 and 1960, concluded that chronic, inter- generational poverty was a chief risk factor." [8] When I think of "poverty", however, I think also of cultural and intellectual poverty, neither necessarily the "acquired" poverty of so-called "impoverished nobility", nor genteel descendants of Churchminster's Latin scholars from the pages of Hardy's Jude the Obscure.

Even when families, communities and teachers, themselves, "opposed this culture of dominance", their employers' agendas were unmistakable and enforced.[9] By the 1950's, although exceptions and "escapees" were slowly increasing, the basic socio-economic/ "edu-programming" retained its vice-grip on the consciousness of most of the "masses". Stereotypes remained ingrained and opportunities for logical, analytical, assertive, direct, decisive, independent, individualistic, self-reliant "thinker" styled women[10] were scarce, especially in other than traditional occupations, including library, where most of the top executives and managers were male.



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From what I have read, observed and experienced throughout North America, while some of this has changed significantly, the chances of seeing males in more secretarial and clerical support roles remains proportionately slim in many public education systems. Realistically speaking, the women content occupying these types of positions, might not want men there. Many "traditional" women, comfortable being identified primarily as nurturing, subjective, cooperative, "flatterable", and "understanding" have tended also to resent (or at least find puzzling) both men who appear to exhibit more of the "feelings" traits and women who operate more as "thinkers".

At times this is demonstrated by a (thinly-concealed) aversion to the term "Ms." and suspicion towards women who do not change their names to that of their husband's upon marriage. It is a barely whispered secret that the agenda of some industries (including some public education systems) marks [insufficiently "feminine"] women for ultimate demotion, or at least non-promotion. Such women can expect never to have so-called "job security" unless they fit somewhere into a [politically convenient] category or unless they have a very influential (family)relative. -- A reminder that "job- security" for most humans of either gender, is much likelier enjoyed by members of society's top 15-20% (somewhat irrespective of gender-- although still favoring slightly the male) might be of small consolation.

Herein lie two tragedies, both in my opinion stemming from distorted ethics and corrupted basic morality (it is a relief one needs not aspire to sainthood just to observe basic morality!).

Tragedy *numero uno* is that the hardworking taxpayer's (rising) taxes from multiple tax-sources in many instances do not adequately fund two of the most important structures proven to maintain civilized, healthy communities, e.g.- solid public education and accessible health-care. This leads eventually to societal "implosion" from within, that we see already in overcrowded public elementary classrooms[11], "win/lose" encounters between so-called "professional" and so-called "support" workers, steady *decreases* in appropriate remuneration and types of work for degreed academics (especially women), deteriorated physical and mental/emotional health among public workers *and their families* and, in both urban and small town settings, concerns about various drug-linked(especially crystal methamphetamine and crack-cocaine)or other violent crimes, including but not limited to child prostitution or gang sub-cultures.

Tragedie nombre deux . . . adolescent females without enough positive women"thinker"role-models, assume since there is little or no life beyond pregnancy, domesticity, and [pleasing-primarily male-authority]that they might as well start at age ten (note again the bare midriffs and 3-inch high-heels, with some help from ad-media!). If we are under the illusion that all frustrated career women successfully hide these bitter disappointments from their offspring and other family members, we need to re-think. Social programming has dictated(nearly worldwide)that "women whose superiors are male usually are rewarded more for niceness than for self-assertion and are punished for overtly confronting injustice and unfairness"[12] and this operates even in so-called "liberal" circles.

In many school library settings, males still are more likely to be seen repairing hard-drives and pulling cable. Even if a woman demonstrates capability in this area, probably she will receive neither recognition nor remuneration. --Conflicting duties either are introduced or the hours of work shortened to render efficiency impossible



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(and decreased remuneration for the female technician!). In some settings, senior technical library duties are intentionally "re-assigned" to a male employee already in a higher earning bracket or, even a manager [who, if female, usually either fits "political convenience" or *benefits from nepotism*].

Among the female library technological (or technical) support staff, numeracy or accounting skills are valued by [management] only as part of a "secretary-receptionist package", while tutoring skills are considered useful only if part of a "special-needs" teaching assistant's "package". For non-secretarial library staff that attended elementary school in the 1950's when students were taught to complete the tasks/projects at hand *before* starting new ones, the frenetic continuous "short term focus" mentality is both 2 steps from a seizure[!]and, according to Dr. John Ratey (and NIOSH), another spate of nails in the coffin encasing public health, as part of the "pseudo-Attention Deficit Disorder [pandemic] being imposed" on the human work environment.[13]

Another irony is that while information technology and records management, as well as structural design and accounting or actuarial occupations are very suited for some individuals born with *very mild* "pervasive perceptual disorders" such as Asperger's Syndrome, many of these occupations still are less available to women than men, even in school library settings.[14] *Non-traditional women* of colour [15], especially if non-status [North American First Nations, Inuit or Metis] sometimes find the library career-path *equally* daunting and essential!

If the intention is to continue augmenting stereotypes and mediocrity within the human psyche, without regard to the widespread consequences of teenage pregnancies and over- population, viral and other communicable diseases, "zero-concept" of *self-discipline*, increased youth prostitution and exploitation, alcohol and other substance abuses, and affiliated violent crimes, the agenda is plain.

Disabling and "dumbing down" the *educated and ethical* for socio-political/economic agendas at the expense of the "[common good]" always has amazed[some of us]!

If a child's brain is not trained to read for comprehension (other than the online-arcade "cheater-lists"), if what is read either fuels delusion, reinforces hopelessness and despair, or represents meaningless marks on a page, we are about to revisit more realities than do Thomas Hardy's novels.

Potentially "beautiful minds" remain imprisoned for life--or death?--inside[the wrong]bodies -- while "*honey there's no money!*" resounds within their eardrums. It has little or nothing to do with degrees, diplomas, or certifications, and much to do with self-serving, systemic corporate and political nepotism, dollar-power-plays[16] . . .and very short, narrow, dim vision.[17]

We need *good* public schools North America-wide with libraries that are the schools' academic hubs. We need to stop pretending this is other than *priority and to recognize* the *diverse educated, trained staff* who have invested both their years and their funds into these learning resource centres. Really, we can launch a new, brightened, enlightened direction when replacing the obstacle-"isms"[18] with "mass will to equity and fairness".

Really . . . in fact.

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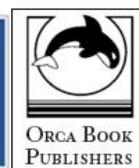
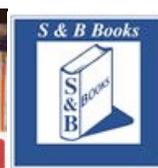
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[1] "A Beautiful Mind" (lead actor, Academy Award winner Russell Crowe, portraying John Nash) . . . 2004 August 8- 8:45pm Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

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[3] Dehli, Hari & Harry Smaller, "Public Schools in Canada: a History Lesson", Our Times (October/November 2003: 18).

[4] Ibid.,[p] 18.

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[9] Op.cit., [p]19.

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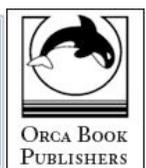
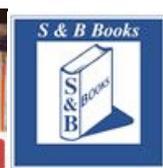
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[15] As does Dana Crowley Jack (Op.cit., p. 285) I use the term "of colour" to denote red, brown, black and yellow persons, vis-à-vis white/pink persons.



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[16] Dehli, Hari & Harry Smaller, "Public Schools in Canada: a History Lesson", Our Times (October/November 2003: 19).

[17] Business and industry of itself is not the problem, abusive monopolism is a proven problem; a "small-business-based" economy would be a partial anecdote.

[18] Some "obstacle-isms": sexism; racism; ageism; gender-ism; nepotism; anti-intellectualism; "clique-ism".



On Intellectual Freedom

Carin Bringelson

"Intellectual Freedom." I had no idea what that phrase meant when I started my graduate degree in Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. But there I was, a first semester student in the Spring of 2001, taking a class by that same name. I had yet to learn all of the jargon and acronyms of Library Land. Nonetheless, anything entitled "Intellectual Freedom" sounded like a good class to me—especially from my perspective as an academic activist. Intellectual: my academic side liked the sound of a concept related to the worlds of cognition and theory. Freedom: my activist side was all about creating and expanding choice, justice, and equity.

What I learned that semester (thanks to Dr. Dianne McAfee Hopkins) can sometimes be boiled down to one concept: Access. If we, as librarians and information professionals, work to ensure access to materials, then our customers/students/patrons will have the space (mentally) and the opportunity to choose to follow the direction in which their thoughts take them. Now THAT is intellectual freedom: the freedom to roam wherever our minds may lead.

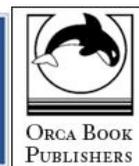
Creating this space and opportunity to choose is much more than an intellectual endeavor, however. It is about the real physical work that impacts access, such as signage, language used, and the format of materials. It is about shelf-space, architecture, and transportation to the building. It is about technology, confidentiality, and the culture of a library. It is also about adequate funding, trained staff, and an educated school or advisory board. Notice that not once have I mentioned the word censorship.

Censorship

While a graduate student in library school, I held the position of Intellectual Freedom Information Services Coordinator at the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a library of the school of education. I often described my job as "anti-censorship work." I assisted Wisconsin librarians and teachers when they were facing potential or actual book challenges. This meant understanding the complaint against a book, gathering reviews, and locating additional information specific to the complaint or the book. My job was not to take a position on the book, but simply to provide concrete information about the title and sometimes perspectives on the broader issue or issues involved. My work gave me the opportunity to think about the reasons why people challenge materials. While these reasons were many and varied, among the concerns that came up repeatedly (for many different titles) were objectionable language, sexuality, and violence.

Language

Now there's a euphemism for you. "Objectionable language" refers to what some people call vulgarity, others swearing, and still others obscene words. If you read authors' thoughts behind the use of swear words, you will notice them mentioning the realism of the characters and the appropriateness of the situation. Like real life,



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there are some of us who swear more than others, and some times (and places) when we curse where we wouldn't otherwise. It's the same way for books and their characters. If we want our young people to imagine a scene, understand a character, and enjoy a plot, we cannot expect them to believe that a contemporary character would say "rats" instead of "shit!" We cannot disrespect and discount their experience of the world by sugar coating language to make it palatable to all first, fifth, tenth, etc. graders. Language is ever shifting, always being reinvented, and, of course, continuing to offend someone or other.

Sexuality

Sexuality is yet another broad topic with many facets. Maybe someone's upset about a book that involves abortion. Or one with gay, lesbian, or bisexual characters. Or maybe the teens in the book are exploring their sexual desires. Whatever the complaint about a book depicting sexuality may be, it cannot erase the fact of life that every human being is sexual. I believe that having books (both fictional and non-fictional) about sexuality is a safer and more effective way to learn about the complexities and intricacies of this very human phenomenon than growing up without resources. There is no question: young people have thoughts, questions, and feelings about sex. Therefore, it is not surprising that books for young people also explore these life issues

Violence

Characters in books are humiliated, get physically attacked, and sometimes are killed. Adults are corrupt, peers are cruel, and parents abuse. A well-written book will make our stomachs churn from such violence even though on the outside we are "merely reading." Is there value in depicting violence in books that our young people read? Because I strongly admire the non-violent civil rights movement and its leaders, it is hard for me to say that depicting violence is a good thing. However, I know that violence—in its multiple manifestations—is a real thing. We are living in a world torn by war, for goodness sakes. And if that's not violent, what is? If we can't explore the causes, relationships, politics, and effects of violence through reading books, where can we? Again, books can be an important resource for young people trying to come to terms with the violence in their world.

Reading in Context

Besides raising concerns for some readers, these issues of language, sexuality, and violence also have something else in common. When found objectionable, all three of these aspects have often been taken out of context from the story or book in which they are embedded. Without that larger context, one cannot fairly judge as to the purpose or necessity of that aspect. To fully understand and appreciate (or tolerate) the language, sexuality, or violence in a book, the reader must be open to the possibility that the author is trying to convey a message or idea that deserves to be communicated and explored. Without these sometimes uncomfortable issues set within a larger context, the message will be lost.

Power of Choice

In thinking about these concrete concerns of language, sexuality, and violence, I am reminded that there is a line. There is a line that we each get to draw. A line that marks the difference between what we think is acceptable, and what we don't. As adults, we get to draw that line for ourselves: "No, I don't want to read S&M erotica." "Yes, I do." As parents and guardians, we have the power to draw such



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lines for our children. I would even argue that it is our responsibility to help our young people decide for themselves what is comfortable for them to read and what is not—to help them determine where they draw the line.

Beyond their roles as parents and guardians, however, adults do not have the authority to draw that line for other children or adults. This tension is a major balancing act for intellectual-freedom-loving people. While we don't want to close down opportunities for involvement and dialogue, we must also convey to potential censors that they do not have the authority to restrict reading and limit the choices of other people's children. Additionally, potential censors do not have the authority to limit the choices of librarians and teachers who are putting their professional training into practice.

Of course, the scariest question is: Who among us is not a potential censor?

Power of Words

There is no doubt in my mind that words—both written and verbal—are powerful tools. They give shape to our ideas, helping us sculpt our previously held thoughts ever sharper. They also limit our thoughts, for if there is no word for a concept, how can it be communicated? We are stuck with the words that we know. So in very real ways, words are powerful tools.

For that reason—the power of words—I can not simply dismiss the concerns that complainants raise when they worry about certain words in certain books having influence over our children. I would be surprised if the words didn't influence readers. In fact, I would be disappointed if suddenly words didn't have the ability to move people to feel, think, or act differently. What a boring world that would be.

Unlike some potential censors, however, I do not believe nor dwell on the idea that books hold a negative power: the power to taint. Instead, I believe in the positive power of words: the power to transform. I want young people to be challenged to wrestle with the world, to figure out who they are in the world, and to strive to make the world a better place. We cannot support our young people in this process of growing up if we pretend that swearing, sexuality, and violence don't exist in the world. We must allow our children and youth access to ideas that will encourage them to grow, even if they have to struggle to do so. By ensuring access to a wide variety of materials, we can indeed nurture intellectual freedom: the freedom to roam wherever our minds may lead.

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I would like to thank Megan Schliesman, a librarian at the Cooperative Children's Book Center, for reading drafts and offering suggestions for this piece. And especially for encouraging me to speak about my own journey on this road of intellectual freedom. I would also like to thank Ginny Moore Kruse who encouraged me to travel the road of intellectual freedom by drawing a map, taking her own journey, and sharing her toolkit with me.



Blood Ritual in the Library

Elaine Harger

Elaine Harger is a librarian at Mount Si High School in Snoqualmie, Washington. She is also a co-founder of the Progressive Librarians Guild, co-chair of the International Responsibilities Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table in the American Library Association, and an elected councilor-at-large of ALA.

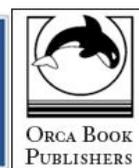
But your flag decal won't get you into heaven anymore, They're already overcrowded from your dirty little war. Now Jesus don't like killing, no matter what the reason for, And your flag decal won't get you into heaven anymore. - John Prine, singer & songwriter

At about 9:00 in the morning on September 11, 2001, I sat alone in the K-8 public school library at PS/IS 176, the W. Haywood Burns School, in upper Manhattan, thumbing through a picture book edition of the story of Noah's ark – a tale of an angry god feeling justified in killing all but a few members of the human race, many, if not most, perfectly innocent of any sin or crime worthy, if any ever is or was, of capital punishment. An old story of mass murder committed by a god, condoned by his chosen human intermediaries. The sacrifice and slaughter of innocents becomes acceptable to many when done in the name of God. "At this disturbing thought, I set the book down when the phone rang."

The previous spring, middle school teachers and I had collaborated on an interdisciplinary proposal for a collection development grant. Our proposal had as its focusing theme the notion of catastrophes – natural and social. The earth science and social studies classes would explore a variety of phenomena – earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, wars, genocide, torture – which humans experience as low scale, local disruptions, or as national or global catastrophes to daily routine, individual life and limb, social relations and infrastructures. Units of study would explore mythology, literature, history, current events, and the earth and applied sciences.

The teachers and I arrived at catastrophe as a unifying curricular theme for several reasons. First, because middle school *life* is filled with the *sturm und drang* of adolescent catastrophe. Life abounds with disruption. Middle school students, by and large, have a natural affinity to catastrophe – physiologically, voices break, blood descends, hormones explode; psychologically, the young adult rebels against the elder with a fury; socially, relations are established and severed with an abandon the equal of which can only be found in plate tectonics and volcanic eruptions. Secondly, natural and social disasters are often in the news, students find the reports fascinating, and they can tie in conveniently to school curriculum. Thirdly, our library was home to a mural, painted by New York City artist Ora Lerman, which depicted the aftermath of the biblical flood. Vibrantly colored toy animals recreate the world with brushes and paints, scissors and pens after the divine destruction. A statement carved into a clay tablet by the artist draws parallels between the library and the ark – the former a repository of culture, designed to weather social and natural stress for the benefit of future generations.

[1]



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Many of our students had, literally, grown up beneath the mural, mounted in the ceiling, which we occasionally made reference to with students studying the mythologies of different cultures. Our art teachers also used the mural with their classes. The mural was familiar, and so the idea of exploring catastrophe and the human work of recovery would not be alien to our middle schoolers. We won the grant and purchased with half of the funds books on mythology, history, earth science, social studies, and novels depicting the "social catastrophes" of slavery, genocide, apartheid. Students would, for example, delve into the connections between ancient creation myths and geological and astronomical phenomena.

Over the summer, however, most of the teachers I'd worked with on the curriculum found other jobs (turnover was high at our young, struggling middle school). Now, here I was with lots of new books to support lessons designed by teachers who'd moved on to greener pastures. So, during 1st period on the second morning of the first full week of the new school year, I sat alone in the library, looking for angles to entice a veteran language arts teacher into using our new collection of "catastrophe literature."

In the days and weeks following that fateful morning, we did make some use of the books and the mural with a few classes to discuss the work of rebuilding, of regrouping in the aftermath of the great human tragedy that was September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, for us at PS/IS 176, as for people throughout the country, the human solidarity sought by many rapidly became overshadowed by divisions created by leaders who cast the traumatic events of that day in simplistic frameworks – "the terrorists hate our American way of life," "you're either with us or you're with them" – and appealed to all to prove solidarity with the victims of the attacks by engaging in public acts of patriotism. On September 13th, Congress passed a resolution encouraging every U.S. citizen to fly the flag in a show of solidarity with the victims of the attack. [2] School districts required the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools.

Flag rituals, encouraged by Congress, required by school districts, demanded by administrators, became the litmus test of each individual's patriotism and a symbolic wedge, separating those who supported "us" from those who, supposedly, supported "them."

These symbols, the flag and pledge, and their presence in the library form the subject of this essay, in which I argue that the presence of either violates the fundamental philosophical tenet of librarianship, namely that the library embodies the ideal of free and open exchange of ideas in a democratic society. As has been said and written on countless occasions, a democracy requires in citizens the critical capacity of being informed – fully and accurately. I will also argue that there can be no progressive, peaceful cooptation of the U.S. flag. Even as I write these words, I grapple with how to deal with the flag and its rituals in the high school library in which I now work, and I write to share my reflections on this issue in the hope that my experience, questions, research and thoughts will be of help to others who struggle with these very powerful symbols in the context of their own libraries and lives.



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Flags at School

New York City blossomed with American flags after the destruction of the World Trade Center . Large and small, the stars-and-stripes adorned jacket lapels and skyscrapers. It became difficult to locate a post office. Every street looked dressed for a Fourth of July parade. Baseball stadiums brought in eagles to soar aloft to the strains of the national anthem. Every bus and subway car was adorned with a backward (i.e. flying) flag decal.

Such was happening across the country. Expressions of patriotism were *expected* in every venue – from the hotdog vendor on the street corner to the halls of Congress to the airwaves – and those who questioned, or refused to engage in displays of patriotism were often branded as uncaring, at best, but more often as unpatriotic or as in league with terrorists. The NYC Board of Education resolution requiring the pledge ritual was passed at its meeting on October 17, 2001. It read:

Whereas, the Board of Education stands united with the City of New York and the United States of America following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 ; and Whereas, the Board of Education recognizes that patriotism, liberty, and justice are important values that should be imparted to students; and Whereas, the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America and its flag embody those values; and Whereas, many schools do not now fly United States flags outside their buildings, in student assembly rooms, and in classrooms; and Whereas, Section 802 of the Education Law mandates that the Commissioner of Education issue regulations concerning a daily pledge of allegiance to the flag and other patriotic exercises in our schools, and pursuant thereto the Commissioner has issued Part 108 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, which provides Flag Regulations for all public schools; therefore be it Resolved, That the Board of Education requires all schools to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every school day, and at all school-wide assemblies and school events; and be it further Resolved, That the schools are encouraged to form color guards to present the flags of our City, State, and Nation at assemblies; and be it further Resolved, that the Board of Education shall make every reasonable effort to provide flags to schools that do not have them, with the goal of placing flags outside every school building and in as many classrooms as is practicable; and be it further Resolved, That no student or staff member may be compelled to recite the Pledge of... [Author's note: The document on the NYC BoE website was cut off at this point] [3]

In early November, the staff of PS/IS 176 met and discussed was the Board's mandate concerning the pledge. The spectrum of thought and feelings expressed was very broad. Some thought the pledge was an appropriate show of respect and unity. Some thought each class should hold a discussion and decide as a group whether or not, or to what extent, it would participate in the ritual. Others thought the mandate should be ignored, while others thought it should be actively protested. Whichever stand was taken, each teacher spoke from the heart, and at one point the exchange became so heated, with one teacher shouting "If you don't love it [the U.S.A.], then leave!" that the principal moved to end the discussion. Fortunately, calm was restored, we continued to talk, and ended by requesting that the principal find out from other schools how they were dealing with the mandate. Later that week the principal sent out a memo to the staff:



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Dear Staff – On Tuesday we had a difficult but a most necessary discussion about the pledge of allegiance. This open discussion was only possible because you were willing to share your thoughts, feelings and suggestions. I thank you for that. Many valid concerns were shared; the feeling of being judged for ones position regarding the pledge of allegiance, the issue of how to deal with the mandate without compromising personal choices, and that there may be other ways to express the intent behind pledging to the flag. There were those who spoke to the reasons why this was important. Some spoke about how people may find comfort in the flag or view the flag as a symbol of good things. Still others, because of the loss of friends and loved ones may view the flag as an unspoken sense of security and a rebirth of patriotic vigor.

Reflecting on all this, I decided not to go outside our community with regards to alternatives to the pledge. Instead, I have opted to move forward with faith, trusting that each individual in our community can each hold onto their stands without compromising the quality of our coexistence. As a result of this resolution, let us focus on the concepts of justice and liberty in our teachings. Let us strive, ever more so, to prepare our students for their future, by equipping them with the tools they will need to continue the pursuit of peace and equity. Let us model for them the essence of freedom as we make our choices; yet stand side by side with our differences. Let us, for the sake of the children, continue to direct our energies to our vocation, to wit, to teach.

So I ask that you discuss with your students the intent of the pledge, teach them the words and review the symbol of the flag. In preparation for this exercise, which will begin on Tuesday morning, please review with your students how the pledge will be done every morning at 8:45 and Board of Education American flags will be placed in every room by Tuesday morning, these must remain on display.

Miriam Pedraja, memo dated November 7, 2001 [4]

The principal declined to inquire from other schools what they were doing in response to the Board's mandate, which troubled many of our teachers, and we all knew that, in spite of the seeming openness of the memo, the last paragraph contained our "marching orders." The flag had not been a fixture on our building or in our classrooms. Our school was originally founded by politically progressive educators and parents, and served a large immigrant community. Many parents were citizens of countries other than the U.S. , and all parents had their own, and widely differing, views on expressions of patriotism. Teachers were concerned about how students and parents would respond to the mandated recitation, and it seemed certain that the order to engage in the Pledge of Allegiance would sow as much division as unity within our school community.

Flags in the Library

While teachers at one small school in New York City discussed the flag ritual, libraries across the country were raising flags by the score. Central libraries hung enormous flags over entranceways, tiny flags popped up on reference desks, and in the weeks to come several members of the library community began to notice, and hear stories, of how these silent symbols were creating a climate of discomfort and intimidation within libraries.



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The question that arose in the minds of many in the U.S. in the wake of the September attacks was, "Why?" Some traveled to libraries for answers to that simple, and yet so complex question.

Tragically, our leaders were not seeking to help answer that most important of questions. In their view, there was no time to waste in trying to understand, the important thing was to act, to retaliate. Any questioning was treasonous – "You're either with us, or you're with the terrorists." – and the atmosphere generated seemed to hover about the newly erected flags, even though many were raised as a simple memorial of those who had died, as a sign of human solidarity and sorrow over innocent lives destroyed by a horrible act of violence. Of course, the flag was also displayed to show support for the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and for the new Bush administration policies of "preemptive" war, "homeland security," the USA PATRIOT Act, and the detention of "terrorist suspects" without charge or access to legal counsel. In some cases the flag represented expressions of racist, xenophobic sentiments.

The flag discussion amongst librarians began on the internet with Library Juice and the listservs of the Progressive Librarians Guild and the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, then moved into more mainstream forums like *American Libraries* and the ALA Council listserv. The following excerpt from a posting to PLGnet is representative of the core concern raised by the sudden and widespread display of flags in the library.

The administration of the library where I work (Multnomah County Public Library, in Portland , Oregon) has just announced to the branch supervisors that there will soon be American flags displayed in each neighborhood library. The flags will be inside the branches, in a spot designated by the branch supervisor...

In addition, in the last month or so I have been dismayed to see a few of my colleagues wearing American flag pins or "patriotic" t-shirts while in public areas of the library...

Oregon law requires that public employees refrain from supporting or opposing political candidates, initiative petitions, or voter referendums. Multnomah County Library encourages staff to interpret this rather broadly, and we are asked to refrain from saying or wearing pretty much anything, while at work, that might make a patron think we've got a particular view on an issue that is sort of vaguely politically related. The example used in the required intellectual freedom training I attended was that a t-shirt with the slogan "Free Tibet" could well make folks using the library less comfortable asking certain kinds of reference questions, or checking out certain materials.

To my mind, staff wearing patriotic gear, or flags suddenly appearing in the branches is far worse than a staff member wearing a "Free Tibet" t-shirt – flags are being used as symbols of absolute and blind support of the United States' war in Afghanistan, and by some, as a display of racism and hate against people of Middle-Eastern descent and Muslims. In this context, I worry about the comfort level and safety of our patrons – patrons who don't support the war, but especially patrons who are or might appear to be Muslim or of Middle Eastern descent...



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Are any of your libraries or library administrators suddenly getting patriotic? If you have ideas about how to fight this, please let me know. I am really going to hate coming to work if there is suddenly a big American flag behind the circulation desk. [5]

Another librarian on the same listserv took offense that anyone would feel negatively toward the sight of the flag:

I love what my country symbolizes, and that it's embodied in the flag. I think that the Bush administration is doing us all a disfavor and the U.S. foreign policy has not lived up to the symbol of the flag, but to be distraught at the sight of such a beautiful symbol to me is a sign that some folks have forgotten just what it means...I have a flag on my desk [from long before Sept. 11]...INSIDE my car...I cry during fireworks at the 4th of July, but my patriotism does not mean I blindly support what our government is doing. I support and believe in the ideals upon which our country was founded, and I would like to see them upheld. [6]

Encapsulated in these two postings are sentiments, which to this very day echo among people in the U.S. It seems there are three basic categories of emotion people feel for the flag: those who love it and support the government with little or no question; those who love it in spite of serious questions they have toward government; and those who have no love for the flag, who see it simply as the symbolic expression of nationalistic chauvinism.

Teardrops, goosebumps and the flag

Where do our strong emotions toward the flag come from? On July 4, 1989, the *Washington Post* reported on some recently published psychological studies on patriotism.

Patriots are made, not born. The process begins in childhood, when the seeds of national devotion are sown with simple acts such as pledging allegiance to the flag and singing "God Bless America" long before they ever understand the words... In children as young as 7 or 8, patriotism can first be detected. Preliminary studies of patriotism in schoolchildren conducted by UCLA's Feshback found that "kids experience a great deal of patriotic feeling." For children, patriotism is pure devotion. There is no hint of nationalism until adolescence, when teen-agers suddenly begin to be drawn to feelings of national supremacy. [7]

The article goes on to say "Why patriotism may be linked to early [parent-child] relationships is not completely understood."

My own experience, however, shows that this matter is actually quite *easily* understood.

My father was in the military until near the end of my 7th grade in school. I grew up reciting the Pledge of Allegiance daily with my classmates, from kindergarten on – eight years of this ritual, on the majority of days in any given year. Additionally, in movie theaters on military bases, the very first film shown would be of the flag, billowing in the wind, blue sky in the background, accompanied by a stirring rendition of the national anthem. All movie goers would stand at attention for the duration, then settle down with our popcorn for Armed Forces newsreels, previews



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and – finally – the featured film (often, for us kids, a Saturday matinee *double* feature).

Dad left the service in the spring of 1969 while I was attending junior high school in Wiesbaden, Germany . I finished the 7th grade in Mountain Home , Arkansas , where the family stayed with New Grandpa while Dad, who'd resigned his commission in protest of the Vietnam War, went in search of a job. At my new school in Mountain Home, I was scandalized that the Pledge of Allegiance was preceded by a *prayer*. My concern, at that time, had nothing to do with the appropriateness of a prayer being said in school, but at what to me was the audaciousness of giving pride of place to *anything* before the pledge. My youthful sense of protocol was greatly offended.

Later in college, I found it necessary to do some soul searching, some serious reflection on my experience of patriotic rituals. By that time in life, I'd learned enough about U.S. history to have long abandoned participating in patriotic rituals, and yet I was disturbed and confused by the powerful *emotions* that would sometimes course through my veins upon hearing the national anthem, or seeing a symbol of U.S. patriotism – the flag, the Statue of Liberty, a soaring eagle, and, yes, 4th of July fireworks. I could sit through "God Bless America" at rodeos and commencements without feeling a thing, ignoring raised eyebrows and hisses and accidentally spilled beers, but sometimes tears would well up in my eyes, or I'd get that goosebump thrill or a palpitating heart when suddenly faced with some national symbol. Why? Why were my emotions at odds with what my mind knew? What was going on in my body that defied my brain? Where in my subconscious were those hair-triggered emotions? How did they get there? And, what allowed them to stay there with such strength

I eventually arrived at the only explanation that makes any sense to me. As children, saluting the flag and singing the anthems are one of the *only* activities shared consistently with whole groups of other children. Furthermore, we are told by teachers and parents to feel proud, to stand up straight, to recite or sing with feeling – and so we do. We feel proud together – *together* – a group, a community of Americans proud of our country. As children we might not know what the words we recite actually mean, we might not know what exactly we are to be proud of, but the words spoken *together*, in unison, the images seen establish a powerful, emotional bond to words, to musical notes, to those stars-and-stripes. As children, we in the United States are *indoctrinated* to feel powerful emotions when patriotic cues are present. We are trained to thrill at the sight of the flag, in the same fashion as Pavlov trained his dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell.

For myself, the only similar emotional ties I have are to a few songs that became important to me at different times in my life. From my pre-school childhood, the songs "Jesus Loves the Little Children" and "This Little Light of Mine" can still generate emotions as strong as those roused by "Solidarity Forever" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and "We Shall Overcome" – the later songs learned as an adult in settings with groups of people with whom I identified, people I admired and sought to emulate, join, to be a proud, loyal member of the group.

The emotional bonds of patriotic fervor are rooted either in the natural, trusting, unquestioning *ignorance* of children, or develop at moments of personal crisis or openness in the life of an adult who desires to establish psychological, spiritual or political ties with a group – whether it be a baseball team, a religious cult or congregation, or a political party.



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The same *Washington Post* article reports on some opinion polls inquiring about feelings of patriotism in several countries. One set of findings in particular strikes me as revealing:

Similar results emerged from another cross-national survey by Gallup pollsters in 1982...81 percent of respondents in the United States – the highest percentage of any nation – said that they were “very proud” to be Americans. Next came Ireland , where 66 percent of respondents said that they were “very proud” to be Irish. Third ranked was England , where 55 percent polled reported feeling “very proud” to be British. At the bottom of the list were Japan and West Germany . Just 30 percent of Japanese reported being very proud of their nationality, and only 21 percent of West Germans said they were very proud to be Germans.[8]

Although the article attempts no analysis of this survey, the low number of “very proud” Japanese (and probably the Germans as well) could have much to do with the fact that, after World War II, the Japanese were forbidden by the U.S. occupying forces from indoctrinating their school children with nationalistic symbols, songs, and images. The U.S. military command knew very well that the fervid patriotism instilled in young children establishes an emotional foundation for the training of soldiers willing to die for country. World War II certainly provided a display of the strength of the patriotism of Japanese soldiers.

When the war ended, it was the common intent of all the Allied Powers to render Japan incapable of ever returning to the field of battle. “Demilitarization” was thus the first policy of the Occupation authorities and was accompanied by abolishing Japan ’s armed forces, dismantling its military industry, and eliminating the expression of patriotism from its schools and public life. [9]

To this day I struggle, although with less frequency, with emotions triggered by patriotic cues, and in discussions with school and library colleagues in late 2001 I argued strongly against flags in the library and pledges in the school. As it turned out, no flag was ever mounted in the library at PS/IS 176. I don’t know why, perhaps the custodians weren’t given enough for all classrooms. I was relieved, of course, whatever the reason, and happy that the library was, as I phrased it, a “flag free zone.” The pledge ritual at 176 didn’t last long either. Not only was there some resistance, but it was an inconvenient routine. During the time that we did the pledge, however, on one occasion a class was in the library when the recitation came over the intercom. I was struck by the fact that the student who stood tallest, recited most clearly, precisely, and enthusiastically – even without a flag on which to focus – was the sole Middle Eastern student in the class. A few of his classmates half-heartedly engaged in the recitation, while the rest stayed seated on the floor in preparation for our story. Both the teacher and I remained seated.

The discussion on the Internet between librarians resulted in the passage of the following statement by the Social Responsibilities Round Table at its Action Council’s midwinter meeting in January 2002:

Statement of Concern on the Use of Flags in Libraries' Public Areas

SRRT recognizes that the US flag ordinarily is appropriately, proudly and respectfully displayed according to custom and law in libraries and public institutions. The display of the colors is a formal matter which is meant to represent the sovereignty



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and unity of the nation.

However the aggressive display of flags in unusual places, in unusual numbers, and in an unusual manner might be taken to imply, among other things, institutional endorsement of current US governmental policies.

Privileging symbolic speech in possible support of current US governmental policies tends to undermine the library as a place of free thought and compromises the neutrality of the library space. Such unusual displays may create an intimidating atmosphere for some library users who may be deterred in their requests for materials and assistance. SRRT urges libraries to be sensitive to these concerns. [10]

Flags in the school library

Three years after September 11, 2001, I found myself on the other side of the country, the new librarian at a high school, when all of a sudden (to me), at the beginning of 2nd period on the first day of school, the cheerful voice of a female student came over the public address system – “Good morning, Mount Si. Please stand for the pledge of allegiance.”

I can't recall if there were students in the library at that moment, but the two other adults promptly stood, faced the flag, hands over hearts and began the recitation. I, meanwhile, filled with a surprised shock, which almost immediately turned to silent, internal rage – knowing full well what was expected of me and resenting it powerfully – slowly rose from my chair, but refusing to turn my body to face the flag. Instead I bowed my head slightly, subjecting my body and spirit to this authority. I did not remain seated, as I normally would, out of fear – fear of offending my new colleagues, fear of giving anyone cause to question my moral capacity, my worthiness as a new, untenured employee of the school, as an educator of young women and men, fear of jeopardizing my job. I felt shame and fury.

In the following weeks, I responded to the 2nd period instruction in the same fashion, minus the charged emotions of the first day, but with an ever-growing sense of resentment and an equally blossoming knowledge that this couldn't continue. Something had to give – and it wasn't going to be me.

What came to my rescue, in a moment of reflection while writing in my new work journal, was action research – I would explore this problem systematically, smartly, trying to set aside emotions, I would collect some data, analyze it and try to arrive at some meaningful way to deal with the situation. By early January I had finally articulated the question behind my quandary:

How can I address positively the “imbalance of respect” inherent in my school's daily flag ritual?

I was able to arrive at this question and method of action because:

- I'd gotten to the root of why I found the ritual offensive,
- I'd arrived at what I thought was a satisfactory solution to the problem, and
- I'd finally worked up the courage to share my concerns with a couple of my new colleagues and the principal.



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Robert Jensen, in a speech on November 10, 2001, which was posted the next day on the internet by CommonDreams, calls patriotism "perhaps the single most morally and intellectually bankrupt concept in human history." He goes on to express best why I have come to find patriotic rituals offensive when he quotes Emma Goldman:

Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who had the fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, more intelligent than the living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill, and die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all others.

[11]

If patriotic rituals are *exclusive*, they especially do not belong in a library, which strives to be *inclusive*. However, as I learned, Washington state law mandates the pledge in public schools, and I was in no position (at the time) to take on the state legislature. I could, however, "temper" the ritual *symbolically*, and decided that hanging an Earth flag, preferably above, but eventually (in a compromise) at an even height with the U.S. flag, would let all who came into the library know that this was a space which acknowledges the views and beliefs of *everyone*.

With my Earth flag "solution" finally arrived at, I decided to broach the issue with someone else. Until then, I'd been silent, not knowing how to approach this volatile subject with people I didn't know. Fortunately, just about the time I was feeling very much in need of someone to talk to, one of my new colleagues offered that if there was anything I ever wanted to know about the "politics" of the school, I should just ask – and I did.

I learned that, as regards the pledge, every classroom teacher dealt with it in his or her own fashion. Some require their 2nd period students to participate or quietly stand, others allow students follow their conscience, meaning they can sit it out, stand quietly or fully participate.

Later, my conversation with the school principal led me to the realization that *central* to the problem is what I call the "imbalance of respect." The principal told me that those who did not wish to participate in the pledge, must stand quietly during it *to show their respect to those who did participate*. The notion of this show of "respect" grated on my mind, until I finally realized why – the respect is always one-sided. Those who don't want to pledge must show their respect for those who do, but *never* does the reverse happen. There is *never* an occasion when the people who choose to engage in the pledge of allegiance stand up to show their respect for those of us who don't. Not on a daily basis, not on a weekly or monthly basis, but *never*.

And, more importantly, the *suggestion* that standing is simply a way of showing respect is a falsehood. It is a falsehood, a euphemism for what is really a demand that one *subject oneself to the authority* of the flag, and to the authority of the person requiring that one stand, whether it be a teacher, principal, or president. In a democratic, secular nation, this is the equivalent of requiring an atheist to bow before god, for a rebel to bow before the king, of an early Christian to bow before the graven image of a Roman diety. The realization of this brute, albeit symbolic, subjugation was confirmed when I discovered the book *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*, by Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle



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(Cambridge University Press, 1999). In the introduction to their book, they write:

How does the flag operate in American life? Religiously, in a word...In American civil religion, the flag is the ritual instrument of group cohesion. It transforms the bodies of insiders and outsiders who meet at a border of violence. This is the kernel of the totem myth, endlessly re-enacted in patriotic life and ritual, and always most powerfully in the presence of the flag. Though the structure of totem myth is as familiar to Americans as anything can be, it remains largely unacknowledged. Though it governs our political culture, we do not recognize it. When it threatens to surface, it is vigorously denied. What it conceals is that blood sacrifice preserves the nation. Nor is the sacrifice that counts that of our enemy. The totem secret, the collective group taboo, is the knowledge that society depends on the death of its own members *at the hands of the group*. [emphasis in the original]

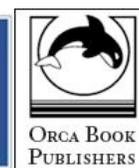
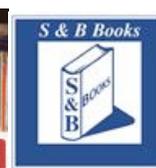
...The claim that Americans are devotees of a powerful civil religion is deeply suspect. Americans generally see their nation as a secular culture possessed of few myths, or with weak myths everywhere, but none central and organizing. We [Marvin and Ingle] see American nationalism as a ritual system organized around a core myth of violently sacrificed divinity manifest in the highest patriotic ceremony and the most accessible popular culture. Though it uses a Christian vocabulary, its themes are common to many belief systems. Our failure to acknowledge the religiosity of this system obeys the ancient command never to speak the true name of God. It is said that so-called primitive societies fail to recognize distinctions between their religion and their culture. This is the first of many resemblances between ourselves and cultures we consider to be different from us by virtue of a special condition of savagery or villainy or both. A feature of our modernity is projecting on other cultures impulses we believe we do not possess and deeds for which we claim no capacity. By remaining displaced observers of our most important acts, we define ourselves as a nation. [12]

Totem in the Gym

Imagine a school gymnasium, shining basketball court, bleachers out and filled with 1,300 high school students and another 100+ staff members. On the best of occasions, assembly emcees call for quiet, scold the chatterers, denounce disrespectful behaviors, and frequently give vent to exasperation at the assembled crowd's inattentiveness. On this occasion, however, a dropped pin would have shattered the silence after the Veteran's Day color guard marched, shoe taps clicking, across the gleaming wood floor up to the podium. Absolute silence reigned, not a cough, certainly not a giggle.

Leading the guard, the stars-and-stripes, next came the flags of the State of Washington and the United States Army, one guard shouldering a rifle, and bringing up the rear another guard bearing a staff from which hung long, heavy ribbons, a colorful array, each embossed or embroidered with the name of a battle in which the guard's regiment had participated. The ribbons hung thick, and had the staff been ornamented, not with pretty ribbons, but with the skulls of lives lost in all those battles, the gymnasium would have looked like the World War I memorial at Verdun, the walls of its cellar rooms lined with the bones of the unknown dead. Death was in the gym, one could feel it in the utter silence of all assembled.

A speech was made by one of the guards, a flag was ceremoniously folded, and a recitation made of a text which, we were told, described the "meaning" of each fold.



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The first fold of our flag is the symbol of life. *The second fold* is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life. *The third fold* is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world. *The fourth fold* represents our weaker nature, for peace as American citizens trusting in god, it is to him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for his divine guidance. *The fifth fold* is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Steven Decatur... "Our country, in dealing with the other countries, may she always be right, but it is still our country right or wrong." *The sixth fold* is for where our hearts lie. It is with our hearts that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under god, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. *The seventh fold* is a tribute to our armed forces, for it is through the armed forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic. *The eighth fold* is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day. *The ninth fold* is a tribute to womanhood, for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded. *The tenth fold* is a tribute to the father, for he too, has given of his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since she was first born. *The eleventh fold*, in the eyes of the Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *The twelfth fold*, in the eyes of the Christian citizen represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, god the father, the son, and the holy spirit. *The thirteenth and final fold* signifies the original 13 colonies upon which this great nation was founded. [13]

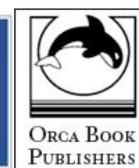
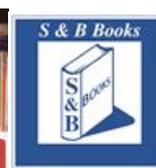
We were led to believe by the presenter that this text was a traditional part of the flag folding ceremony. As one who has been present at many such events, I was surprised that I was hearing this "traditional" reading for the first time. I even became suspicious as to its authenticity.

I searched the Internet for a few hours seeking information regarding the origin of the text. I spent a full day at the University of Washington library pouring through histories of the U.S. flag. Nothing, *nada*. In desperation, I sought the assistance of fellow librarians, first from Radical Reference, then from the reference librarian at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The later confirmed what I suspected – this text had *appeared* on the Internet (the Air Force placed it on its website at the request of veterans) with no attribution, no history, but *wide* distribution – an instant "historical" text. A new "tradition" of indeterminate age, certainly less than ten years, probably less than five.

I present the full text here, along with the description of the Veteran's Day assembly, as anecdotal evidence of the insights of Marvin and Ingle into the religious role of the flag in U.S. life.

Old Glory – ever to glow with goodness?

Debates continue over whether or not the flag, as a symbol of love for country, can or should be claimed to represent what is good, truly good, about the United States of America. And, there *is* much that is good about this country.



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I have come to the conclusion, however, that there can be no progressive use of the flag that can make it mean anything other than the blood sacrifice it actually and historically permits and justifies. Were you to hand a flag to a pacifist and another to a warmonger, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, laying deep in the hearts and minds of either individual that can endow that inanimate, red-white-and-blue object with any meaning other than the actual history embodied in those stars and stripes.

...the flag does NOT mean "whatever you want it to mean,"...it unavoidable DOES express support for our present government policies, and DOES express a membership in that famous 90% of Americans who are happy with president Bush, support the war, and implicitly support John Ashcroft and the administration's stated position that to express dissent is to side with the enemy. In other words, on the inside of a library, a flag is a political statement, and a very strong one at that. [14]

While the thirteen stripes, themselves, do represent a historic moment of rebellion against a colonial power and the lofty ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence, they also represent the dispossession of native peoples of their lands, lives and cultures, and of the kidnapping and enslavement of countless Africans by those same rebellious colonists. Like the notches on the butt of a rifle, or the scalps in the belt of a bounty hunter, each of the fifty white stars on field of blue represents the violent dispossession of land from a people who made that land their home long before the arrival of Europeans.

In response to one librarian's listserv comment describing his love of flag in spite of his knowledge of America's bloody past and his present opposition to U.S. foreign policy in the fall of 2001, Mark Rosenzweig wrote,

...Fred's attitude towards the flag is a matter of conscience: he didn't suddenly bedeck himself in red-white-and-blue in this outbreak of flag mania 2 months ago. I would assume that for him the flag represents the nation as it is, for better and worse, and is a sign of his appreciation of the luck of the draw that he was born here, of his realization that the bounty he enjoys is also the systematic material product of the want, need, disease, death squads, elsewhere (and of poverty, discrimination, social injustice within) and his commitment to doing whatever he can to getting rid of the flip side of American "prosperity" and the freedom it affords, which is the beggaring of other peoples, the use of disproportionate mass violence to solve conflicts, the degradation of a large part of the planet and the despoliation of the natural environment of the biosphere, to all of which we as a nation make more than our share of a contribution. [15]

Some people "parse" the flag in ways that try to make it mean something more than what it means in its official form.

I don't fly a flag or wear the flag because to the person on the street it appears to mean I support Bush and his cronies. But I do wear a peace sign over the flag button on my backpack instead (I also have a "peace is patriotic" button...) [16]

Coupling the U.S. flag with other symbols does, in my view, alter it in ways that visually and symbolically acknowledge that the wearer or bearer wants to communicate some modification to the usual meaning of the flag. I believe such images are a worthy transition, a "weaning" if you will, away from our attachment to the flag.



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Without such parsing, however, the only true, historically faithful interpretation of the meaning of the U.S. flag can be found through the eyes of those who suffered and died beneath its folds. One need only consider the general attitude held in the U.S. today toward the flag of the Civil War-era Confederacy to understand this. While the stars-and-bars elicits nostalgic feelings among some people for the grandeur of the Old South, and to others has been "appropriated" as a symbol of rebellion against any number of entities, for most people in the U.S. today the Confederate flag is the symbol of a society rooted in slavery, a society not to be held in memory with any fondness or longing or pride. The presence in recent years of this symbol of pro-slavery sentiment over statehouses and public spaces has been powerfully challenged on the grounds that, as a vestige of social structures which no longer have approval in the civilized world, it should not be given place of pride in any public sphere.

One day, the same will be true of the stars-and-stripes. As a society, we might one day come to see this flag as it has been seen for centuries through the eyes of those forcefully removed from their homes, family members slain, women raped, children burned by forces bearing that flag. We will some day see it through the eyes of young American men and women who have been lured into the war machine to have their souls brutalized, their bodies maimed, their young, promising lives snuffed out – all this for what? For another white star on a field of blue? For access to oil fields? For agribusiness theft of land that is the home of human beings, who just like us only want to live their lives in peace? Can we ever see in the flag the needless sacrifice of our own children to the maws of wars of greed and power?

Could the U.S. flag ever embody any level of goodness, could it ever be washed clean of all the blood in which it is so thoroughly drenched?

It depends.

It depends on whether or not the people and leaders of the United States are willing, first, to ask forgiveness from all those whom we have wronged and, secondly, to begin the task of *acting* in accordance with the ideals we claim to hold dear. Ideals, such as democracy, justice, equality – which are not exclusively "American" ideals, but *human* ideals, shared by peoples of many lands, throughout human history. Plato, after all, wasn't a U.S. citizen. Neither was Jesus, or Spartacus, or Robin Hood, or any other people who have struggled against oppression.

We in the United States of America would have to admit in our hearts and minds that our comforts are largely rooted in the misery of others. The bright yellow, delicious bananas we feed our babies, for instance, are picked by mothers and fathers who have no choice but to raise their children in poverty, because of unjust economic relations between producing and consuming nations. The pretty, shiny patent leather shoes worn by our toddlers are made by women whose own children have no shoes.

We would have to learn enough about of our own country's history in order to know from whom we must ask forgiveness.

We would have to humble ourselves – we big, arrogant Americans – before the hungry two-thirds of the world's population and actually have the courage to ask "Can you forgive me for contributing to your suffering? What can I do to atone for my country's crimes against humanity?"



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We would have to listen to their answers. And then we would have to act, to transform words into deeds. We would have to harness our wonderful, American – no, *human* – creativity, technology, knowledge and “can do” spirit to meet the task of proving ourselves worthy of forgiveness. Only then might the broad stripes and bright stars be filled with the broad spirit that is a real characteristic of Americans, with the bright promise of the ideals we claim to hold dear. By then, of course, we’d probably want a flag that represented all humanity, not just one nation. At that point, the stars-and-stripes would be placed in a museum, alongside the stars-and-bars and countless other banners of cultures no longer considered civilized, societies in which people clobbered each other over the heads, disemboweled their heretics, dropped napalm on the heads of children, and poisoned their own soldiers and scientists with Agent Orange, dirty bombs and minds willed with the horrors of war.

What are the chances of such a transformation? Well, today we are led by the son of a man who “In 1988, after the U.S. Navy warship Vincennes shot down an Iranian commercial airliner in a commercial corridor, killing 290 civilians...said, ‘I will never apologize for the United States of America. I don’t care what the facts are.’”[17] (Jensen, p.4)

We in the United States must begin to care what the facts are, and we librarians are in a position to help that happen. After all, we are the keepers of the facts and so it is our responsibility to actively nurture communities as places where the facts are desired and sought out and acted on. When we see that our communities are being lied to, we need to promote the facts, the truth.

My first two years in college were spent at Jackson State University, a historically black college. JSU’s motto was from the Bible, a quote attributed to a peacemaker – “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Perhaps we could start with the truth of the American flag.

[1] See website with Ora Lerman’s work at <http://www.lermantrust.org/tour.html>

[2] See House resolution at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?r107:/temp/~r107KGFHTw>

[3] See resolution at <http://www.google.com/u/nycdoe?sitesearch=www.nycenet.edu&q=pledge%20of%20allegiance>

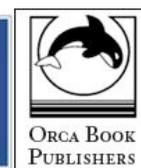
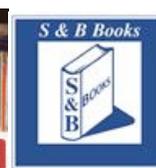
[4] Memo dated November 7, 2001 from Miriam Pedraja, principal PS/IS 176.

[5] Emily-Jane Dawson, PLGnet-L, 28 October 2001

[6] Diana Loreman, PLGnet-L, 29 October 2001

[7] Sally Squires. “Old Glory, New Passion; the psychology of America’s devotion to itself” *Washington Post*, July 4, 1989, pg.z.12 from ProQuest, Mount Si High School Library, <http://proquest.umi.com/> May 21, 2005.

[8] ditto



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- [9] Asia for Educators, Columbia University . "The American Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952"
<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/japan/japanworkbook/modernhist/occupation.html>.
23 May 2005.
- [10] SRRT flag statement <http://www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/resolutions.flags.html>
- [11] Robert Jensen. "Saying Goodbye to Patriotism: a talk delivered to the Peace Action National Congress, November 10, 2001 ." CommonDreams News Center .
<http://commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=views01/1112-07.htm>.
- [12] Carolyn Marvin & David W. Ingle. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: totem rituals and the American flag*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999. pages 2-3.
- [13] Space & Missile Times, vol.11, no.25, June 29, 2001 .
http://www.vandenberg.af.mil/~swStaff/public_affairs/smTimes/stories/~archive/?HLSTAFF=y&HLPAO=y&HLNEWSARC=y May 25, 2005
- [14] Rory Litwin, PLGnet-L, December 15, 2001 .
- [15] Mark Rosenzweig, PLGnet-L, November 29, 2001 .
- [16] Debbie Richards, PLGnet-L, October 30, 2001 .
- [17] 'Pres. George H.W. Bush quoted by Jensen in his speech "Saying Goodbye to Patriotism, page 4."



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

Distance Education Opportunity Promotes School Librarianship

Lynn Wisnieswski

Library Technicians are employed by many Canadian school boards. They have commonly worked at the board level providing technical services to schools including the cataloguing and processing of school library materials. More recently, Library Technicians have been called upon to play a role in the provision of library services at the school level. In order to address this change, one community college responded with the creation of an elective course in the Library and Information Technician Diploma Program.

Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology in Hamilton , Ontario has been offering the School Libraries course to distance education students since January 2003. The course manual, some 170 pages, was written by Margaret Hodgins and Nancy Porteous in 2002. At the time, Margaret and Nancy both worked as Librarians for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. As Nancy explains,

“In my experience with the WCDSB, it seemed like there was a real need for a course for library technicians in school settings. Dolores [Program Manager, Mohawk College] was very enthusiastic about adding such a course to the Mohawk curriculum and so Margaret and I set about pulling it all together.”

Since its first offering, more than 155 students have completed the School Libraries course.

The course’s learning outcomes include:

- An understanding of the issues and identification of the unique features of the school library
- The exploration of the functional areas of school libraries including collection development, programming and reference services, funding and budgeting, the internet and technology, and human resources management strategies
- An awareness of how the school library fits into the larger school institution and how it differs from other types of libraries
- The application of the skills needed to fully manage services and collections within the school library

Students who have enrolled in the course live and work in various communities across the country. They bring to the course various levels and ranges of school library experience. From Teacher-Librarians looking to broaden skills and knowledge, to first-time students exploring school librarianship, to seasoned Library Technicians currently working in school library settings; all benefit from the multitude of student perspectives. The breadth and depth of variations in our school libraries across Canada resound in the knowledge and experience these students bring to the course.



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According to Harms Penner,

“One of the benefits of the course is that it serves two markets: those who only want to come and take that individual course from the college (since the course has no prerequisites, this is possible), and those who take it as an elective course as part of the full Library and Information Technician Diploma. In my opinion it has served to inspire some students from the first group to take our entire program, as it created interest for them in learning more about the world of library and information work.”

As a distance education course, students taking School Libraries are required to submit various assignments and exercises. Scheduled online “chats” with the course instructor and other students in the class provide a forum for a real-time connection to ask questions, discuss school library issues and scenarios, and reinforce concepts and information covered in the course manual. Students seem to enjoy the online learning environment that basically allows them to study and learn at their own pace, all the while knowing that guidance from the instructor and collaboration with classmates are only an email message away.

Perhaps the waters are murky when considering the role of Library Technicians in school libraries. Many people express concern that Library Technicians are not qualified to work there. However, the fact remains that for some school boards and private schools, Library Technicians, if not parent volunteers, are the only staff they have working in the school library to ensure students and teachers have access to quality resources that support the curriculum. The development of the School Libraries course at Mohawk College was a timely and necessary response to trends in the Canadian workplace. It is hoped that students who successfully complete the course are empowered with skills and information that will help them serve our young learners.



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

New Freedom to Read Initiative & Resource Guide

Toni Samek

Toni Samek is Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta. Her teaching, research, and service focus on intellectual freedom. For more information, see <http://www.ualberta.ca/~asamek/toni.htm>.

NOTICE: New Freedom to Read Initiative for Alberta's English Language Arts Teachers

Even in Canada, a free country by world standards, books and magazines are banned at the border. Books are removed from the shelves in Canadian libraries, schools, and bookstores everyday. Free speech on the Internet is under attack. (Excerpt from Canada's Freedom to Read Week Kit, 2004).

The theory and practice of intellectual freedom are essential underpinnings of critical inquiry and informed citizenship, both important goals of our education system. However, our teachers are hard-hit by related sensitive social issues, such as book challenges, Internet access and child protection, principles of intellectual freedom in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, the impact of cutting teacher-librarians, and working with community leaders to deal with concerns about school resources.

English language arts teachers are the hardest-hit of our educators for a number of reasons: (1) the resources and curriculum they use is challenged regularly, (2) the intellectual works they choose are subject to broad interpretation, (3) the students they teach represent every level and age group, and (4) they are rapidly losing their best professional consultants on intellectual freedom issues--teacher-librarians. (Alberta currently employs only about 70 teacher-librarians.)

Because Alberta's teacher librarians are already seriously overburdened, the University of Alberta's School of Library and Information Studies has launched a new freedom to read initiative for Alberta's English language arts teachers. This initiative includes the development of workshops, conference sessions, and resources designed to help the teachers strengthen school policy, curriculum, resources, community relations, and media response in the context of sensitive community climates.

Initiated by Toni Samek -- funding generously provided by the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Toni has given the following public talks contributing to the intention of this initiative:

New Freedom To Read Initiative for Alberta's English Language Arts Teachers. Learning Resources Council (of the Alberta Teachers' Association) with the Alberta Library Conference 2005. Jasper, Alberta . April 29, 2005 .



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Ethical Reflection on 21st Century Information Work. Conversations About Ethics: Presented by The School of Library and Information Studies, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education Graduate Student Association. Edmonton , Alberta . March 18, 2005 .

Librarians Never Looked So Tough: How Librarianship Advocates for Human Rights and Global Citizenship. Greater Edmonton Regional Learning Resources Council Winter Conference 2005. Edmonton , Alberta . February 5, 2005 .

An Introduction to Librarianship for Human Rights. Educating for Human Rights and Global Citizenship: International Conference. University of Alberta . Edmonton , Alberta . November 12, 2004 .

Schools and Libraries: Are They the Last Bastions of Intellectual Freedom? Canadian Library Association Annual Conference 2004/ British Columbia Library Association Annual Conference 2004. Victoria , British Columbia . June 18, 2004 . (Co-presented with Peter Carver, Red Deer Press; Dr. Ann Curry, University of British Columbia .)

A Faster Moving Target: Intellectual Freedom Today. Alberta Library Conference 2004. Jasper, Alberta . April 30, 2004 .

Principled Engagement: An Introduction to Librarianship for Human Rights. Education for Human Rights and Global Citizenship Workshop. University of Alberta . April 22, 2004 .

Intellectual Freedom and Freedom to Read. The Lorne MacRae Intellectual Freedom Lecture. Connect! Live in Fragments no Longer 2004 (A Joint Conference of the Computer Council, English Language Arts Council, and Learning Resources Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.) Banff , Alberta . April 17, 2004 .

New Freedom to Read Initiative Resource Guide Compiled and researched by Valerie Thomson

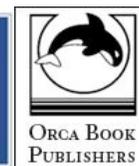
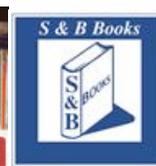
The Freedom to Read Initiative, initiated by Dr. Toni Samek at the University of Alberta, is a support resource for language arts teachers on how to fight book challenges and receive assistance with advocacy for freedom of information in schools. This resource guide constitutes preliminary work completed for the initiative and serves as a foundation for information to help teachers defend books and the freedom of information.

The guide is subdivided into Canadian resources, U.S. resources, and international resources. Contact information has been provided wherever possible in order to assist users of this resource guide with gaining support and advice in their endeavors. A list of regional library associations' Intellectual Freedom committees in Canada is provided at the end as an additional area of support for schools.

Canadian Resources

"Access to Information Act." **Department of Justice.** 2004. Government of Canada . 28 Oct. 2004 <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/A-1/8.html>.

-Official document describing Canadians rights of access to information.



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

Contact: Access to Information and Privacy Justice Canada 284 Wellington Street
Ottawa , ON K1A 0H8 Telephone: (613) 952-8361

Bernstein, Sandra. When the Censor Comes. 1996. Book and Periodical Council. 16
Dec. 2004 http://www.freedomtoread.ca/censorship_in_canada/censor.asp.

-Guide that offers basic information about dealing with would-be censors.

Blais, Joann. Freedom of Expression and its Limitations in Canada : Background
Materials and Learning Activities. Calgary : Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre,
2004.

*-The mission statement of the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre is: "to promote
awareness among Albertans about civil liberties and human rights through research
and education".*

Contact: Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre University of Calgary c/o Faculty of
Law 2500 University Dr. N.W. Calgary , AB T2N 1N4 Email:
aclrc@ucalgary.ca Telephone: (403) 220-2505 Fax: (403) 284-0945. Executive
Director - Linda McKay-Panos

British Columbia Library Association. Intellectual Freedom Handbook. Burnaby , B.C.:
BCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee, 1991.

-Addresses such issues as censorship and freedom of information.

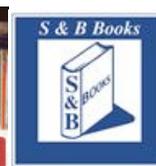
Contact: British Columbia Library Association Intellectual Freedom
Committee Heather De Forest Email: hd@interchange.ubc.ca

"Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." 1982. Constitution Act. 15 Dec. 2004
<http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/charter/charter.text.html>.

*-See Fundamental Freedoms 2(b). Refer to this in any Canadian library policy
relating to intellectual freedom. Illustrates the important role that Canadian
librarians play as agents of democracy.*

Canadian Coalition for School Libraries. 2004. Canadian Coalition for School
Libraries. 27 Oct. 2004 <http://www.peopleforeducation.com/librarycoalition/>.

*- Mission Statement of CCSL: "The Canadian Coalition for School Libraries (CCSL)
believes that school libraries are an integral component of a healthy public
education system, to give our children the opportunity to become confident,
productive Canadian citizens. As such, school libraries must be well-stocked, well
funded, and professionally managed by qualified teacher librarians. The coalition's
mission is to draw together a wide range of stakeholders -- including, but not limited
to, parents, teacher-librarians, writers, educators, publishers, library wholesalers
and literacy advocates -- in order to sponsor original research; provide policy
analysis to decision-makers at all levels of government; develop new partnerships
and approaches for fostering dynamic school libraries; and communicate the issues
to the broader Canadian public."*



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To join the CCSL listserv, contact marsha@calla.com or go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CCSLlistserv>

For further information, contact:

Annie Kidder, People for Education Telephone: (416) 534-0100. Email:
annie@peopleforeducation.com

Canadian Library Association. "Code of Ethics." 1976. CLA. 16 Dec. 2004
<http://www.cla.ca/about/ethics.htm>.

-Did you know that the first directive in the Canadian Library Association's Code of Ethics is to support intellectual freedom? Check it out!

Canadian Library Association. "Effective School Library Programs in Canada ." 2000. CLA. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.cla.ca/about/school.htm>.

-Puts the goal of the school library program into perspective, explaining how specific factors can help support students' education.

Canadian Library Association. "Net Safe: Net Smart." 2000. CLA. 16 Dec. 2004
<http://www.cla.ca/netsafe/index.htm>.

-Rely on this to help you negotiate open Internet access in a climate of fear surrounding children's protection.

Contact: Canadian Library Association 328 Frank Street , Ottawa , ON K2P 0X8
Telephone: (613) 232-9625 Fax: (613) 563-9895 Email: lobrien@cla.ca

Canadian Library Association. "Resolutions Passed at the 58th CLA Annual General Meeting." 2003. CLA. 16 Dec. 2004
<http://www.cla.ca/resources/resolutions2003.htm>.

-Recent examples that demonstrate how intellectual freedom is at the heart of library advancement in Canada .

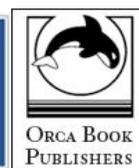
Canadian Library Association. "Statement on Intellectual Freedom." 1985. CLA. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.cla.ca/about/intfreed.htm>.

-Have this posted on your library wall in public view and refer to this in all policies relating to intellectual freedom.

"Case Studies on Book Challenges." 2004. Book and Periodical Council. 16 Dec. 2004
http://www.freedomtoread.ca/censorship_in_canada/case_studies.asp.

-Go here to view the Case Study Form and to get tips on documenting, reporting, and coping with challenges in Canada .

Contact: Freedom to Read Week Case Studies Book and Periodical Council Suite 107 ,
192 Spadina Avenue Toronto , ON M5T 2C2 info@freedomtoread.ca



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Freedom to Read. 2004. Book and Periodical Council. 20 Oct. 2004
<http://www.freedomtoread.ca/>.

-A website devoted to the Freedom to Read in Canada . Useful links include "Censorship in Canada " and "Links and Resources", which provides a resource list of books, articles, pamphlets, periodicals, and other sources of information about censorship and freedom of expression.

Contact: Freedom of Expression Committee Book and Periodical Council Suite 107 ,
192 Spadina Avenue Toronto , ON M5T 2C2 Telephone: (416) 975-9366 Fax: (416)
975-1839 Email: info@freedomtoread.ca

Freedom to Read Week Media Contact Sarah Thring Email:
publicity@freedomtoread.ca

Jenkinson, D. "Selection and Censorship: It's Simple Arithmetic." School Libraries in Canada 21.4 (2002): 22-23.

-Addresses the differences between selection and censorship in libraries with particular reference to Canadian school libraries. It also notes that a majority of censorship cases involve parents of school children and cites a study conducted in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in which it was found that parents were involved in 60 per cent and 70 per cent of challenges, respectively.

McKay-Panos, Linda. Guide to Access to Information and Protection of Privacy: Alberta and Canada . Calgary : Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, 1996.

-Manual that discusses the Freedom of Information and Privacy legislations in an Alberta context.

Contact: Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre University of Calgary c/o Faculty of Law 2500 University Dr. N.W. Calgary , AB T2N 1N4 Email:
aclrc@ucalgary.ca Telephone: (403) 220-2505 Fax: (403) 284-0945.

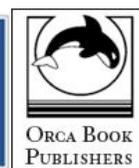
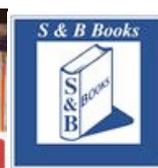
"Statement on Effective School Library Programs in Canada ." 2000. CLA. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.cla.ca/about/school.htm>.

-Familiarize yourself with the Canadian Library Association's stand on school libraries and tie it in to your own advocacy rhetoric to show alliance.

Contact: CLA Executive Council Stephen Abram, President 412 - 120 Perth Avenue Toronto , ON M6P 4E1 Telephone: (416) 669-4855 Email:
stephen.abram@sirsi.com

Stokes Verworn, Brenda. An Educator's Guide to Freedom of Information. Aurora : Aurora Professional Press, 1999.

-Discusses freedom of information and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, within an Ontario context.



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U.S Resources

American Library Association. "Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A." 2004. ALA. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/basics/intellectual.htm>.

-Clear and accessible definitions and scripted answers to common questions found here.

American Library Association. "Parents, Kids and Banned Books." 2003. ALA. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/piopresskits/bbbwpresskit/parentskids.htm>.

-Read up on how to better communicate to parents the importance of intellectual freedom.

American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom. "Challenge Database Form." 2004. ALA. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/challengesupport/reporting/challengedatabaseform.html>.

-A great place to get informed about the reasons resources are challenged and who is doing the challenging.

Contact: Office for Intellectual Freedom Nanette Perez, Program Coordinator American Library Association 50 E. Huron St . Chicago , IL 60611 Email: nperez@ala.org

American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom. Intellectual Freedom Manual. 5th ed. Chicago : American Library Association, 1996.

-Manual that discusses censorship and the freedom of information in the United States .

Contact: Office for Intellectual Freedom 50 East Huron St . Chicago , IL 60611 Telephone: 800-545-2433, ext. 4223 Fax: 312-280-4227 Email: oif@ala.org

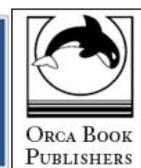
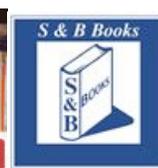
Judith F. Krug, Director Telephone: 800-545-2433, ext. 4222 Email: jkrug@ala.org

Anti-Censorship Center . 2004. NCTE. 17 Oct. 2004. <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/censorship>.

-American organization that provides support, advice, and resources for K-12 teachers faced with censorship challenges.

Contact: National Council of Teachers of English Millie Davis, NCTE Division Director of Communications and Affiliate Services Telephone: 800-369-6283, ext. 3634

Brinkley, Ellen Henson. Caught off Guard: Teachers Rethinking Censorship and Controversy. Boston : Allyn and Bacon, 1999.



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-Presents various viewpoints on censorship and related controversies about education. Provides a plan for establishing policy that protects intellectual freedom and will help educators respond to the concerns, fears, and demands of parents and organized groups. Issues addressed include sexuality education, creationism, Internet access and materials, student newspapers, religion, politics, and morality in the classroom.

Brown, Jean E. ed. Preserving Intellectual Freedom: Fighting Censorship in Our Schools. Urbana : National Council of Teachers of English, 1994.

-Insight into how censorship can come about, its impact and repercussions, and how to fight it. Personal examples, philosophical and psychological considerations, and legal precedents are discussed.

Cromwell, Sharon . "Banning Books from the Classroom: How to Handle Cries for Censorship." 2001. Education World. 28 Oct. 2004 http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr031.shtml.

-Discusses how to avoid and handle controversy surrounding book challenges in schools.

Foerstal, Herbert N. Banned in the Media: A Reference Guide to Censorship in the Press, Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Internet. Westport : Greenwood Press, 1998.

-Looks at the history of censorship in the media using a variety of examples. Also provides a survey of student-press censorship and a selective list of media advocacy and censorship organizations.

Foerstel, Herbert N. Banned in the U.S.A. : A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries. Westport : Greenwood Press, 2002.

-Reference book that highlights major book banning incidents in the U.S. and provides background information on the legal history of book banning

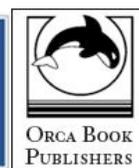
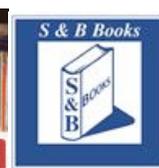
Heins, Majorie and Christina Cho. (2002). "Media Literacy: An Alternative to Censorship". 2002. Free Expression Policy Project. 1 Dec. 2004 <http://www.fepproject.org/policyreports/medialiteracyfull.html>.

-Explains the history and current issues surrounding media literacy in the U.S. , and provides the argument that media literacy can alleviate the pressures of censorship.

Contact: Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law Democracy Program Free Expression Policy Project 161 Avenue of the Americas , 12th Floor New York , NY 10013 Fax: (212) 995-4550

Marjorie Heins, Coordinator Telephone: (212) 992-8847 Email: marjorie.heins@nyu.edu

Ivanhoe Broadcast News. Battle over the Books: Censorship in American Schools. Princeton : Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1994.



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-Video that shows how teachers can prepare themselves against a censorship attack and looks at those who are doing the censoring.

Johnson, Claudia. Stifled Laughter: One Woman's Fight against Censorship. Golden: Fulcrum Publications, 1994.

-Stifled Laughter is one woman's account of her efforts to restore literary classics to the classrooms of rural north Florida . Provides valuable insight into why what our children read at school remains a controversial issue, and why free speech in America remains a precarious right.

Kravitz, Nancy. Censorship and the School Library Media Center . Westport : Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

-Insight into who is doing the censoring and why, the types of material challenged, the need for policy, and what teachers and librarians are doing today to fight censorship.

Marsh, David. 50 Ways to Fight Censorship. New York : Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991.

-Suggests 50 practical steps that every American can do to help fight censorship.

Mires, D. "Censorship and the Freedom to Read." PNLA Quarterly 67.3 (2003): 15-17.

-Argues that librarians are required to consider their obligations not only to their professional organizations but also to employers, the students and the community. However, once the decision has been made for the inclusion of an item in a school's collection, there must be a commitment to fight for its retention should the item be challenged.

National Council of Teachers of English. "Defining and Defending Instructional Methods." 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004
<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/cens/107614.htm>.

-Strategies for defending various instructional methods, including objections, rationales, and resources for further information. Covers the teaching and writing of written expression, oral expression, reading, literature, language mechanics, non-print media, and collaborative learning.

National Council of Teachers of English. "Guidelines for Dealing with Censorship of Non-print and Multimedia Materials." 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004
<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/cens/107611.htm>.

-Position paper written by the NCTE on censorship of multimedia; includes principles, guidelines, responsibilities for teachers, suggestions, resource list, and contacts for various organizations.

National Council of Teachers of English. "The Students' Right to Read." 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004
<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/cens/107616.htm>.



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-Position paper written by the NCTE on the right to read; includes examples.

NCTE Education Advocacy Network. 2004. NCTE. 15 Dec. 2004
<http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/ean/108352.htm>.

-The Education Advocacy Network is operated through the NCTE, and endeavors to keep educators up to date on relevant pending legislations. It also provides advice on speaking with the media, cultivating spokespeople for your organization, and how to take action.

Contact: Education Advocacy Network Millie Davis, NCTE Telephone: 800-369-6283, ext. 3634 Email: slate@ncte.org

Pipkin, Gloria. **At the Schoolhouse Gate: Lessons in Intellectual Freedom.** Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann, 2002.

-A personal account of two Florida English teachers and their battle to support students' intellectual rights. Highlights the challenges that they faced, the importance of free expression for student publications, and the issues surrounding selection policy.

"Rationales for Challenged Books." CD-ROM. 1998. NCTE in Partnership with the International Reading Association. 17 Nov. 2004.
<http://www.ncte.org/store/books/censorship/106101.htm>.

-CD-ROM that provides over 200 rationales that cover more than 170 book and film titles. A typical rationale provides references to reviews, plot summary, redeeming qualities, teaching objectives, methods, and assignments.

Contact: The National Council of Teachers of English Customer Service 1111 W. Kenyon Road Urbana, IL 61801-1096 Telephone: (217) 328-3870 or (877) 369-6283 Fax: (217) 328-9645

Reichman, Henry. **Censorship and Selection: Issues and Answers for Schools.** Chicago : American Library Association, 2001.

-Discusses the issues of censorship in the schools. Includes a checklist for preparing for challenges, a workbook for selection policy writing, guidelines for student publications, and advice for handling concerns about library resources.

Scales, Pat R. **Teaching Banned Books: 12 Guides for Young Readers.** Chicago : American Library Association, 2001.

-Suggestions on how to teach the first amendment and discussion topics and activities for teaching banned books in the classroom.

Simmons, John S. ed. **Censorship: A Threat to Reading, Learning, Thinking.** Newark, Delaware : International Reading Association, 1994.

-An anthology of censorship cases and how they have undermined the goals of education in the classroom. Provides specific plans of action for teachers and school library media specialists.



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Simmons, John S., and Eliza T. Dresang. School Censorship in the 21st Century: A Guide for Teachers and School Library Media Specialists. Newark : International Reading Association, 2001.

-Provides a historical context of censorship issues in the U.S. , insights into the nature of current challenges, and recommended resources for handling these challenges. The end of each chapter includes the section: "Guidelines for Teachers and Librarians".

SLATE. 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004 <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate>.

- Mission Statement: "SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) seeks to influence public attitudes and policy decisions affecting the teaching of English language arts at local, state, and national levels; to implement and publicize the policies adopted by NCTE; and serves as NCTE's intellectual freedom network."

Contact: SLATE Email: slate@ncte.org

SLATE Newsletter. 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004
<http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate/newsletters>.

-SLATE Newsletter is published electronically 3 times per year and features articles that speak about the issues that affect the teaching of language arts.

To contribute, contact:

SLATE Newsletter Fred Barton, Editor Email: bartonf@msu.edu

SLATE Starter Sheets. 2004. NCTE. 17 Nov. 2004.

-PDF documents that offer information and help for dealing with censorship issues. Some recommended sheets include:

"The Hatch Amendment" <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate/sheets?s=&sd=DESC&p=5>

"Combating censorship of instructional materials" <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate/sheets?s=&sd=DESC&p=5>

"Selection and retention of instructional materials – what the courts have said" <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate/sheets?s=&sd=DESC&p=5>

"Censorship of instructional materials" <http://www.ncte.org/about/issues/slate/sheets?s=&sd=DESC&p=6>

Symons, Ann. Protecting the Right to Read: A How-To-Do-It Manual for School and Public Librarians. New York : Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1995.

-Strategies and information on how to protect the right to read. Emphasizes the importance of a clear, board-approved selection policy in the fight to retain library resources.



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The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression. 2004. The Thomas Jefferson Center . 17 Oct. 2004. <http://www.tjcenter.org/index.html>.

-A non-partisan organization devoted to the defense of free expression in all forms.

Contact: The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression 400 Peter Jefferson Place Charlottesville , VA 22911-8691 Telephone: (434) 295-4784 Fax: (434) 296-3621 Email: freespeech@tjcenter.org

Warnock, Jonelle R. "The Effects of Censorship." PNLA Quarterly 68.4 (2004): 23-26.

-Discusses the movements in book banning and challenges in school libraries throughout the U.S. Concludes that an immediate and professional response from the school library is extremely important in the face of a censorship issue.

Williams, Keisa M. "GLBT Materials in School Libraries and Selection Policy." 12 May 2004. LIBR 220. Professor Ellen Greenblatt. 14 Nov. 2004. <http://homepage.mac.com/keisawilliams/.cv/keisawilliams/Public/GLBTCollection.pdf-link.pdf>.

-Provides information for school library staff on developing an inclusive collection development policy for GLBT materials. Provides information to prepare library staff and teachers for possible book challenges related to GLBT materials, how to find GLBT material and where to find reviews on such material.

International Resources

Clyde, L.A. , and M. Lobban. "A Door Half Open: Young People's Access to Fiction Related to Homosexuality." School Libraries Worldwide 7.2 (2002): 17-30.

- Literature review of the fiction resources of school and public libraries written for youth with homosexual themes or that contain gay and lesbian characters. Discusses the effects of censorship and legislative pressures in some countries on the inclusion of such titles in library collections. Suggests possible factors that may interfere with access and indicates areas for future research.

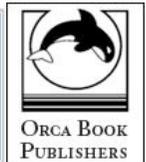
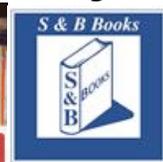
"The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services, and Intellectual Freedom." 2004. IFLA. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/gldeclar-e.html>.

-On its 75th anniversary, IFLA met in Glasgow , where it reaffirmed its commitment to intellectual freedom. Shows the importance of keeping policy current.

Contact: IFLA P.O. Box 95312 2509 CH The Hague Netherlands Telephone: +31 70 3140884 Fax: +31 70 3834827 Email: IFLA@ifla.org

"IFLA Internet Manifesto." 2002. IFLA/FAIFE. 16 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ifla.org/III/misc/im-e.htm>.

-Makes the strong point that access to the Internet and all of its resources should be consistent with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (especially Article 19). See how all of these documents work together!



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"IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom." 2003. IFLA/FAIFE. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/iflastat.htm>.

-Use this to contextualize the Canadian Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom with similar policy around the world.

Contact: IFLA/FAIFE Office Birketinget 6, 6th floor, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark Telephone: +45(32)586066, ext. 532 - direct line: +(45)32341532 Fax: +45 32 84 02 01 Email: susanne.seidelin@ifla.org sus@db.dk faife@ifla.org

Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Paul Sturges, Chair Professor, Deputy Head of Department of Information Science Loughborough University Leicestershire, LE 11 3TU, United Kingdom Telephone: +(44)(1509)223069 Fax: +(44)(1509)223053 E-mail: r.p.sturges@lboro.ac.uk

"IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto." 1994. IFLA/UNESCO. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm>.

-This document was created in cooperation between IFLA and UNESCO in 1994, to urge communities and their libraries around the world to implement principles of intellectual freedom. Targets the public library audience, but easily applies to other contexts.

"IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto." 2000. IFLA/UNESCO. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s11/pubs/manifest.htm>.

-An executive level statement on the mission and goals of school libraries, plus their funding, legislation, staffing, operation, and management.

"Universal Declaration of Human Rights." 1948. United Nations. 15 Dec. 2004 <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

-See Article 19. Adds weight to any library policy relating to intellectual freedom. Shows how librarianship is connected to the larger social context.

Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committees in Canada

Canada

Canadian Library Association Advisory Committee on Intellectual Freedom Susan Caron Email: scaron@tpl.toronto.on.ca

Alberta

Library Association of Alberta Intellectual Freedom Committee Geoffrey Harder Email: geoffrey.harder@ualberta.ca



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

British Columbia

British Columbia Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee Heather De Forest Email: hd@interchange.ubc.ca



Book Review of the *Sissy Duckling* (2002)

Michael Ross

The Sissy Duckling Authored by Harvey Fierstein Illustrated by Henry Cole Simon and Schuster, 2002

I was very fortunate to attend the second G.A.L.E. conference at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School in October of 2004. It will remain memorable for me as my own "Coming Out" conference. Being an absolute nut about children's books, I was thrilled when the keynote speaker read *The Sissy Duckling* as a part of his keynote address. The book touched my heart and brought tears to my eyes. I identified with *The Sissy Duckling*. Except for the feathers and webbed feet, that sissy duckling was me many, many years ago!

That afternoon, immediately following the conference, I found myself at Little Sisters bookstore, a specialty bookstore that carries titles virtually impossible to find elsewhere. I purchased a hardcover copy for my own classroom. I am so glad I did!

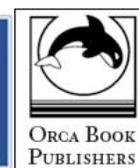
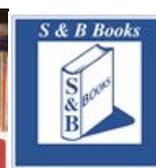
This beautifully illustrated book, complete with glitter-embossed lettering on the front cover, bears similarities, in both name and theme, to the traditional tale *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Anderson. Harvey Fierstein dedicates the book "to proud sissies everywhere".

Any adult reader who has a child, experienced being chosen last for a team sport at school, or ostracized because of being "different", will be cheering for the main character, a duckling who is different in many ways from his peers. Elmer is into decorating cookies and putting on puppet shows while the other boy ducklings box and play football. His father, worried about being the "laughingstock of the flock", attempts to teach Elmer to play baseball so that he will be like the other ducks, with disastrous results. Feeling like a total disappointment to his mama and papa, Elmer runs away from home and uses his "special talents" to set up his own digs. He ends up saving his father from a hunter and nursing him back to health, which gives dad and son a perfect opportunity to actually get to know each other. *The Sissy Duckling* ends "happily ever after", but not without Elmer's declaration of independence: "I am a BIG Sissy and PROUD of it!"

I know a genuinely touching book when I read one - my teary eyes are a dead giveaway.

Yes, I cried upon first reading it to my class, and I still have to catch my breath during the father-son reunion. It hits close to home for me, as I'm sure it will for many others.

The addition of *The Sissy Duckling* to my already extensive classroom library will serve for sensitive discussions about appreciating, even celebrating, differences in others. The Sissy Duckling emerges as a genuine hero, but even more importantly, a hero with a huge heart. I highly recommend it for both teachers and parents. It is sure to enable discussions about diversity, inclusion versus exclusion, and family love.



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As a post-reading Social Development activity, it would be rewarding to have a " Magic Circle " discussion, in which each child says something about him/herself that creates difference from someone else in the room. Encourage likes, interests, talents, and dig deeper than the obvious physical differences. I would extend this further (doubling the "magic") by going around again and encouraging children to offer something about him/herself that they think makes them the same as someone else in the room.

A quick and visually striking art activity could also be a great follow-up to *The Sissy Duckling*:

Fold an 8 x 11 paper in half. On the left side, Start the sentence "Some kids like to _____" (they write a recess/lunch activity in the blank and illustrate). On the right side, print "but I'd rather _____" and illustrate. Once the artwork is finished, volunteers could compare and contrast their different ideas.

The Sissy Duckling is available at Little Sisters bookstore for \$24.50. I challenge you to read it without feeling even a little tug at your heartstrings!

Michael Ross
Grade 1/2 teacher
Mission School District



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Future Librarians for Intellectual Freedom (FLIF): A Student Initiative

Valerie Thomson

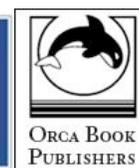
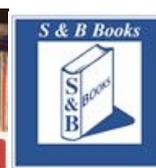
After a two-year hiatus, the Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility committee has been resurrected at the University of Alberta's School of Library and Information Studies. Co-chaired by Jenny Ryan and Valerie Thomson, the group is committed to promoting intellectual freedom and social responsibility both within the school and throughout the University of Alberta community.

One of its first projects actually influenced a name change for the committee. The project involved a campus screening of a documentary film, and a guest appearance on the campus radio station, CJSR. The decision to change the committee name to Future Librarians for Intellectual Freedom (FLIF) was made in order to sound more "radio friendly" (Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility is quite a mouthful!), and also to have a more self-explanatory name to those outside of the library school community. The screening and radio guest spot were both successes and the name of FLIF stuck.

FLIF also headed out on campus in the spring, celebrating *Freedom to Read Week* by promoting the awareness of challenged books. Taking a cue from the *Freedom to Read Week* website, FLIF decided to take part in the Bookcrossing campaign by randomly distributing challenged books in public places on campus. Bookcrossing labels were attached to the books that provided a short explanation about challenged books and freedom of expression while inviting the finder of the book to visit the Bookcrossing website. There they could register the book as "found" as well as discover more information about challenged books. In addition, FLIF set up an information table in the Students' Union Building to raise awareness of the Bookcrossing campaign and intellectual freedom. This campaign turned out to be very successful, and of the 26 books released so far, 6 have been caught and registered by their founders, which is on par with the national Bookcrossing catch and release rate.

Intellectual freedom and social responsibility were promoted within the school as well, the most impressive project being a school art show. Enjoyed by all who attended, the show displayed art by both students and staff, using a very liberal definition of the word "art". Crafts, experimental art, poetry and writing, works in progress, and a website accompanied the many pieces of traditional fine art in a proud display of talent and creativity.

FLIF's inaugural year (2004/2005) saw some huge achievements, and there is every reason to believe that the work begun this year will only continue to grow in the years to come. It was an exciting and accomplished year. FLIF was able to circulate within the University community and spread the word about intellectual freedom and social responsibility, and also raise the profile of the library school and of future librarians. For more information, please direct any questions to our continuing student representative, James Reimer, at jreimer@ualberta.ca.



SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

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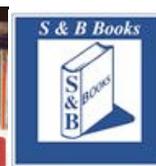
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