

## **2004 Intellectual Freedom Awards**

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### **John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award**

Nolan T. Yelich, state librarian of Virginia, has been named the 2004 winner of the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award for Intellectual Freedom, presented by the American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT).

The Immroth Award honors intellectual freedom fighters who have demonstrated remarkable personal courage in resisting censorship. The award consists of \$500 and a citation.

The Immroth Award Committee chose Yelich for his courageous and victorious stand in defense of freedom of information in Virginia. For several months he vigorously and publicly pursued the complete records of former Virginia Governor James Gilmore's administration for the state archives of Virginia.

"Nolan Yelich demonstrated steadfast leadership in protecting and preserving the public interest by upholding state law," said Chair Sylvia Turchyn. "With his thoroughly professional yet insistent pursuit of public information, Yelich sets an excellent standard for other state librarians faced with increasing refusals by elected government officials to surrender papers for archival preservation and access by the citizenry."

The award will be presented Saturday, June 26, at 1:30 p.m., during the IFRT program at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla.

For more information regarding the John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award and past recipients, please visit <http://www.ala.org/ala/ifrt/ifrtinaction/ifrtawards/immroth/immroth.htm>

### **Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award**

Wendell Berry and David James Duncan, coauthors of "Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality and Leadership in an Age of Terror" (Orion Society, 2003), are the 2004 recipients of the Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award. The award is presented for the best published work in the area of intellectual freedom and consists of a citation and \$500.

"The committee is very pleased to present Wendell Berry and David James Duncan with this award for 'Citizens Dissent,'" said Oboler Award Committee chair Martin Garner. "These essays on the larger issues of civil liberties and political dissent in a post 9/11 world are powerful reminders of the underlying principles of intellectual freedom."

Presented by the American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT), the award honors Eli M. Oboler, an extensively published Idaho University librarian who was a champion for intellectual freedom that demanded the dismantling of all barriers to freedom of expression.

"Members of the committee were impressed with the authors' quality of writing, eloquence of arguments, and dedication to beliefs," said Garner. "Berry's rigorous and intellectual refutation of the National Security Strategy nicely balances Duncan's emotional, almost grief-stricken lament of the country's current policy towards Iraq. These profound topics provide a context for the daily challenges to intellectual freedom in both our libraries and our larger society."

Berry, farmer, essayist, poet and novelist, is the author of more than thirty books including, "In the Presence of Fear: Three essays for a Changed World," and a regular contributor to Orion magazine. When he learned of the award, he said, "The little book 'Citizens Dissent' puts its authors well out on a limb. That is where intellectual freedom is apt to put its practitioners from time to time, if it is in fact a working freedom. Even so, writers who go out on a limb should not expect to be honored. I am telling the truth, then, when I say I am surprised by the Eli M. Oboler Award. But I am also relieved and encouraged. Thank you."

Duncan, the author of the novels "The River Why" and "The Brothers K" whose recent book, "My Story as Told by Water," won the Western States Book Award and was nominated for the 2001 National Book Award, said, "I am more grateful than I can say that the American Library Association, in a dark time, stands by those of us who love the richness of human and literary experience and call the psychic assault weapons into question."

The Eli M. Oboler Award will be presented on Saturday, June 26, at 1:30 p.m., during the IFRT program at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla.

For more information regarding the Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award and past recipients please visit <http://www.ala.org/ala/ifrt/ifrtinaction/ifrtawards/oboler/oboler.htm>.

"Citizens Dissent: Security, Morality, and Leadership in an Age of Terror," ISBN 0-913098-62-0, Paperback, 60 pages, \$8.00 US, is available through [www.oriononline.org](http://www.oriononline.org) and at independent booksellers nationwide.

### SIRS-ProQuest State and Regional Achievement Award

The Colorado Association of Libraries Intellectual Freedom Committee (CAL IFC) is the 2004 recipient of the SIRS-ProQuest State and Regional Achievement Award presented by the American Library Association (ALA) Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT).

The award, funded by SIRS-ProQuest, consists of a citation and \$1,000, and recognizes successful and effective intellectual freedom committees or coalitions that have made a contribution to the freedom to read in libraries, or to the intellectual freedom environment in

which libraries function.

CAL IFC is honored for its development and implementation of a statewide initiative to educate the public about the USA PATRIOT Act. Its work included informational presentations to 25 diverse groups throughout the state of Colorado, and the development of informational Web pages that are available to librarians as well as the general public. Its informational resources are crafted for diverse audience use and are easily accessible. CAL IFC also offers customizable brochures to library or citizen's groups throughout the country who may need informational materials for their communities.

"We are all thrilled with this recognition," said Nicolle Steffen, current chair, CAL IFC. "This is a very dedicated committee that has worked hard through the years. Last year was especially challenging as we responded to the needs of library staff and citizens for answers to questions about how the USA PATRIOT Act affects them professionally and personally."

Martin Garnar, immediate past chair, pointed out that the project is not over. He added, "The CAL IFC will use the monetary award given by SIRS-ProQuest to supplement our program budget so that we can keep resources current."

The award will be presented to CAL IFC during the IFRT program at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla. The award will be presented on Saturday, June 26, at 1:30 p.m., during the IFRT program.

For more information on the award, see <http://www.ala.org/ifrt/sirsproquest>; for information on the Colorado Association of Libraries Intellectual Freedom Committee, see <http://www.cal-webs.org/if.html>.

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IFRT provides a forum for the discussion of activities, programs and problems in intellectual freedom. The committee serves as a channel of communications on intellectual freedom matters, and also promotes a greater opportunity for involvement among the members of the ALA in defense of intellectual freedom.