

Keeping IFRT Strong and Active

Martin Garner

With a large number of librarians poised to retire in the next few years, we stand to lose much of our profession's collective knowledge of and experience with issues of intellectual freedom. To counteract this brain drain, new librarians must be given opportunities for continuing education on intellectual freedom so that the principles they've learned in library school can be transferred to practical applications. IFRT is the perfect place for such educational efforts, but our hard work will be for naught if we're not reaching the right audience. It is essential for IFRT to reach out to new librarians and bring them into our activities as colleagues and fellow defenders of intellectual freedom.

Along with education, one of IFRT's primary purposes is to advocate for the principles of intellectual freedom within our professional association. As one of the five largest Round Tables in ALA, we have our own Councilor. It's crucial that we maintain our membership numbers in order to ensure that there's a champion for intellectual freedom in our organization's governing body.

Therefore, in order to advance the twin goals of education and advocacy, we must ensure a robust and active membership for IFRT. To that end, we spent some time at the Annual Conference in Orlando generating a number of ideas, including:

- * developing information packets on IFRT for display/distribution at local, state and regional meetings
- * recruiting/identifying IFRT members to serve as the main contact person for each state association, with duties of recruitment and publicity for IFRT
- * recruiting/identifying IFRT members to serve as liaisons to all library schools (same duties as above)
- * transform the existing IFRT e-mail list into a value-added information exchange (e.g., a place to share experiences with intellectual freedom challenges) that would complement existing information sources like the IF Action Network

All of these ideas will require some effort from both the Executive Board and from our existing membership. Over the next few months, we will be soliciting volunteers to help us with these membership promotion efforts. Please give some thought to how you want to participate in these new ventures. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Martin Garner (Membership Promotion Committee chair) at mgarnar@regis.edu.

Martin Garner, Reference Librarian
Dayton Memorial Library, Regis University
3333 Regis Blvd., Mail Stop D-20
Denver, CO 80221-1099
303.964.5459
303.964.5497 (fax)
mgarnar@regis.edu