

## From the Editor

Doug Archer

This is my last opportunity as editor to encourage you, our readers, to consider contributing copy to the *IFRT Report*. If you want to read what intellectual freedom advocates who are not IFRT "insiders" are thinking and doing, consider setting a good example by sending something (anything) in to our new editor, Lauren Christos. How's that for a sneaky introduction?

Lauren is a very active participant in the work of IFRT. She just finished a term as chair the IFRT Program Committee and most significantly has been consistently involved in the production of this newsletter for several years. Many, many thanks to Lauren for her excellent and enthusiastic efforts on behalf of the *IFRT Report* and the Round Table.

This issue of the *IFRT Report* contains a fine example of the member initiative mentioned above. Steve Marquardt has sent in an appeal for support for Cuban library workers. Steve's submission takes a slightly different approach to this highly charged issue than that which we usually see. In correspondence, I welcomed his effort but cautioned him that it might provoke a bit of editorializing on my part. It did.

Put bluntly, the Cuban Independent Librarians and their supporters have been usurping our professional image and title for their partisan political purposes for several years. Collecting and loaning a few books which reflect your particular opinion doesn't begin to qualify you as a librarian any more than dispensing iodine and bandages makes you a doctor. On the other hand, what's wrong with collecting and distributing bandages – or books?

While I do not consider these so called Independent Librarians to be such, I do most emphatically agree that their human rights are being violated as defined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Steve, by using the term library workers and emphasizing the human rights angle of their plight, is pointing toward a third way of addressing these abuses.

There must be some alternative to accepting the agendas of the right or left. If the right will drop the subterfuge inherent in its use of the term "independent librarians" and the left will acknowledge the shameful suppression of political opinion by our next door neighbor, we might find a way to speak out together for a cause we all claim to hold dear, the free flow of information.

Freedom for all, even the dummies who disagree with us!