



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



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December 21, 2007

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Purpose:

To promote academic freedom, defined as intellectual freedom in educational and research contexts. This includes freedoms of belief and expression and access to information and ideas.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—Doug Paterson

This has been a busy year. After twenty years of spirited organizing, discussion, and action, AFCON seems to be coming into its own as a true force in Nebraska for Academic Freedom of all kinds.

We continue to pursue several important projects:

* Working to pass a Civics Engagement law in Nebraska K-12 education which would require a class for all students to study civic issues that include Academic Freedom and the Freedoms of Speech and Assembly;

* Watching for regional and national incidents of intrusion into promotion and tenure processes by agents outside the university, especially by agents with expressed political agendas;

* Educating Nebraskans about No Child Left Behind, with its tendency to teach to the test, to prefer testing to improved teaching and learning, and to homogenize education to an unsettling degree;

* Protecting high school newspapers in their efforts, as part of their education in journalism, to research, report, and publish material on matters deemed relevant by the students; similarly, AFCON seeks to protect Academic Freedom and the Free Speech rights of all K-12 students in their journalistic, artistic, forensic, and scholarly expression;

* Aiding high school teachers who have limits placed on their teaching and Academic Freedom, and especially those who might have been unfairly dismissed because of undisclosed concerns.

The list could go on. What is important to stress is that I believe, and suggest that the Board of AFCON also believes, that Academic Freedom and its correlative outside the educational environment, Freedom of Speech, is under assault. The attack is not incidental, nor is it casual. There appear to be various interests within the country that contend these two great national values are dangerous and systematically look for ways to erode their power.

With our twentieth-year celebration taking place in Lincoln on December 1st, I as the outgoing President of AFCON, am happy and proud to report the organization is very much alive, flourishing, and scanning the horizons for two vessels: One flies the flag of the Un-jolly Roger, threatening encroachment and diminishment on our basic freedoms. The other flies a truly resplendent rainbow-of-ideas flag, urging not only the protection of our freedoms, but indeed the expansion of those freedoms. As someone, it could have been me, once said, "The cure for discomfort with Academic Freedom and the Freedom of Speech is even more Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech."

What a great organization! Do what you can to sustain AFCON!

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings: January 12, February 9, and March 8, 2008
Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings—Karen Buckley

September 8, 2007

Present: Dwayne Ball, Tom Black, Karen Buckley, Jim Bunstock, Nancy Comer, Karen Drevo, Dick Herman, Laurie Thomas Lee, Cathi McMurtry, Dave Moshman, Susan Oles, Linda Parker, Doug Paterson.

Minutes of the July 14 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report showed a balance of \$1708.02, with 39 individuals and 11 organizations current with dues.

President's Report: Paterson has materials for AFCON networking ready to be mailed in September. He spoke on the new play, *Sedition*.

President-elect's Report: Comer's letter to the editor of the *Plattsmouth Journal* was not been published.

Annual meeting: The program for the Dec. 1 annual meeting will include a panel discussion on student free expression, lunch and reminiscing on AFCON's 20 years of existence.

Newsletter: The September issue of the *Sentinel* has been printed. Black said that a new speaker was needed for the speaker's bureau concerning censorship of student publication.

Policy Coordinator: Moshman spoke of a UNL professor who received a backlash of criticism on campus after being quoted nationally as stating that there is no genetic basis for homosexuality and that it is possible to change one's sexual orientation. The professor had published a column in the *Daily Nebraskan* and did not seek additional aid from AFCON.

Banned Books Week: Lee reported that AFCON-sponsored activities will be a panel discussion on banned books Oct. 3 and Mark Twain impersonator Wally Seiler at Lincoln Oct. 1.

Legislation Report: Ball noted that he and Haller attended the Education Advisory Council of the State Department of Education Sept. 7. Haller spoke on the need for students to have academic freedom and requested that the Council's support for a student rights expression bill when the bill is introduced before the Unicameral.

Membership Reports:

Oles noted that the Nebraska English/Language Arts Council State Con-

ference was approaching.

Ball mentioned the ACLU sponsorship of the afore-mentioned readings at bookstores in Omaha and Lincoln for Banned Books Week.

Black discussed the intergenerational mentoring program of the Nebraska State Education Association-Retired, which pairs junior education students with retired teachers, now in its fourth year and expanding to a state-wide program. Following an NEA Project called Outreach to Teach that selects a school where student and retired members do a bit of renovation, the NSEA student and retired members are initiating such a project at Indian Hill Elementary School in Omaha in October.

Bunstock said the Nebraska Writers Guild's fall conference will be in October.

Drevo, Parker and Buckley said that the NLA/NEMA fall conference will be Oct. 24-26 in Kearney.

New business: Paterson, Ball, Lee and Moshman were appointed to the Nominating Committee for the 2008 elections.

October 13, 2007—

Present: Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Karen Buckley, Nancy Comer, Bob Haller, Susan Helmink, Dick Herman, Mel Krutz, Cathi McMurtry, Dave Moshman, Susan Oles, Doug Paterson.

Minutes of the Sept. 7 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report showed a balance of \$1426.67 with 40 individuals and 13 organizations current with dues.

President's Report: Paterson said that Benson High School Principal Lisa Dale regretfully declined accepting this year's Academic Freedom Award but was pleased to have that honor bestowed on Jerred Zegelis, Benson High newspaper advisor, and Sarah Swift, last year's editor of the Benson student newspaper.

The two nominees will receive their awards at the AFCON annual meeting. Paterson also called attention to the recent controversy surrounding the invitation and rescinding of that invitation for Desmond Tutu to speak at St. Thomas University.

President-elect's Report: Comer said that the *NSEA Voice* magazine contained

an article on the Nebraska Professional Practices Commission.. One could realize why that Commission was unable to intercede for the Conestoga math teacher, who felt she was wrongfully terminated.

Comer mentioned the Nov. 2 performance of "Top Secret: The Battle for the Pentagon Papers" at the Lied. Daniel Ellsberg will also give two public lectures Nov. 1.

Annual meeting: 10 am Saturday, Dec. 1 at Beacon Hill Restaurant. Presentation of the Academic Freedom Awards and a response by the honorees, discussions on civics education (Haller) and the student free expression bill (Adair,) and a panel of AFCON's original members (Moshman, Krutz, McMurtry, Haller, Gerry Cox and Kathy Stofer) on the founding of AFCON. Each AFCON member is encouraged to bring a member from their organization plus another guest. Cost will be \$20 a person. The Board voted to pay the registration fee for up to 10 specially invited guests.

Newsletter: Copy deadline for the *Sentinel* is Nov. 26.

Policy Coordinator: Moshman noted that originally members of AFCON were considering the name, "Intellectual Freedom Coalition of Nebraska." He proposed Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska to support academic freedom for students and teachers at all levels, not just for colleges and universities. Moshman has a contract to write a book on academic freedom with Heinemann Publishing.

Banned Books Week: Ball noted that the presentation by Mark Twain impersonator Wally Seiler at Lee Booksellers Oct. 1 was well attended.

Members of the panel on "The Freedom to Read Freely" Oct. 3 at the UNL Auditorium of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications were . Moderator: Robert Haller, English Professor (retired,) UNL; William Dimon, East High School English Teacher and students in his "Banned Books" classes; Vicki Wood, Youth Services Librarian, Bennett Martin Library; Mary Reiman,
See **Summaries** Page 3)

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings

(Continued from Page 2)

Director of Library Media Services at LPS; Dr. R. J. Pasco, Associate Professor, College of Education Coordinator, Library Science Education Programs UNO; and Bill Fech, Senior English and Film Studies Major at UNL.

Legislation Report: Haller felt that the Civics Educational Advisory Council was sympathetic to the need for a student free expression bill and he would like AFCON to work with this group. Haller addressed the State Board of Education on the proposed bill and felt the chair's comment was positive. Joe Higgins offered to testify if the bill is presented.

Adair and Paterson met with Sen. Tom White. White plans to look into past constitutional cases and will support this bill if he feels it might be successful.

Membership Reports: Krutz noted that the Nebraska Book Festival will be Oct. 26-27. A schedule of activities may be found at http://www.unl.edu/NCB/current_festival.html or google Nebraska Book Festival. The Nebraska Center for the Book needs to appoint an AFCON representative. The Board elected Krutz as a board member at-large.

Helmerk said the Nebraska High School Press Association annual conference will be held Oct. 15 at UNL. The Washington correspondent for the *New York Times* will be the featured speaker.

Buckley said that the NLA/NEMA fall conference will be Oct. 24-26 in Kearney.

New Business: The board approved awarding one year AFCON memberships to members of the panel for Banned Books Week and approved allowing AFCON to pay fees for the annual meeting attendance for up to 10 invited guests.

November 10, 2007—

Present: Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Karen Buckley, Bob Haller, Laurie Thomas Lee, Cathi McMurtry, Dave Moshman, Susan Oles, Linda Parker,

Minutes of the October. 13 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report showed a balance of \$1509.54, with 41 individuals and 13 organizations current with dues.

Annual Meeting: Notices were mailed. Haller showed the plaques for the Academic Freedom Awards.

Newsletter: Copy deadline for the next issue of the *Sentinel* is Nov. 26.

Legislation Report: Adair spoke to Sens. Glenn Howard and Ron Raikes regarding upcoming education issues. She also spoke with ACLU attorney Amy Miller regarding student newspapers. The role of public schools as publisher of student newspapers remains an ambiguous issue and has remained thus in court cases following Hazelwood. Ball proposed that next year's annual meeting focus on the 20th anniversary of the Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier decision.

Nominating Committee: Moshman said that McMurtry and Buckley will be on the slate. The candidate for president-elect will be announced.

Membership Reports: Lee said that concerns are being raised at UNL regarding the guidelines for the new category of "professors of practice," a non-tenured contract position, which may very well reduce the number of tenured and tenure-track positions. Members agreed that AFCON develop a statement on eroding faculty tenure. Moshman will work on a policy statement on the need for tenure at the university level.

Moshman reported that Jim Binstock has resigned from the Nebraska Writers Guild board and will no longer represent that organization on the AFCON board. Members agreed that it would be valuable to stress the strong ties between Nebraska Writers Guild and AFCON and to encourage the Guild to retain its organizational membership in AFCON.

Park and Buckley noted that the NLA/NEMA fall conference was held in late October.

New Business: The question was raised if AFCON materials should be archived—perhaps by the Nebraska Historical Society, UNL or UNO. Parker offered to see if UNO would be interested.

The next meeting will be the annual meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 at Beacon Hill Restaurant.

Reflections on Westboro Baptist Church — Robert Haller

These reflections arise from the case involving the funeral-poisoning Kansas cult that calls itself "Westboro Baptist Church," recently slapped with a huge civil-suit damage judgment in Baltimore for disturbing the burial ceremony of a veteran. The jury awarded the soldier's family \$10.9 million, and the case is worthy of AFCON consideration. Some supporters of the First Amendment have worried that the case threatens the free expression of repugnant ideas, but I would argue that the case helps define, not only the First Amendment protection for freedom of speech and the "free exercise" of relig-

ion, but also the relationship of academic freedom to these rights

Start with the precedents which permit public institutions to determine the "time, place and manner" of political and religious expression. Free expression cannot take precedence over the central functions of the institution, and it cannot endanger persons and property. For the same reason, an educational institution will not allow random protestors to come into classes or non-public meetings in session. And a school can forcibly remove protestors whose antics interfere with a public event, preventing the exercise of free speech by other members of

the community.

But, on the other hand, these same institutions, AFCON insists, cannot limit the free expression of ideas by students or faculty in the classroom, or in the deliberations of the institution, just because these ideas are repugnant and might be disturbing or insulting to persons present on the occasion. Rightfully we have fought against speech and "climate" codes that would have a chilling effect on free discussion.

As has been widely reported, the Westboro group carries a sign, "God hates Fags." Of course those at a
(See **Reflections** on page 4)

(Reflections from Page 3)

funeral will be distressed to see such a sign. But there may be good reasons for the phrase to be taken up in a classroom context, even though it would offend and sicken a great range of persons, especially those sensitive about blasphemy and those for whom that last word is a hateful insult. For instance, in my Linguistics and Society class, I could guide the analysis of the assertion, its deictic elements and the register of its vocabulary, as well as its illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. In a course in the Bible, the assertion could be advanced as a possible interpretation of a passage or of the text as a whole, and the implications examined as a way of understanding how assumptions about discourse can influence belief about the motives of a divine being. I suppose someone in the class, teacher or student, could assert it as his or her belief, but would have to be willing to present the case for it through some recognized heuristic methodology which could justify the use of a term like “fags” not present in the text and with an inherently offensive status in the vocabulary of English. (The Bible, understand, has no term referring to gay persons or gay sex.). In some class in the Sociology or Psychology, the use of the phrase might illustrate the process whereby a text or creed interacts with group or personal assumptions and prejudices.

Outside the classroom, the Westboro Baptist Church would be allowed on the campus of a University to hold up its signs in a place designated for open free expression. The University’s stationing of a few police there to prevent public altercations would not interfere with their free speech rights, and indeed protects these rights. I have seen within the past year what I assume was the very same group; they were on the north side of South Street in Lincoln, across from Westminster Presbyterian Church. Located there, they could not directly interfere with churchgoers on their way to and from the Church. The Westboro people had their right of free speech and free expression; so did the Presbyterians on the south side of the street.

In these cases that the educational community has the right to conduct classes and the other activities that carry

out its educational purposes, and a church can conduct its services, and that no one’s right to free speech or free expression of religion can override that right. In other words, one person’s right cannot be exercised in a way that takes away someone else’s right. Theoretically speaking, the exercise of rights is not a zero-sum game. The right not to hear or read repugnant ideas cannot exist in the same world with the right to express such ideas. No Bill of Rights could contain both rights. But the courts and law enforcement can arrange a world that protects free expression of religion for one group and free speech for another.

I have not been able to find a text of the Maryland decision, but I assume it turns on the aggrieved family’s right of privacy. If that were the case, I would argue that the damage award presents no threat to free speech or the free expression of religion, and supports what we call academic freedom.

The word “privacy” does not appear in the U.S. Constitution, but judges, including those of the Supreme Court, have found it present in the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth and Fourteenth Amendments. One of the early and significant articulations of this right occurred in *Meyer v Nebraska* (1923). The opinion states:

Without doubt, it [the liberty referred to in the 14th Amendment] denotes not merely freedom from bodily restraint but also the right of the individual to contract, to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and generally to enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.

Disregarding the collective term “men” the opinion recognizes the primacy of the ordinary constituent activities of family life, although the opinion, like the constitution, never uses the term “family.” It may be a source of frustration to persons asserting “family values” that our Constitution and this Supreme Court decision can refer to a family only by making it up of “individuals” who may “establish a home and bring up children.” Neither the Constitution nor this opinion make reference to parental and

family affection nor to grieving at the loss of a family member, but certainly a funeral would be recognized in “common law” as “essential” to the “orderly pursuit of happiness.” A ritual of communal farewell to a family member or a friend is not a “happy” occasion, but the term “happiness” in the Declaration of Independence or in *Meyer v Nebraska* does not mean pleasure or joy. It means the ability to observe all the desired activities that make up the institution.

Individual rights are constitutionally protected from legislative action or government interference, and not necessarily from the misguided zeal of the Westboro Church. But unless a family buries its dead in the basement, or (as used to be the case) inside a Church, that burial will usually be in a cemetery, a public venue. But a funeral has the same relationship to the “right of privacy” that a classroom has to the right to “acquire useful knowledge” and therefore deserves protection under the same kind of “time, place and manner” provisions on the campus of an educational institution. Funerals are one-time events, but they are easily included among the essential constituents of family privacy. Protecting them from disturbance would not be the same as, for instance, protecting a family picnic in a park or a family shopping excursion, neither of which have the same essential quality of a funeral.

In any event, nothing about this case threatens the educational contexts in which academic freedom operates. The university or the school allows persons to “acquire useful knowledge” and thus a disruptive interference with a class or lecture could not be constitutionally protected in the name of free speech or free expression of religion. Note that academic freedom, like the right of privacy, is not (to use a term from the 9th amendment) “enumerated” among the rights in the Constitution. Privacy and academic freedom exist as terms to be applied to the basic values of the family and of education. They need to be carefully defined so that they do not come into conflict with the enumerated rights, free speech and the free expression of religion. And the process of so defining them, by laypersons as well as by judges, can help us understand what they are.

AFCON SPEAKER'S BUREAU (As of December 2007)

Peggy Adair: "Banned Books, Black Armbands, and School Prayer: The Evolution of Children's First Amendment Rights in America"
padair@tconl.com

Dwayne Ball: "Threats to Academic Freedom at Universities"
adball@neb.rr.com

Bob Haller: "Civics Education and the Practice of Freedom" and "How Books Can Harm You: Lessons from the Censors"
rhaller1@unl.edu

David Moshman: "Principles of Academic Freedom"
dmoshman1@unl.edu

John Bender and David Moshman: "Student Freedom of Expression/Student Rights"
jbender1@unl.edu
dmoshman1@unl.edu

Laurie Thomas Lee: "Implications of the USA Patriot Act"
llee1@unl.edu

Presentation of the Readers' Theatre production of A Tangled Web: Student Freedom of Expression (a cast of adults and students)

ADDRESS FOR THE AFCON WEB SITE

<http://www.AFCONebr.org>

Check it out and learn Who We Are and about Our Activities; read our Constitution; learn how to Join Us; see the where and when of our Meetings; meet our Members and Officers; Study our Publications, Principles, and Statements

FOR SALE BY AFCON

Send orders to Mel Krutz, 2625 Bluff Road, Seward, NE 68434-9801

Note cards with a Paul Fell design with the wording "When all Books are Banned, see the Book— \$1.00;" \$1.50 each or a packet of four for \$5.00. Packaging and postage: \$0.75 per packet.

Reader's Theatre Script (a booklet,) entitled TANGLED ISSUE: Student Freedom of Expression. \$10.00 buys the booklet and production rights, including rights to copy. Packaging and postage: \$3.00.

REQUEST FOR NEWS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The editor of the AFCON SENTINEL invites all AFCON individual and organizational members to send news about academic freedom issues in Nebraska or editorial comments for inclusion in this newsletter and/or announcements of organizational meetings for the UPCOMING EVENTS column.

Due date for submissions to the **MARCH 21, 2008**, issue is **FEBRUARY 29, 2008**,
Send to Tom Black, editor, 610 West Park, West Point, NE 68788 or wpc6296@cableone.net

University reports—Dwayne Ball

My sources for these reports are the Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE) the newsletters of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), and other sources as noted.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

As mentioned in the last AFCON newsletter, San Francisco State University investigated and put on trial the College Republicans for stepping on Hezbollah and Hamas flags (copied onto butcher paper) as part of an anti-terrorism demonstration. Unbeknownst to the CRs, the flags contained the Arabic word for Allah, and a number of students filed complaints of the creation of a “hostile environment.” The SFSU CR, FIRE, and the Alliance defense fund sued SFSU for intimidation of free speech. A federal judge has now ordered San Francisco State University (SFSU) and the California State University (CSU) System to stop enforcing the unconstitutional speech codes under which the College Republicans were prosecuted. (FIRE Newsletter of 11/8/2007)

Three years ago, Occidental College of Los Angeles fired campus radio station “shock jock” Jason Antebi and used his firing as a pretext to dissolve the student government (he was charged with “harassment” for politically incorrect jokes on the air, and was a high-ranking member of the student government). In the conclusion of a multi-million-dollar lawsuit Antebi filed against Occidental College for violating his freedom of speech, a monetary settlement was reached and Antebi is reportedly “pleased.” (FIRE Newsletter 10/19/2007)

The University of North Dakota’s sports teams are called the “Fighting Sioux.” Some think this name offensive. They often say so, including a number of people and organizations, including five UND academic departments, who took out a large ad in the local newspaper. At that point, the

university’s affirmative-action officer sent a memo to all 5 of those departments, warning them that their official rebuke of advocates of the “Fighting Sioux” name might create a hostile environment on the basis of political opinion for the students and staff in their departments, and they were to cease such official statements of departmental opinion on the matter. (CHE 10/8/2007)

STUDENT ACADEMIC FREEDOM

“After an intense campaign led by FIRE, the University of Delaware has dropped an ideological reeducation program that was referred to in the university’s own materials as a “treatment” for students’ incorrect attitudes and beliefs. The program’s stated goal was for the approximately 7,000 students in Delaware’s residence halls to adopt highly specific university-approved views on politics, race, sexuality, sociology, moral philosophy, and environmentalism. Following FIRE’s campaign, which called the attention of the national media and the blogosphere to the Orwellian program, university President Patrick Harker terminated the program, effective immediately.” (FIRE newsletter of 11/2/2007)

FACULTY EMPLOYMENT AND TRAVEL RIGHTS

Adam Habib, a deputy vice chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, had his visa to enter the U.S. revoked by The U.S. State Department (he was deported from a New York airport). The Department cited a section of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act that allows the exclusion of any foreign national who has engaged in acts of terrorism or who is associated with a group that endorses terrorism. Habib vigorously denies the charges, and the ACLU has filed suit against the several organizations that invited him to speak (the American Sociological Association, the American Association of University Professors, and the American-Arab

Anti-Discrimination Committee). They contend that Habib was denied entry because of his views against U.S. Foreign policy, not because of the stated reason. (CHE 11/15/2007)

One concern that has been expressed regarding faculty employment nationwide is that university faculty are so far to the political left that faculty on the right will not be hired. A new study on the political balance at U.S. universities, “The Social and Political Views of American Professors,” by Solon Simmons (George Mason, Sociology Dept.) and Neil Gross (Harvard, sociology), seems to confirm the political bias. The study of over 1400 U.S. university professors shows that only 9% call themselves “conservative,” and only 20% voted for George Bush in 2004 (not one of whom was in the humanities or social sciences at a research institution). The authors argue that, while there are few conservatives, many professors, particularly among the young, are “centrists.” (CHE 10/8/2007)

STUDENT ADMISSION RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report insisting that law schools disclose the success of law students (in terms of passing the bar and other measures), detailed by student race. For some time, law schools across the U.S. have used preferences in admission of law students to admit more minority students than would be admitted on the basis of objective merit alone. The report insists on determining if these policies have resulted in more failures of minority students. The report also wants the American Bar Association, in accrediting law schools, to stop requiring that law schools demonstrate a commitment to diversity, which it says infringes on the academic freedom of the law school faculty. (CHE 8/28/2007)

(See **Reports** Page 7)

Reports continued from Page 6)

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE CLASSROOM

Columbia University has a department of Middle East and Asian languages and cultures. Professors in that department were accused, in a 2004 film called "Columbia Unbecoming," financed by an organization called the David Project, of making students feel uncomfortable for expressing pro-Israel points of view. Columbia's president (Bollinger) insisted on an investigation of the complaints. Critics of Bollinger's actions say that he

has now systematically violated the academic freedom of the faculty by giving students the right to file grievances over being made to "feel uncomfortable" on the basis of opinions expressed in the classroom. (CHE 10/5/2007)

The University of Missouri is doing something similar. UM is creating a database of student complaints of "biased professors." The on-line complaint system and database was created in response to concerns expressed in the Missouri legislature about the lack of "intellectual pluralism" on the UM campus. One apparently motivating incident was a lawsuit filed by a Christian student who claimed a

UM professor retaliated against her grade when she refused to sign a statement supporting gay adoption. It remains to be seen how the database will be used. (CHE 10/5/2007)

FACULTY RESEARCH FREEDOM

Faculties at both the University of California and Stanford University, by resounding margins (10 to 1 and 2 to 1, respectively), rejected proposals brought before them to ban the acceptance of money from tobacco companies for tobacco research. (CHE 10/12/2007)

Fine Lines



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Fine Lines is dedicated to the writing development of authors of all ages. What started out as a classroom newsletter in 1991 has now turned into a 50 state writing network. The first issue was four pages long and allowed students an opportunity to show others their clear thinking and proper written expression. Today, each quarterly issue is 60 pages of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry written by "writers in process" who wish to improve their craft.

Fine Lines receives creative writing from all over the nation and authors of all occupations. Prose articles of medium length, reflective essays on widely diverse topics that reflect life experiences or what one learns through the writing process, and poetry in all forms are the usual submissions. Last year, we printed a poem from an eight-year-old, several pieces from a 92-year-old great-grandmother, work of ministers, janitors, doctors, lawyers, scientists, and students of all educational levels. We have printed work submitted by writers from as far away as Azerbaijan, China, Denmark, Dubai, England, Germany, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Jordan, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkey, and Switzerland.

If you want answers to specific questions, write to the email address at the top of this letter or check out our Webpage. We look forward to receiving your students' submissions as well as your own.

David Martin, editor; member of AFCON

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM COALITION OF NEBRASKA

HELP AFCON PROMOTE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

As a member of AFCON, you can help us

- ◆ support applications of the First Amendment in academic contexts, including elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and libraries.
- ◆ educate Nebraskans about the meaning and value of intellectual freedom, intellectual diversity, mutual respect, open communication, and uninhibited pursuit of knowledge, including the role of these ideals in academic contexts and in democratic self-government.
- ◆ assist students, teachers, librarians, and researchers confronted with censorship, indoctrination, or suppression of ideas.
- ◆ act as liaison among groups in Nebraska that support academic freedom.

MEMBERSHIP (To become a member, send dues, organization or individual name, address, and phone number to Cathi McMurtry, 515 N. Thomas Avenue, Oakland, NE 68045)

Organizational Membership (\$100) entitles the organization to one seat on the AFCON Board, one vote in the election of officers and at the annual meeting, eligibility for office and chairing standing committees, provides newsletter subscription for the board member to share with the organization's information director, and reduced rates to AFCON conferences for its members.

Individual Membership (\$10) provides newsletter subscription, eligibility for office and for chairing standing committees, reduced rates for AFCON conferences, and one vote at annual meetings.

Student Membership (\$5) entitles full-time students to the same privileges as provided by the Individual Membership.

**AFCON ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS, PLEASE DUPLICATE THIS NEWSLETTER FOR YOUR MEMBERS.
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS, PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND AFTER YOU HAVE READ IT.
ENCOURAGE HIM OR HER TO JOIN AFCON**