



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



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A Quarterly of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

September 19, 2014

AFCON OFFICERS

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Newsletter Editor

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—David Moshman

In the March 2014 issue of the Sentinel, readers had the opportunity to encounter the “Content Standards Compliance Form” of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA). Personally, even the title upset me.

Then came the March NSAA speech competition, which resulted in a brief Facebook and media frenzy concerning the apparent censorship of a speech by Michael Barth, a student at Gordon Rushville High School. That drew the attention of ACLU Nebraska.

NSAA soon received a letter from ACLU Nebraska Legal Director Amy Miller questioning the constitutionality of NSAA’s policy. In the course of further discussion, she suggested that AFCON could help craft a policy that better respected intellectual freedom.

As I reported in my June president’s message, I had a very pleasant meeting in May with Rhonda Blanford-Green, Executive Director of the NSAA, and Deb Velder, NSAA Associate Director, who were happy to work with AFCON in revising their policy. They subsequently attended the July meeting of the AFCON Board for further discussion.

Consensus, it turned out, was easy to achieve. NSAA fully supports intellectual freedom in school activities, though of

course insisting on the application of proper academic standards. AFCON fully supports academic standards, though of course insisting on intellectual freedom.

After several rounds of revision, the form formerly known as the “Content Standards Compliance Form” is now simply a “Speech Review Form.” It sets proper academic standards and then concludes:

Nothing in these standards is intended to permit or encourage censorship on the basis of topic or viewpoint. The NSAA supports academic standards and academic freedom.

Everyone was so pleased with this result that AFCON decided to make the resolution of this issue the focus of its annual meeting and NSAA offered its Lincoln facility free of charge as the venue for the meeting. In a departure from our usual Saturday lunch meetings, this one will be Thursday, October 9, from 5:30 to 7:30, with hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar.

The meeting will include presentation of our annual academic freedom award to Michael Barth. This will be followed by a panel discussion about how consensus was reached in the aftermath of controversy.

For more information, see page 4.

Hope to see you October 9!

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings, October 9 (See page 4 for location), November 8, 2014
Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings—Peggy Adair

June 14, 2014—

Present: Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Nancy Comer, Bob Haller, Laurie Thomas Lee, Lori Leibrandt, Cathi McMurtry, David Moshman, Rod Wagner.

MINUTES: Minutes of the AFCON board meeting held on May 10, 2014, were approved as presented upon a motion by Ball, second by Wagner, and a voice vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT: McMurtry presented the treasurer's report dated June 13, 2014, with a balance on hand of \$1,348.03. The treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Moshman presented ideas for raising funds to reimburse expenses of the AFCON board members who will be presenting at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention in Washington, D.C. in November. Dwayne Ball made a generous contribution of \$1,000.00 to AFCON, to be used for said expenses or other AFCON needs. Adair will research projected costs for speakers to attend the NCTE Convention and will report back to the Board in July.

SENTINEL: Moshman plans to converse with Black to develop a master AFCON list of all AFCON individual members, organizational members, and non-members to whom we send the *Sentinel*. Deadline for articles for the next issue of the *Sentinel* is August 25.

WEBSITE: Leibrandt will update the website in the next week or two.

NEBRASKA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION: Moshman reported he met with the executive director and assistant executive director of NSAA regarding the content of NSAA's Content Standards Compliance Form. After that discussion the assistant director revised the content and sent it to the NSAA "speech panel," where it was revised again. Board members discussed the revisions. Moshman will summarize the board's findings and will distribute a draft document to the AFCON board. The executive director and assistant executive director of NSAA plan to attend the July AFCON board meeting.

DATA TRACKING SOFTWARE AT UNL: Lee will continue to monitor the issue and will report back to the AFCON board.

UNL PRESIDENT CANDIDATE

-SEARCH PROCESS: The board discussed alternative scenarios and decided to take a wait-and-see approach for now.

AFCON ANNUAL MEETING: The board postponed further discussion until the July AFCON board meeting.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

Nebraska State Reading Association: As noted in the May 10, 2014 AFCON minutes, NSRA thanked Comer for paying their organizational dues, although this was not the case. However, Comer has now graciously offered to do so, for the greater good of all.

NEXT MEETING of the **AFCON BOARD OF DIRECTORS** will be **Saturday, July 12, 2014**, at Eiseley Library, Lincoln, Nebraska.

www.academicfreedomnebraska.org

JULY 12, 2014—

Present: Peggy Adair, Nancy Comer, Frank Edler, Bob Haller, Laurie Thomas Lee, Lori Leibrandt, Cathi McMurtry, David Moshman, Linda Parker, Rod Wagner. Guests: Rhonda Blanford-Green, Deb Velder.

MINUTES: Minutes of the AFCON board meeting held on June 14, 2014, were approved as presented upon a motion by Parker, second by Edler, and a voice vote.

NSAA SPEECH REVIEW FORM:

Moshman reported on the recent discussions among NSAA's executives, ACLU's legal director, and AFCON's president. Moshman distributed documents arising from the discussions. Blanford-Green gave a brief history of the NSAA and explained the background issues that led to the discussions.

The AFCON board and NSAA executives reviewed and edited the draft NSAA Speech Review Form. Velder will share the updated form with NSAA members and will email it to Moshman.

AFCON ANNUAL MEETING:

Comer invited Blanford-Green and Velder to participate as panelists at the AFCON annual meeting this fall. Blanford-Green and Velder accepted and offered the use of the NSAA Lincoln office building as a venue. AFCON board members accepted the generous invitation. Comer and the NSAA executives will work together to plan dates, times, etc. for the annual meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

McMurtry presented the treasurer's report dated July 11, 2014, with a balance on hand of \$2,393.23. The treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Mosh-

man discussed ideas for raising funds to send Haller and Adair to the NCTE convention in November. A motion was made by Wagner, second by Lee to provide up to \$1,000.00 each to Haller and Adair to reimburse their expenses to participate in the NCTE event as AFCON representatives. Motion carried on a voice vote. Edler will also be attending the conference as a member of the NCTE Standing Committee on Censorship. Edler will determine if committee members receive traveling expenses and will report back to the AFCON board.

SENTINEL: Adair will work on a master AFCON email list with input from Haller, McMurtry, Black and others.

Parker suggested we place a notice in future issues of the *Sentinel* that AFCON is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

Haller will check to make sure the latest issue of the *Sentinel* has been mailed to those who have requested hard copies.

Submissions for the September issue of the *Sentinel* are due August 25.

WEBSITE: Leibrandt and Parker have updated the website. The board agreed we need to find a method for more consistent and more frequent updating of the website, keeping in mind that we are all volunteers and some of us are technologically challenged volunteers. Leibrandt and Parker will work together to determine the best and easiest way to assure the website has more frequent and fresher content, and will report back to the board.

OLLI BANNED BOOKS COURSE:

Haller assigned the September 10 session to Adair. Adair will email Haller with confirmation that the date will work for her. Haller will confirm subsequent sessions with the other presenters.

DATA TRACKING SOFTWARE

AT UNL: Lee reported the rat-out-your-neighbor software is scheduled to be operational by the fall semester.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AWARD,

2014: Lee made a motion to nominate "The Kid" for the 2014 Academic Freedom Award. Haller seconded the motion. Motion carried on a voice vote. ("The Kid" is Michael Barth, a student from Gordon-Rushville, who will be attending the University of Nebraska this fall. Barth won first place at the 2014 state high school speech tournament for his poetry presentation.)

(See **Minutes**, page 3)

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings

(Continued from Page 2)

NEXT MEETING: of the AFCON BOARD OF DIRECTORS will be **Saturday, September 13, 2014**, at Eiseley Library, Lincoln, Nebraska.

www.academicfreedomnebraska.org

No meeting August

September 13, 2014—

Present:

Peggy Adair, Nancy Comer, Frank Edler, Bob Haller, Laurie Thomas Lee, Lori Leibrandt, Cathi McMurtry, David Moshman, Linda Parker, Rod Wagner.

MINUTES: Minutes of the AFCON board meeting held on July 12, 2014, were approved as presented upon a motion by Parker, second by Edler, and a voice vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

McMurtry presented the treasurer's report dated September 12, 2014, with a balance on hand of \$2,256.64. The treasurer's report will be filed for audit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Moshman generously offered to pay for lapsed organizational memberships for one year and presented a check in the amount of \$1,000.00 to treasurer Cathi McMurtry. Moshman specified that his donation shall be used in part to help offset some of the expenses for NCTE attendees Adair and Edler and also shall be used for AFCON annual meeting expenses if needed.

AFCON ANNUAL MEETING:

The AFCON Annual Meeting was the focus of considerable discussion. The meeting will be held on October 9, 2014, from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the offices of the Nebraska State Activities Association, 500 Charles Street, in Lincoln. Cost will be \$30.00 for adults and \$10.00 for students. Comer will contact HyVee catering for hors d'oeuvres. Haller will be in charge of obtaining the award plaque for AFCON Academic Award recipient Michael Barth. Comer will update the annual meeting flier and will email it to Adair for distribution through the AFCON email list.

Comer announced Common Cause is presenting their "By the People" award to John Bender on Thursday, September 25, 6:00pm, at Chez Hay in Lincoln. Keynote speaker will be Jane Kleeb. Cost is \$35.00. Comer encouraged AFCON board members to attend since Bender is a long-time AFCON activist. To register online go to: CommonCause.org/take-action/

events.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Moshman will contact Dwayne Ball to see if he is willing to serve on the nominating committee. Laurie Lee and Frank Edler offered to serve with Ball on the committee.

EMAIL LIST: Adair distributed a draft of the AFCON master email list. McMurtry and/or Haller will send to Adair their lists of people who have requested hard copies of the *Sentinel* so Adair can create a separate master list of people who prefer snail mail for AFCON communication.

SENTINEL: Submissions for the September issue of the *Sentinel* are due immediately. Moshman and Comer will get information about the annual meeting and the annual meeting flier to Black. Adair will send July AFCON minutes to Black.

WEBSITE: Parker added Moshman's latest Huffington Post blog to the website. Parker will add the annual meeting flier to the website. Edler will send Parker the link to NCTE website so she can post that on the AFCON website.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM ISSUES:

Lee reported UNL is moving forward with the TIPS program that will add anonymous snitching to services provided with taxpayer dollars (in this case, \$100,000) to the UNL college system. Faculty Senate continues to express concern.

Moshman reported UNL will have to publicize the names of the four finalists in the world-wide search for a new president of the university. UNL had attempted to keep this information secret.

Moshman reported the issue of university professors being able to participate in public policy activity, brought to AFCON's attention by UNO professor Claudia Garcia, seems to have reached resolution. Moshman will remain in communication with Garcia and will alert AFCON if further attention by AFCON is needed.

Moshman and Edler reported the unhiring of Steven Salaita at the University of Illinois has not reached resolution and is likely to result in legal action on Salaita's part. Moshman sent an official AFCON letter in support of Salaita to U of I trustees. Moshman and Edler will continue to monitor the situation and will report to the AFCON board.

OLLI BANNED BOOKS COURSE: The course was cancelled due to lack of interest.

NCTE CONVENTION: Edler and Adair will continue to prepare for their academic freedom panel discussion for the NCTE Convention that will be held in Washington, D.C. November 20-23, 2014.

MEMBER REPORTS:

Center for the Book: Wagner reported the annual meeting for the Center for the Book will be held on Saturday, November 8, 2014, 3:30pm to 6:30pm at the Nebraska Library Commission, 1200 N Street, Lincoln. More information can be found at centerforthebook.nebraska.gov.

Nebraska State Reading Association: Comer reported the Leadership Meeting was held in Lincoln, and the annual conference will be held in February, 2015.

Nebraska Library Association: Parker reported a webinar on banned books will be held on Wednesday, September 24, 11:00am central time. Let's hope it doesn't get cancelled for lack of interest. Parker will send the link for the webinar to AFCON board members.

American Association of University Professors: Haller reported the State Conference was meeting today, September 13, 2014. Haller reported he is on their agenda and will report back to the AFCON board as to what transpired. Haller also reported the first meeting of the UNL Chapter of AAUP since about 2000A.D. is also convening today immediately after the State Conference meeting, and Creighton University is gaining more AAUP members; so things are looking up for AAUP strength in Nebraska.

OTHER BUSINESS: Parker volunteered to serve as secretary pro tem at the AFCON annual meeting in Adair's absence.

NEXT MEETING of the AFCON BOARD OF DIRECTORS: **November 8, 2014**, at Eiseley Library, Lincoln, Nebraska.

www.academicfreedomnebraska.org

Annual Meeting
Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska
Thursday, October 9, 2014
5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.
Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA)
500 Charleston Street, Lincoln (Haymarket)

Controversy to Consensus
Free Speech in Nebraska School Activities

5:30 P.M. **Reception:** Hors d'oeuvres / cash bar

6:15 P.M. **Academic Freedom Award:** AFCON's annual academic freedom award will be presented to ***Michael Barth*** to recognize his courageous defense of free speech in NSAA events as a student at Gordon Rushville High School.

6:30 P.M. **Panel discussion:** How the controversy over Michael Barth's speech led to discussion about NSAA's "Content Standards Compliance Form" and ultimately to agreement on a new "Speech Review Form." The new form sets academic standards and concludes: *Nothing in these standards is intended to permit or encourage censorship on the basis of topic or viewpoint. The NSAA supports academic standards and academic freedom.*

Brief business meeting for AFCON members (open to all) after panel discussion

For further information, email Nancy Comer at ncomer@neb.rr.com or David Moshman at dmoshman1@unl.edu.

For more about AFCON: <http://www.academicfreedomnebraska.org>

To read about the case, see
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/02/nebraska-lgbt_n_5078409.html

For Michael Barth's speech, see
<http://netnebraska.org/interactive-multimedia/news/michael-barth-performs-controversial-poetry-selection>

Register by October 6. Registration is \$30 per person (\$10 for students). Please send a check payable to AFCON to Nancy Comer at 7730 Myrtle St., Lincoln, NE 68506 or send her an email message at ncomer@neb.rr.com and pay at the door. Please provide your name, address (including city and zip), and email address.

Creation, Evolution, and Science Education

Darwin formulated his theory of evolution by natural selection in the 1830s but delayed publication for many years, recognizing the challenge his work posed for traditional religious views of creation. He finally published his general account of evolution in 1859 and extended this account to human evolution in 1871. As he anticipated, his argument that human beings evolved from other organisms via natural processes, like the earlier discovery that the earth is not the center of the cosmos, challenged humanity to radically reconsider its conception of itself and its place in the universe.

Resistance to such reconceptualization was strong but gradually succumbed to the overwhelming evidence for evolution. Modern genetics began about 1900 with the rediscovery of Mendel's work from the 1860s on inheritance in pea plants. The subsequent integration of genetics with evolutionary theory in the 1930s and 1940s produced the "modern synthesis," which has remained the foundation of biology ever since. Most religions have come to accept evolution as a natural process set in motion by God. But creationist opposition to evolution has remained a powerful force in the United States, where it includes both Young-Earth and Old-Earth creationists.

Young-Earth creationists hold that God created the Earth 6,000 to 10,000 years ago as described in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Calculations based on the Bible indicate that the Earth must be at least 6000 years old and could be, depending on biblical interpretation, as much as 10,000 years old, but not much more than that. Young-Earth creationists don't only disagree with modern biology about evolution; they also disagree with modern geology about the age of the earth. There has long been a consensus among geologists that the earth is billions, not thousands, of years old. Even in Darwin's time it was clear that the earth

was likely millions of years old, old enough for evolution by natural selection to be a plausible theory.

Old-Earth creationists see Young-Earth creationists as an embarrassment to the creationist cause. They agree with modern geology about the age of the earth. But they agree with the Young-Earth creationists about the impossibility of evolutionary transformation of species. God created a finite number of distinct "kinds" of living things, and such kinds are immutable. There may be "microevolution" within a kind but not "macroevolution" across kinds. And human beings, they insist, were created by God and are sharply distinct from animals. This is the moral core of the creationist objection to evolutionary biology.

Resistance to evolution has always been strong in the United States and remains a powerful influence on education well into the 21st century. Without a distinction between people and animals, many have feared, there can be no basis for morality and moral education. In a nationally publicized 1925 trial, science teacher John Scopes was convicted of teaching students about evolution in violation of Tennessee law. The controversy led teachers and administrators in many states to avoid all mention of evolution for decades. Textbook publishers followed suit until the early 1960s. Only in 1968 did the U.S. Supreme Court finally strike down state anti-evolution laws. Such laws, it ruled, serve no purpose except to support Christianity, a religious purpose that violates the First Amendment ban on government establishment of religion (*Epperson v. Arkansas*, 1968).

Recognizing that the teaching of evolution could no longer be forbidden, creationists devised new legislation requiring that any public school curriculum that included the teaching of evolution must balance such teaching with equal attention to "scientific creationism," a version of Young-Earth creationism that makes no mention of supernatural causation or God. To pre-

sent only the evolutionary perspective, they argued, is to indoctrinate students in a single point of view. Academic freedom requires the balanced presentation of both points of view, thus encouraging students to think for themselves and make their own judgments of what to believe.

There is a superficial attractiveness to the idea that in case of controversy the fair thing to do is to give equal time to each point of view. In a debate between two political candidates, it would normally seem fair and best to give each equal time to make an opening statement and equal time to answer questions. In cases of scientific or other controversy, however, there are rarely just two viewpoints, and the various viewpoints are usually not all equally plausible.

In *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987), upholding earlier decisions from lower courts, the U.S. Supreme Court found that scientific creationism did not qualify as genuine science. Thus the purported goal of protecting academic freedom by balancing two scientific theories was a sham. The intent of balanced treatment laws, like that of the earlier generation of anti-evolution laws, was to promote a particular religion. The new laws, like the earlier ones, were an unconstitutional establishment of religion by the government.

Although the legal response to creationism continued to focus on the First Amendment issue of religious indoctrination in public schools, it is worth noting some broader epistemological considerations. The conception of academic freedom as balanced treatment of two viewpoints is rooted in a subjectivist epistemology. The subjectivist recognizes that we cannot always resolve a dispute between two viewpoints by determining which one is correct. But subjectivists are too quick to assume that the two most obvious viewpoints must always be equally plausible and are the only views we need to consider.

(See *Creation*, page 6.)

Creation (continued from page 5.)

Traditional conceptions of academic freedom, in contrast, construe academic freedom as freedom to pursue the truth in teaching, learning, and inquiry. This is consistent with a rationalist epistemology, in which truth is not a final outcome but rather an epistemic ideal. The curriculum is not simply a collection of truths, but neither is it simply a collection of opinions. Teachers and other experts devise the curriculum on the basis of academic considerations. This includes decisions about what to include and how much time to allocate to various ideas and sources of information.

Having failed to stop the teaching of evolution through anti-evolution laws and then through laws mandating equal time for creation science, the creation movement turned in the 1990s to “intelligent design,” a doctrine claiming that some biological systems are so irreducibly complex that they could not have evolved from simpler systems through a process of natural selection. Given that such systems could only be the outcome of intelligent design, science must posit an intelligent designer. And who might that designer be? Don’t ask. And how old is the earth? Never mind about that either.

The intelligent design movement not only avoided commitment to specific religious views but also avoided commitment to a young earth. And it did provide evidence of some remarkable biological structures and the highly sophisticated functioning of such structures. Thus it was not as easy to refute as the older “scientific creationism.” Even if intelligent design isn’t the best theory, it still ranks as a scientific theory, doesn’t it? And if not, why not?

These issues call for some serious philosophy of science. Philosophers of science have in fact long been deeply concerned with the creation/evolution issue. Among other things, philosophers have helped clarify the epistemological distinctions

between science and other human endeavors, including religion.

This is not just a matter for philosophers, however. Understanding the nature of science is crucial for students. The creation/evolution controversy could be taught as part of the politics of science, raising issues of religion, education, and democracy. Students should know about the politics of science as well as knowing about science. It is crucial, however, that they understand the epistemic distinction between these, and that too is part of what science education should address.

But these are matters for expert discussion about the science curriculum, not for legislative manipulations. In *Kitzmiller v. Dover* (2005), Intelligent Design was rejected as a spiffed-up version of scientific creationism rather than a legitimate scientific theory. The decision was not appealed. Thus the establishment clause of the First Amendment, having prevailed over both anti-evolution laws and balanced treatment laws, now prevailed over the intelligent design movement.

Opposition to evolutionary theory continues, however. In what may be considered a fourth generation of efforts to undermine the teaching of evolution, the new creationist bills and laws focus on the academic freedom of teachers in public elementary and secondary education. They require governing boards and administrators to recognize the responsibility of teachers to help students understand and analyze ideas presented in the approved curriculum. This includes respecting their authority to present and discuss the “strengths and weaknesses” of evolution and alternative views. Such laws also provide for discussion of “strengths and weaknesses” with regard to theories of climate change and sometimes other aspects of science deemed problematic.

It is easy to dismiss this as the next generation of creationism, broadened to include other anti-scientific trends such as objections to climate science. But it is important to note that these new laws recognize the responsi-

bility of schools to their students. They require governing boards and administrators to create an environment that encourages active exploration of ideas, respect for diverse opinions, concern for relevant evidence, and the development of critical thinking. This is the sort of academic environment in which objectivists achieve subjectivist insights and subjectivists move on toward rationalism.

The problem with the current generation of anti-creationist legislation is not that it promotes academic freedom for teachers and students. The problem is that this freedom is limited to particular scientific topics. State legislators may believe that scientific conclusions about evolution or global climate change are more questionable than conclusions in other areas of science, but they have no special expertise or authority to determine this. Science educators should discuss the scientific strengths and weaknesses of all ideas that merit such treatment. Their academic judgments should not be constrained by laws that single out particular topics or theories for special question.

Laws protecting the academic freedom of teachers and students, moreover, should not single out science. There is no reason to suggest to students that what they learn in history or literature classes is the unquestioned truth or that scientific knowledge is less justified or more controversial than knowledge in other domains. Teachers should be free to present the strengths and weaknesses of all ideas in all areas of study, and students should be encouraged to think critically in all their classes.

From D. Moshman, Epistemic cognition and development: The psychology of justification and truth, to be published by Psychology Press in December 2014.

AFCON GOES TO NCTE ANNUAL CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON

By Frank Edler

The idea for having an AFCON session on how to start state-wide academic freedom or anti-censorship coalitions at the NCTE annual convention in 2014 originated at our dinner for ReLeah Cossett Lent on the evening of our annual meeting in 2013. ReLeah, chair of NCTE's Standing Committee Against Censorship, was excited about the prospect since she and Millie Davis, Director of NCTE's Intellectual Freedom Center, were interested in expanding the Center. Having an academic freedom coalition on the state level provides a first line of defense against censorship issues when they arise. Bob Haller, a founding member and previous president of AFCON, and Peggy Adair, secretary and long-time AFCON veteran volunteered to go. Later Bob Hal-

ler was unable to go and Frank Edler volunteered to go in his place.

I was quite taken aback when I read the two pieces Dave Moshman was kind enough to provide me on the history of AFCON. The two pieces are titled "Tenth Anniversary of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska" and the other is "A Brief History of AFCON on the Occasion of its 15th Anniversary Year 2003." I discovered that AFCON had given a presentation once before at an NCTE annual convention in October of 1989. Mel Krutz gave the presentation about the history of AFCON and "questions that can be posed about censorship and curriculum development." Much to my surprise I also discovered that AFCON grew out of the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English (NeCTE), the state affiliate of

NCTE, so our presentation in Washington this November will truly be a kind of homecoming!

Over the spring, Joan Bertin, Executive Director of the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), expressed an interest in the session and agreed to participate in whatever capacity she could. Also, ReLeah was kind enough to draft the first version of the session proposal as a placeholder on the program until we could organize the session in greater detail. The final shape of the session turned out to be a panel composed of Joan Bertin, Peggy Adair, and Frank Edler. ReLeah graciously agreed to moderate the panel. Below is the final version of the description for the AFCON/NCAC session in the NCTE 2014 program:

Title:

ACADEMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS: CREATE AN ANTI-CENSORSHIP COALITION IN YOUR STATE!

Abstract:

When censorship happens, it's usually too late! Learn how to organize your defense by forming a state anti-censorship coalition. Nebraska has had one for 25 years. Members of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska and the National Coalition Against Censorship provide guidelines for establishing a coalition. Free anti-censorship t-shirts.

Moderator: ReLeah Lent, Chair, NCTE Standing Committee Against Censorship

Panel Members:

Joan Bertin, Executive Director of the National Coalition Against Censorship
Peggy Adair, Secretary of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska
Frank Edler, Past president of Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

Recent links to Dave Moshman's Huffington Post blog:

Colleges: Drop Your Speech Codes (Aug. 2014)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-moshman/colleges-drop-your-speech-codes_b_5663108.html

Academic Freedom at the University of Illinois (Sept. 2014)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-moshman/academic-freedom-at-the-u_b_5745702.html

AFCON SPEAKER'S BUREAU (As of December 2007)

Peggy Adair: "Banned Books, Black Arm-bands, 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"

mshortt@inebraska.com

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.academicfreedomnebraska.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;

AFCON is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

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 December 13, 2014, issue is November 24, 2014.**

Send to Tom Black, editor, 610 West Park, West Point, NE 68788 or wpc6296@cablone.net

AFCON

515 North Thomas Avenue
Oakland, NE 68045.

Mailing
Address
Label

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 (\$120) 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 (\$15) 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**