



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



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A Quarterly of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

June 21, 2002

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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—Linda Beckstead

It is a common belief in America that prayer and religion don't exist in public schools. What many do not understand is that many religions are typically studied and songs are sung from a variety of cultures, and as the old joke goes, many a prayer is probably said before a difficult test.

This myth also perpetuates the idea that God's name is not to be uttered during school hours.

As a public high school teacher, I can attest that these are all what I consider to be an urban legend.

The word God has not been blackened out of the *Pledge of Allegiance*, which students and staff in my school say weekly, while other teachers opt to say it daily such as those in JROTC. *The Pledge of Allegiance* is a voluntary activity, so although it is recited at various times during the week, students have the right to choose not to participate.

And how could religion be ignored in so many of the upper level literature anthologies and novels that often contain symbolic religious references. A teacher would be negligent to ignore this symbolism in deference to leaving religion out of the public school.

The word God and religious references continue to exist in music, and many public school choir directors often combine religious and secular selections at choral concerts. At my own son's elementary concert this year, the music represented a nice eclectic cultural selection.

Our high school has added a World Religions class to its social studies curriculum that includes guest speakers and tours of various temples, sanctuaries, and cathedrals. Students who enroll in this class do so voluntarily to extend their understanding of differing religions through direct contact with various religious leaders.

Perhaps the students in my school district are

fortunate to have so many opportunities to study a variety of religions, but locally, the myth regarding religion was exemplified in the Woodbine, Iowa, case. A federal judge banned "The Lord's Prayer" at graduation following a lawsuit by two sophomore choir members whose family is atheist. And although it was reported that spontaneous prayers or the singing of "The Lord's Prayer" did not occur during the ceremony, the opinion of some of the public was mixed during the days leading up to Woodbine's graduation.

In Public Pulse letters in the *Omaha World-Herald*, many complained that the judge's ruling was another attempt to keep God out of school. Or, in one letter, the writer suggested that since Madeline O'Hare was now dead, that atheism had lost its leader and therefore its credibility and that prayer should return to public school.

But the writers of these letters forget that our public schools are supported by public tax dollars and that these institutions must honor the separation of church and state. "The Lord's Prayer" is a particularly Christian prayer and could not be argued to be otherwise. The writers also forget that leaving "The Lord's Prayer" out of graduation exercises does not diminish anyone's right to pursue his or her own religion. Prayer and the promotion of a particular religion is simply not an activity to be sanctioned by a public school official.

Instead, this means that schools should continue to create academic opportunities that help our students become knowledgeable, critically thinking citizens who have been exposed to many views of the world. And, hopefully, these students will support those ideals in the First Amendment including the separation of church and state, but also dispelling the myth that religion can't exist in public school curriculums.

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings, July 13, September 14, October, 12
Loren Corey Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings

March 9, 2002—

Dave Moshman reminded the Board it was time for annual dues notices to be mailed. Laurie Lee will ask Linda Beckstead to check on progress.

Moshman distributed a news item that LB 982 (the "Americanism" bill) is bottled up in committee.

Moshman reported on a letter he sent to Omaha Central High school regarding the alleged censoring of the school newspaper; no reply at present. Moshman also reported on two news stories outside of Nebraska, on a Blaine, WA, student expelled for writing a poem with a school violence theme (expulsion upheld eventually in Federal courts,) and one regarding a New Jersey student forced to remove the words "bad ass" from his wheelchair.

Big Red Day: the AFCON goal is to raise the awareness of academic freedom among the freshmen at UNL. Lee and Dwayne Ball are in charge. Lee will register AFCON for a table. Moshman will provide examples of real situations in which academic freedom was an issue for possible inclusion in a postcard-type questionnaire.

Banned Books Week: Dave Kubicek volunteered to lead the effort with Lee assisting. The Board discussed working with public libraries and having a drawing for free banned books donated by bookstores.

April 13, 2002—

Cathi McMurtry reported \$1350.48 in the account. She will send statements to those organizations that have not yet paid their 2002 dues.

Peggy Adair reported LB 982 and LB 1083 are still in committee and effectively killed. She also referred to an *Omaha World-Herald* article that reported on AFCON Board member Bob Haller's testimony against LB 982.

Moshman reported on a ballot initiative in an Illinois town with a pub-

lic school of 3700 students. The town was asked to approve a "core knowledge" curriculum. The district voted against it on the grounds of limiting the freedom of educational professionals; the initiative failed.

Moshman also reported on an incident in which UNL football assistant coach Ron Brown was denied further consideration for a position at Stanford because of his religious views (conservative Christian.) The UNL student newspaper reported on the incident in an editorial criticizing Stanford and the responses of Stanford officials.

Dave Kubicek was elected the AFCON secretary upon the resignation of Peggy Williams.

May 11, 2002—

McMurtry reported a balance of \$1233.03 in the treasury.

Discussion of offering membership in lieu of services for organizations like Nebraska Center for the Book because their \$25 membership category is no longer available. Suggestions were made to grandfather the Nebraska Center for the Book, but not to continue this option.

Beckstead reported there is still an adversarial situation at Central (Omaha) High School. The journalism advisor appreciates AFCON's support.

Ball reported that AFCON will have an ad in the program for the ACLU annual dinner to be held Wednesday, May 29. The meeting is open to the public. The cost is \$35.00 per person.

Moshman reported on an anonymous letter accusing a James A. Lake Award for Academic Freedom panel member of discrimination. The *Daily Nebraskan* used the letter as the basis for a front-page story, although there was no evidence supporting the accusation. The AFCON Board decided to make no response to the story, which appeared the last day of the last week of classes.

Moshman also reported that UNL wants to build a quantitative record of the top 10 journals in each field and has asked each department to compile a list. Discussion: Although UNL claims it wouldn't affect professor evaluations,

such a list could put pressure on academics to publish or perish, and it could hurt English professors who publish novels and others who work in areas in which the major journals aren't interested. No action was taken, but Moshman will monitor the situation and keep the Board informed.

Moshman reported on the controversy surrounding the Center for Afghan studies at UNO, which is producing textbooks for school children in Afghanistan. It has been suggested that the government is using UNO as a front to get the books to Afghanistan.

Moshman gave an update on the Intelligent Design (the politically correct term for Creationism) controversy, reporting on a Department of Education hearing about teaching other theories than Evolution in the public schools.

Moshman reported on an editorial in the *Journal Star* that used the case of a Culler Middle School teacher's firing for allegedly making a racial slur to proclaim essentially that the way to teach tolerance is to have policies of zero tolerance, an amazing paradox. Discussion: Should AFCON approach the *Journal Star* about writing a regular column on academic freedom for the paper's "Homeroom" section? The Board will return to the discussion at the next meeting, possibly taking action at the beginning of the next school year.

Big Red Day: It will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Sunday, August 25, 2002. Lee will reserve a table for \$40. Deadline for cancellation is July 19. A \$75 charge will be assessed if a cancellation notification is late, although the \$40 will be refunded. Barbara Cornelius will look into adding the proposal on the AFCON Web site.

501 (c) (3) was tabled until June.

Banned Books Week is September 21-28. Cornelius, Mel Krutz, and Kubicek are on the committee. The Board discussed ideas for handouts.

Krutz offered to hold the June AFCON meeting at her farm with a potluck dinner following the 10 a.m. meeting. Families are welcome. Krutz will notify members of details.

Introductory remarks by David Moshman before the presentation of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award to Professor George Wolf, April 30, 2002

The James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award is presented annually to an individual affiliated with UNL “for helping preserve the most basic freedom of all, the freedom to seek and communicate the truth.” The recipient is selected by the Academic Senate on the basis of a recommendation from the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award Committee, which this year consisted of James McShane, Ezekiel Bahar, and myself, David Moshman. This year’s recipient, Professor George Wolf, was nominated by Professor Fran Kaye of the English Department; the nomination received strong and convincing support from four additional individuals in several units who are familiar with diverse aspects of his work.

As a member of the UNL Academic Senate, George has played a major role in protecting and enhancing academic freedom at UNL. “What George brings to the Senate and to all of the university committees on which he dutifully serves,” wrote Professor John Wunder of the History Department, “is an intense commitment to academic freedom. He offers resolutions that protect it. He speaks forthrightly on issues that impact it. He anticipates matters that involve it . . .

George Wolf on the Senate means that academic freedom has a guardian . . . who will stand steadfast.”

In addition to his work in the Senate, George has vigorously exercised his own academic freedom in his teaching, his coordination of campus events, and his work as a book review editor. In doing so, he has simultaneously enhanced the academic freedom of his students and colleagues by increasing the diversity of perspectives and experiences available to them. Although his intent in this work has clearly been to educate rather than to create controversy, he has not let potential controversy stop him from these educational efforts. In particular, his “unflinching courage in facing all attempts to censor or later to censor the production of [the play] *Unidentified Human Remains*,” wrote Fran Kaye, represents “one of the purest defenses of academic freedom at UNL.” A graduating senior wrote “the trials and tribulations of *Human Remains* is the most important thing I’ve been part of during my academic career. This show changed my life.” In this case and others, wrote English Professor Stephen Hilliard, George “has ventured into . . . essential and risky areas where academic freedom is

not a given to be defended, but a right to be won.”

The special focus of George’s work has been to enhance access to the voices and perspectives of sexual minorities. Not only has this work “supported hundreds of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals,” noted Fran Kaye, but it has also “helped thousands of heterosexual students, faculty members, and other citizens of the UNL community expand their view of human diversity.” Supporters of GLBT students and faculty sometimes argue that universities should create a more positive environment for sexual minorities by censoring and punish homophobic speech. Supporters of academic freedom often respond that, rather than censor or punish objectionable views, universities should expand the diversity of perspectives expressed and discussed. That’s easy to say, but George is among the most active and effective of those who have done it.

For all of these reasons, we are delighted to present Professor George Wolf with the 2002 James A. Lake academic Freedom Award.

Remarks by GEORGE WOLF upon receipt of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award

My enormous gratitude is what I want to express to you first, my colleagues in the Senate and on the Nominating Committee, for allotting me a place in the company of those you’ve selected for the James A. Lake Award in the past. Gratitude, and a sense of my own puniness in the league of those extraordinary men and women who’ve safeguarded academic freedom at UNL with such courage and passion and at such great cost. Their collective efforts, combined year after year with your own, are what have kept faculty governance alive on this campus and preserved our ability to teach and do research according to our own intellectual commitments and passions, often in the face of pressures from both within and without the University to do otherwise. Accepting this award in your name, on your behalf, as a representative of your own enduring efforts at sustaining and nurturing academic freedom, helps assuage my sense of

unworthiness.

Toward the end of Alice Walker’s second novel, *Meridian*, the title character, Meridian Hill, says to the former Civil Rights worker, Truman Held:

. . . “Besides, revolution would not begin. . . with an act of murder (wars might begin in that way,) but with teaching.”

“Oh yes, teaching, said Truman scornfully”

“I would like to teach again,” said Meidian. “I respect it, when it’s done right. After all, people want to be taught how to live. . .”

“And do you think you could teach them?”

“I don’t know. I imagine good teaching as a circle of earnest people sitting down to ask each other meaningful questions. I don’t see it as a handing down of answers. So much of what passes for teaching is merely a pointing out of what items to want.”

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George Wolf

(Continued from page 3.)

Going to college was a unique event in the insular village life of my family, as it probably was for many of you and continues to be for large numbers of our students. My guess is that most families, whether situated in crowded places like the Brooklyn of my childhood or any small town in the Nebraska Sandhills, are insular villages to a great extent; and consequently our encounters with the terribly complicated world outside the family village are often shocking, certainly challenging, and potentially more liberating than most of us had ever been led to expect.

Brooklyn College in the late 1950's astonished me. Imagine a place where you could carry books out in plain sight without the dread of getting beaten up. A place where people could argue about Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" in Robert Sen-nish's no-holds-barred freshman English class without the fear of humiliation or any sense that what we were burrowing into didn't profoundly matter. After all, students like us, sitting-in at segregated lunch counters throughout the South, were getting beaten up, and jailed, for practicing what Thoreau was preaching. In a required Classics course, Ms. Golden encouraged us to take Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's dysfunctional family seriously, personally, Oedipus's too, which gave me some saving perspective on my own family. And so on, and so on. I don't think I ever heard the term "Academic Freedom" mentioned in those days, and if I did it couldn't have meant more to me than the other strange expressions colleges used, like "matriculation," "baccalaureate," and "academic affairs." But this was the 1950's, and neither Brooklyn College, nor the University of Nebraska, as the courageous editor of the *Daily Nebraskan* back then, Ruth Thone, can tell you, had escaped the assaults on academic freedom unleashed by the House Un-American Activities Committee and Senator Joe McCarthy, and abetted zealously by local vigilante groups. Oblivious to me and most of my fellow students, the freedom we took for granted in our classes to say whatever was on our minds about what we read and studied, to confront and question conventional values at every turn, to confront and question our professors, to thumb our noses at "taking cover" during nationwide nuclear defense drills, or even to voice reservations about "liking Ike," that freedom came at a heavy price, one that conscientious faculty members like Frederic Ewen at Brooklyn College and Eugene Anderson at the University of Nebraska found themselves willing to pay.

What I want to say about "Academic Freedom" briefly this afternoon has to do with what goes on, or maybe doesn't go on, in our classrooms, the meaningful questions we dare to ask and encourage our students to ask there, and our tendency, in the mist of the proliferating demands on time and strength we're all experiencing, to settle for handing down answers.

Let me tell you a story, or snippets of stories, my students tell me when I meet with them, one-on-one as we say, in my office:

"I came alive in that "Women's Literature" class. At first I was scared. The professor gave us a letter the first day telling us about herself and what she hoped to accomplish in the

course and inviting us to respond in a letter about who we were and what we expected. What scared me, really scared me, was her saying she was a lesbian and that some of the works we'd be reading were by lesbian authors, people I'd never heard of like Adrienne Rich and Audre Lords. Would she require me to like them, or say I liked them? Would she require me to be dishonest if I found them immoral, or incomprehensible? Would I have to fake it? I learned more in that class about who I am, and what in my background shaped me, and who I want to become than in any other subject I've studied. I learned quickly I didn't have to worry about faking the right attitudes or answers to her or to the other students in the room. Somehow, she created the kind of atmosphere where anyone could say anything and not feel put down or demeaned, even when people disagreed. I don't know exactly how she did it, but I know the trust I felt throughout the tough reading and discussing we did freed me to look really closely at where my values as a female student at UNL actually came from and what I wanted to do with what I now knew."

"Two bubble exams and a final. No writing. No discussion. Hell, there are over a "fill in the blank" of us in the room on a good day, and yes, I sit up front and take notes and get something out of it, but I wonder if it has to be this way, if "fill in the blank" can't be taught with some input from us, with a chance to say something about how I can, or maybe can't, reconcile my religious beliefs with what I'm learning in "fill in the blank." Sometimes I think I'm just racking up credit hours the way grandma used to collect Green Stamps, my prize, my diploma. And I don't even know what I want to do after graduation, despite my majoring in "fill in the blank." You know, a lot of us feel this way."

We in this Senate all know the increasing pressures we're under, day after day, though administrators may claim otherwise, to stint on our teaching, to stint on our personal lives, for pity's sake, in order to focus on the things that most gratify the managerial mind-set: federal grants, swiftness of publication, corporate contracts, patents, technological transfer, anything that can be easily quantified in dollars or numbers, then turned into that supreme administrative fiction: Quality Indicators. At the same time we're perpetually evaluating ourselves, our colleagues, our chairs and deans and directors, sometimes the same person twice the same month ("Well, it was time for the one-year and the five-year review") at a cost that somebody has to pay, and I'm afraid, as I look at myself, that the easiest victims, apart from myself, are my students through the diminishing time I can give to their writing, their ideas, what I think they need to be thinking about, their struggles to figure out what they want to do with their lives and how they might tone down the cacophony from the class of what they've been told to want and what their own bliss discloses. If academic freedom means anything, it means being free to attend to the needs of our students' intellects and imaginations, unfettered not only by political expedience ("You can't teach that; it'll scare the horses, or the voters,") but by the managerial demands of those who long ago pretty much abandoned teaching.

George Wolf

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There are Quality Indicators, complete with numbers like LB215, LB19, and Initiative 416, that reveal something more momentous to many of us as teachers, students, and staff at this University than the titles of this week's top-ten journals or presses in our fields will ever tell us. And better than any Climatological Survey, no matter how well devised and intended, those Indicators help explain why lesbian and gay and minority and women faculty have already begun leaving UNL and why so many of our very best students, winners of Truman scholarships and other prestigious awards soon to be tallied into our official Quality Indicators, are packing their bags and pulling out of the state as fast as they can. This is bad news for all of us, though it may not even surface as news as we fritter our lives away surveying the climate in our department and unit neighborhoods and ignoring what the weather's like for almost twenty-three thousand students.

As a tenured professor limping toward retirement, protected by academic freedom and the First Amendment, I can say these things publicly without much fear or trembling. But that's hardly the case for our untenured colleagues and for the growing cadre of lecturers instructors, and graduate assistants who are teaching so many of our courses. We must find the means, here at UNL, to protect their academic freedom in ways that embolden them, wherever appropriate to their disciplines, to make the controversies of the day essential components of their dialogues with their students and the meaningful questions they ask of them, everything from stem cell research, biomedical cloning, and human evolution, to racism, economic ideology, sustainable agriculture, deep ecology, gender, sexuality, and human rights.

Philosopher Hazel Barnes, the translator of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, says the essential task of education is keeping the future open. We live in turbulent times, as tonight's newscasts and tomorrow's papers will agonizingly remind us. Academic freedom may seem a self-indulged

concept and practice weighed against the dead in the Middle East, and Afghanistan, and the city that embraces the borough of my birth. Yet keeping the future open, not allowing the tragic shortsightedness of governments or corporations, religious or political ideologies to foreclose on human and natural history, requires us all to exercise the freedom we still have, the freedom we labor to maintain, to ask any question, to follow any intellectual path, and to encourage our students to do the same, as we discuss truthfully with them what our individual disciplines now tell us about the nature of physical, human, and social reality. And then there's that further step I believe we as teachers are required to take; to inquire continually of ourselves and our students what we as citizens of this planet are responsible for doing with what we know.

A theater instructor in Florida was fired this semester for producing Moisés Kaufman's *The Laramie Project*, a play about the murder of Matthew Shepard and its aftermath, which I finished teaching in my eight o'clock "Sex Roles in Literature" class this morning. Near the close of the play, the Narrator tells us that Rebecca Hilliker, a member of the University of Wyoming's theater department, was planning a production of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on American Themes*. Rebecca's lines, I think, tell us something I know I need to be reminded of, about the uses to which we put the academic freedom we jointly work so hard to sustain:

REBECCA HILLIKER: "... We have a lot of work to do . . . an obligation to find ways to reach our students . . . And the question is, How do we Move, how do we reach a whole state where there is some really deep-seated hostility toward gays? How do you reach them?

This [play] is the beginning . . ."

For this Academic Freedom Award bearing the name of James A. Lake, a professor who magnificently embodied your steadfast commitments to free inquiry and to keeping the future open, you have my deepest thanks.

UNIVERSITY REPORTS—Dwayne Ball

This is the continuing saga of violations of, and threats to, academic freedom on university campuses nationwide. My sources range from the Chronicle of Higher Education to the national and local news media to the A.C.L.U. and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (F.I.R.E.)

Iowa State University: Don't dare publicly question discrimination at ISU! The head of the school of journalism at ISU received written complaints from a number of white professors questioning why less-experienced minority faculty were receiving better pay and perks than their more-experienced white counterparts. In the publicity

fracas that ensued, three of the four minority professors resigned, citing "hostility." Regardless of the facts, of course, one cannot have resignations of minority faculty without heads rolling—someone has to be blamed, and in this case, the head and associate head were forced to step down. The entire question of discrimination on the basis of race—a worthy discussion—turned into a witch hunt for the administrators who could not stifle the discussion before it became public. Public perception of the university trumps the search for truth. (Fox News "Tongue Tied" on line, www.

foxnews.com, May 2002.)

University of South Carolina: To graduate in Women's Studies at USC, you have to take Women's Studies 797, a seminar. Professor Lynn Weber, the instructor, has a unique requirement on her syllabus: in order to participate in class discussion and receive the 20 % of the class grade for it, one must "acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist," and that "we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group and members of other groups . . ." and so

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University Report —

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on. In other words, agree with these fundamental ideological points of view or risk being denied a degree in Women's Studies at USC. Ideology trumps academic freedom and open discussion. (F.I.R.E. website, www.thefire.org, May 2002.)

George Washington University: Vice President Louis Katz of GWU must have thought his campus was a pretty dangerous place, when he asked Pinkerton Security to establish a 24-hour hotline called the "Compliance Line" in February 2002. Its stated purpose is to "report unethical behavior." Anyone can call up and make accusations of anything about anyone, anonymously. Presumably, complaints from assault to cheating on tests to voicing politically incorrect opinions in class are all fair game. Terrifyingly, these allegations are investigated without notifying the accused. For two of the many historical precedents for this sort of anonymous informer/investigation system, you may recall Venice in the time of the Doges, or the USSR

under Stalin. Despite strong criticism from the faculty senate and campus publications, and an admission by the university president that Katz was "a little aggressive" in setting up the Compliance Line, it remains operative. (F.I.R.E.)

University of California—Berkeley: A campus Hispanic group (MECha,) that receives \$20,000 per year from student fees, called for revolt against "gringos" (as they referred to them) and the liberation of the North American continent by non-whites. The group was criticized in the Berkeley Conservative Foundation's monthly magazine, the *California Patriot*, for bigotry and for setting back civil rights for all. Just the campus right and left taking potshots at each other, you suppose? The usual harmless over-excited post-adolescent ideological mud-slinging? Well, it goes beyond that. The conservative students were personally and individually harassed, received death threats, and had their publication offices burglarized in February. All 3,000 copies of the magazine were stolen.

Now, this is sadly not unusual at Berkeley or other campuses. At Berkeley, the home of the 1960's free

speech movement, leftist students have harassed and threatened conservative speakers and prevented them from speaking, and have stolen and burned conservative publications over the past few years. The one bright spot is that the University chancellor at least verbally condemned the most recent threats and burglary as "antithetical to the values that form the foundation of our democracy." We will be interested to see how the university deals with the perpetrators in the unlikely event they are ever caught and prosecuted. In terms of university-sponsored punishment, do you suppose death threats, burglary, and grand theft might possibly rise to the level of sexual harassment? (*Washington Times*, March 6, 2002.)

Academia Nuts: This is the same campus, by the way, that has a student-taught, university-sponsored class in "male sexuality," that, as reported by the student newspaper, engaged in an orgy at a class party, and went to a strip club where the instructor had sex on stage. The class is currently on probation, whatever that means. (*Collegiate Network*, April 2002.)

Key Court Cases on Student Freedom of Speech

Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 1969

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a public school could not discipline three students for wearing black armbands to school to publicize their objections to the Vietnam War. Majority opinion decided First Amendment rights are available to teachers and students.

Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier, 1988

The U.S. Supreme Court case examined the extent to which educators could exercise editorial control over the contents of a high school paper produced by a journalism class and funded by the school. The court decided that school newspapers were not a public forum by designation or tradition and school officials were entitled to regulate contents in a reasonable manner.

Desilets vs. Clearview Board of Education, 1994

School officials withheld two movie reviews from an after-school newspaper at a junior high because the movies were Rated. A lower court ruled that school officials violated the students' First Amendment rights, because, although the newspaper was not a public forum, school officials did not demonstrate why censorship (as authorized by Hazelwood) was necessary.

Evolution vs. Creationism/Intelligent Design

Some want the Nebraska State Board of Education to allow for the teaching of theories other than evolution. The State Board already insists that evolution be taught as theory, not objective fact. Obviously, evolution is a much discussed topic, generally between those who accept Darwin's theory of natural selection and those who believe in creationism. One aspect that never seems to emerge in the debate, yet the one most fascinating to me is the perception of the word "theory." The creationists define "theory" as "one-man's" opinion, to infer conjecture, supposition, inconclusive information. The State Board "defines" it as "not objective fact." To a person versed in the scientific method, theory refers to systematically organized knowledge applicable in a relatively wide variety of circumstances to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain the nature or behavior of a specified set of phenomena. A scientific theory consists of a set of facts arranged according to a hypothesis. Evolution IS a body of fact, accepted as such by almost all scientists; the debate is not about the factual theory but how the facts are arranged. While Charles Darwin spoke of natural selection, Stephen A Gould spoke of punctuated equilibrium. The "process" of evolution is the "theory—" be it natural selection or genetic drift or mutation or punctuated equilibrium. Evolution IS the fact. Federal courts ruled that there was no scientific evidence for creationism and that these views constituted a religious and not a scientific explanation of life, thus it is unconstitutional to include creationism or intelligent design in the public school curriculum. —Tom Black, Editor

AFCON SPEAKER'S BUREAU (As December 2001)

Dwayne Ball: "Threats to Academic Freedom at Universities"
3120 Jasper Ct., Lincoln, NE 68516
adball@alltel.net

Linda Beckstead: "Freedom of Student Press Issues"
611 North 42nd Street, Omaha, NE 68131
BecksteadL@aol.com

Bob Haller: "Money Talks: Ideas in the Political Process" and "Religion, Intellectual Freedom, and the University"
4000 S. 56th St., Lincoln, NE 68506
rhaller1@unl.edu

John Bender: "The Nebraska Student Freedom of Expression Bill"
3609 S. 20 St., Lincoln, NE 68508
jrbender@unl.edu

David Moshman: "Principles of Academic Freedom" and "Student Rights"
1901 Pepper Ave., Lincoln, NE 68502
dmoshman1@unl.edu

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

NEW ADDRESS FOR THE AFCON WEB SITE <http://www.NebrWesleyan.edu/offices/library/Afcon>

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

"About 15 years ago, I began presenting professional development workshops on student rights, social responsibilities, and how teaching the two can be used as a framework for class-

room management. . . . One teacher came up to me after a daylong workshop and, with great anxiety in her voice, asked, "Do I have to teach students their rights? Can't I just teach

them their responsibilities?"

—Barbara Landau, "Educating for Citizenship," *Education Week*, March 6, 2002

FOR SALE BY AFCON

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

T-shirts with a Paul Fell "banned books" design; Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL; \$15.00. Packaging and postage: \$2.00 each.

Note cards with a Paul Fell design; \$1.50; four for \$5.00. Packaging and postage: \$0.75 per packet.

Reader's Theatre Script of a TANGLED ISSUE: Student Freedom of Expression. \$10.00 buys the book with rights to duplicate the script and produce the play. Packaging and postage: \$2.00 each.

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 **September 13, 2002**, issue is **August 26, 2002**.

AFCON

515 North Thomas Avenue
Oakland, NE 68045.

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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 and one vote in the election of officers and at the annual meeting, and eligibility for office and chairing standing committees and 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**