



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



Volume VIII, Number 3

A Quarterly of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

September 17, 2004

AFCON OFFICERS

Peggy Adair
President

David Moshman
President-Elect

Laurie Lee
Past President

Dwayne Ball
Secretary

Cathi McMurtry
Treasurer

David Moshman
Policy Coordinator

Peggy Adair
Legislative Liaison

Barbara Cornelius
Webmaster

Tom Black
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—Peggy Adair

He will be four years old in September. He knows his colors; he can sing “The Wheels on the Bus,” and he loves *Clifford the Big Red Dog*. His grandmother bought him a new pair of shoes and a backpack just his size. Deng Guk starts pre-kindergarten next Thursday. School! Deng is so excited he bounces up and down as he shows me his brand new box of crayons.

Where Deng’s family comes from, southern Sudan, there is no school. There are only civil war and famine, mass killings and deadly disease. Deng’s grandfather was murdered by the government-sanctioned militia. Deng’s uncle was pushed off a cliff. His mother and older brother lived in a crowded, squalid refugee camp for a year, waiting for the money and the paperwork that would get them safe passage to America.

Deng lives in a tiny house in north Omaha, with his mother, two sisters, grandmother, aunt, three cousins, and two uncles. It is not unusual for so many to live in so small a space. The Sudanese are very protective of each other, and they think nothing of sharing what little they have.

While the Sudanese know they are reasonably safe here in America, their tormented past sometimes sur-

faces to haunt them. “Do not answer the front door alone,” Grandmother admonished Deng not long ago. “It might be the Enemy.”

On a bright summer morning, Deng forgot his grandmother’s caution, and answered a knock on the door by himself, to find two uniformed utility workers standing on the front porch. Deng screamed and ran to hide under his grandmother’s bed. He thought they were the police, coming to take him away. In Sudan, when they come to take you away, you never come back.

The Sudanese who come here from their homeland are bright, ambitious, and they understand the value of education. Everyone in Deng’s household will be attending school this fall. Even Grandmother is enrolled in adult education courses. She wants to get her GED, so she can go to college. Her oldest son is working on a degree in computer science. Her daughter will be a senior in high school. Deng lives in a house full of good role models.

Deng tells me he wants to become a doctor when he grows up. He wants to help people like his grandmother. She has severe health problems related to years of stress and malnutrition. (Continued to Page 3.)

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings, September 11, October 9, and November 13
Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings—Dwayne Ball

June 12, 2004—President-Elect Dave Moshman welcomed Joanne "Chappie" Chapburn as a new board member. Karen Buckley volunteered to take minutes.

Minutes: Minutes for the meetings of April 10 and May 8 were distributed. Neal moved, and Buckley seconded to approve the minutes for the April meeting. Buckley moved, and Haller seconded to approve minutes for the May meeting. Both motions passed unanimously.

Treasurer: The financial statement was distributed, showing a balance of \$2015.03 as of June 11. A motion to approve the report made by Krutz and seconded by Haller passed unanimously. Discussion was held concerning possibly exchanging dues for advertising in *Fine Lines*.

President's Report: A written report from Peggy Adair was read. She was sending Moshman a copy of the League of Women Voters' "Voters' Guide" as an example of types of questions and format that might be used by AFCON. Adair also reported getting good feedback on the Speakers' Bureau. Mark Weddleton has offered to present on the USA Patriot Act and Bob Haller's new topics include "How Books Can Harm You: Lessons of the Censors" and "Free the Students! Why Higher Education Needs a New Movement." She urged board members to encourage members of their representative organizations to become part of AFCON's Speakers Bureau and will begin compiling a flier in mid-July. Laurie Lee, Bob Haller, Tom Black and Tim Butz are committee members for AFCON's Banned Book Week observance in 2005.

Newsletter: Bob Haller reported that the newsletter was ready to be printed. The member organization to be featured will be the Nebraska Center for the Book.

Membership Reports: Neal, who is retiring, is searching for a representative of

L E A

For NCB, Krutz reported on the upcoming book festival this September in Kearney. She also said that her new book would be off the press by about July 1st, and that it is primarily intended for networking between book and writing groups.

Policy Issues: Moshman said that six tenured UNL faculty members have been forced into retirement. In order to keep health care benefits, they signed waivers that said they would not challenge this action but did keep their First Amendment rights. Moshman also reported that the ACLU has filed a lawsuit against the City of Omaha for banning a mother from accompanying her children into a city pool be-

cause she was in traditional Muslin dress rather than wearing a bathing suit.

Old Business: A joint conference will be held this fall, date to be announced, with AFCON and the AAUP. An emphasis will be on the state of tenure at UNL, especially in regard to academic freedom issues. AFCON will also be represented at the fall conference of NLA/NEMA and at the Summer Writers Conference at UNL June 19-25. The Nebraska High School Press Association will hold its fall conference at UNL. The AFCON Speakers Bureau was discussed.

Lee volunteered to be the site coordinator and offered the use of facilities at the College of Journalism for the October 2005 Banned Book Week observance.

Board vacancies need to be filled for LEA, UNO Faculty Senate and an at-large position, created by the resignation of Jane Holt. Up to five at-large members may be on the AFCON board.

July 10, 2004—President-Elect David Moshman opened the Board meeting.

Minutes: Minutes of the June 12, 2004, board meeting were distributed. Motion to approve: Herman/Ball. Approved.

Treasurer: (Cathi McMurtry) \$2054.74 in account. As of today, there are 26 individuals and 15 organizations with paid dues for 2004. Motion to approve: Ball. Second: Herman. Approved.

President's Report: Adair wrote that she is planning to update the AFCON speaker's bureau, find a new representative from the UNO Faculty Senate, had sent flowers to an ill board member, and requests that all AFCON letterhead, brochures, and other printed materials reflect that the organization that belongs to AFCON is Nebraska Story Performances, and not Nebraska Story Arts. Ball moved, and Herman seconded that we reimburse Adair for the flowers; approved.

Newsletter: (Tom Black) The next newsletter deadline for materials is August 23.

Membership: Tom Black reported that the National Education Association-NSEA held its annual assembly in Washington, D.C.

Moshman mentioned that a student academic freedom organization may be formed at UNL and that he is in touch with the potential organizer.

Nancy Comer will speak at an NSRA meeting about AFCON. Suggestions were made regarding where she might find useful materials on AFCON history and activities.

Policy: (David Moshman) Moshman distributed 3 items from the Educational Law Association's publication. The ELA deals with public school law. The essays were on the

history of the Hazelwood case as seen before the Supreme Court decision, what is permissible in religious holiday celebrations in public schools, and on the constitutional right to be politically incorrect.

Old Business:

AFCON Annual meeting: Moshman reported that the annual meeting, held in conjunction with the NE State Conference of the AAUP, will probably take place in October or November, on a Saturday. Most likely date at present is November 6. He anticipates a late morning panel discussion of assaults on tenure at UNL and the future of academic freedom, possibly with some former UNL faculty on the panel who were involuntarily released from UNL by the termination of their departments.

Banned Book Week: The committee to design the events for Banned Book week of September of 2005 currently consists of Lee, Haller, Black, and also Tim Butz, Executive Director of the ACLU of Nebraska.

NHSPA conference table: Ball will contact the NHSPA representative, Joanne Chapuran, to see if an AFCON table would be welcome at their next state conference meeting.

Board vacancies: Currently, the board has vacancies for the LEA and the UNO Faculty Senate. Moshman will contact Adair to see what is being done to secure representation from these two. The Board has an option to appoint one or more at-large representatives. The Board approved unanimously the appointment of a particular person for an at-large position, pending that person's willingness to serve. Board members will make contacts with other persons who might fill at-large positions.

New Business:

Academic Freedom problems among university student newspaper advisors: Moshman brought a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article discussing the firing of the faculty advisor to the Kansas State University student newspaper over charges by a minority student organization that the paper did not give sufficient coverage to their activities. The article mentioned other firings of student newspaper advisors, and pointed out that such faculty advisors are often in danger, because they are not in a tenured position, and cannot control what the students print in the newspaper.

Bill of Rights Defense Coalition rally: Lee offered to speak on AFCON's behalf regarding threats to academic freedom at a combination rally against the Patriot Act, book-signing, and press conference sponsored by BORDC at Lee Booksellers and the Malone Center on July 22. Ball suggested a vote of thanks to Lee, Haller moved and McMurtry seconded, passed unanimously.

The President's Message—Peggy Adair

(Continued from Page 1.)

Deng will be a brilliant, compassionate doctor. I can see him as a pediatrician, singing “The Wheels on the Bus” to his young patients while pictures of Clifford the Big Red Dog adorn his office walls.

Americans whose families immigrated to this country eons ago sometimes take for granted our access to excellent, objective, boundless education. We send our children to school from kindergarten through college fully expecting excellence all along the way. We grumble at tax hikes, we underpay teachers, we throttle schools with unfunded mandates; but nonetheless, we demand the very best.

And pretty much most of the time, we get it.

It would be good if more of us could see education through the eyes of Deng and his family. All too often, firmly-planted Americans see education as our God-given, Don't Tread on Me, ban-the-dirty-books right. New Americans like Deng see education as a treasure.

How fortunate we are to live in this country where dreams can come true, where education is a given, where we can fight for academic freedom without fearing for our lives. And every new school year brings a chance for us to get it right: to share the collective knowledge of our fore-

bears, to see each child's potential, to nourish that inborn and unquenchable thirst for learning.

School! Deng is so excited!

I wish you could see his smile and his enthusiasm for learning. But then again, you can. It is written on the face of every child on that first day of school. Fresh haircuts, new shoes, a backpack full of rulers and gluesticks and number 2 pencils. When you see the exuberant schoolchildren, smile back at them. You are looking into the future of America, and the future is full of promise.

University Reports—Dwayne Ball

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska. (Lincoln Journal-Star of various dates in August, 2004) The student-run Program Council has offered to pay \$40,000 of student funds to bring Michael Moore, director of Fahrenheit 9/11, to the UNL campus or a Lincoln venue in October, shortly before the US presidential election. Moore has reportedly accepted. Critics, arguing the invitation shows a distinct lack of political balance, have demanded a prominent conservative speaker before the election as well. UNL Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs James Greisen was reported as saying that the

Regents Bylaws of the University of Nebraska demand balance in this case.

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education e-mail newsletter www.the-fire.org, August 17, 2004) UNC, under former UNL Chancellor James Moeser, has denied a student organization the right to form as an official campus organization. The organization is the Alpha Iota Omega Christian Fraternity (AIO), which has been denied official status because its charter reserves leadership positions for people of the Chris-

tian faith. UNC cites this as discriminatory; two years ago, it attempted to decertify all religious student organizations, but backed off due to negative publicity. North Carolina Congressman Walter B. Jones has asked the U. S. Department of Education to examine the university's decision in the AIO case. On one hand, the arguments are that student leadership positions should be open to all. On the other is the argument that insisting that student leaders be sympathetic to their organization's mission is entirely appropriate, with one critic pointing out that, otherwise, a gay student organization, in theory, (Continued on Page 4.)

University Reports (Continued from Page 3.)

could be taken over by a faction of students that believes homosexuality is a deadly sin. Charges that federal law demands non-discrimination on the basis of religion are vying with claims that UNC's attempt to deny certification to AIO violate its First Amendment rights.

University of Montana (Chronicle of Higher Education, July 16, 2004) UM won't let professor Robert Natelson teach constitutional law. He believes it is his conservative political views that account for it (he was a candidate for the Republican gubernatorial nomination twice.) The course was vacant, Natelson's publications are mostly in constitutional law, and so he applied four times and was turned down to teach the course four times. The Law School dean refuses to comment until a pending hearing is concluded. Natelson was quoted in the CHE as saying that students have complained to him of a notable lack of political balance in the interpretation of constitutional law as previously taught.

Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education e-mail newsletter www.the-fire.org, July 15, 2004) Occidental College administrators fired the host of a campus radio talk-and-call-in show, convicted him of sexual harassment, and then closed down the entire student government and assumed control of its half-million dollar budget (apparently in retaliation for the student government allowing the radio show in the first place.) The student radio host, Jason Antebi, a vice president in the student government, had hosted "Rant and Rave" for three years, providing a forum for political views, and a great deal of satire directed at the university administration and the student government for what Antebi saw as their excesses of political correctness. Three of Antebi's student political rivals accused him of creating a "hostile environment" by promoting "disrespect and slander" against "women, diversity, and Occidental College." Negative publicity organized by FIRE caused Occidental to back off of its attempt to expel Antebi shortly before his graduation. As of press time, however, Occidental still maintains its other actions were proper.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR—AFCON Annual Fall Membership Meeting

AFCON's annual fall membership meeting will be held in conjunction with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln chapter of the American Association of University Professors in Lincoln in October or November. A panel of speakers will address the following questions:

What do we now know about the UNL program eliminations and faculty terminations of 2003? What happened to the terminated faculty and their programs? What can we expect in the future? What are the ongoing and anticipated effects on programs, faculty, governance, and the state of academic freedom at UN-L? Where do we go from here?

The conference will probably be on a Saturday over lunch and is tentatively set for November 6. The date could change depending on the availability of potential panelists.

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.

AFCON SPEAKER'S BUREAU (As of 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: "Indecent, Subversive, Heretical, Seductive: The Dangerous Qualities of Banned Books" and "Stand up for your Rights! The Need for a 21st Century Student Movement"
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
jbender@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)

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

Nebraska Language Arts Council—September 18

The **Nebraska Language Arts Council's** annual fall Conference is Saturday, September 18, 2004, at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska. The conference is in conjunction with the annual Plum Creek Children's Literacy Festival from 8:30 to 2:30.

Participants will enjoy the presence of five major authors and numerous teacher workshops for all grade levels.

Registration with lunch is \$40.00.

For more information contact NELAC, Clark Kolterman, Seward High School, 532 Northern Heights, Seward, Nebraska 68434
1-402-643-2988 or
1-402-643-6138 or

ckolte00@connectseward.org

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 17**, 2004, issue is **November 22**, 2004.

Send to Tom Black, editor, 610 West Park, West Point, NE 68788 or wpc6296@cableone.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 (\$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**