



THE

AFCON

SENTINEL



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A Quarterly of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

December 18, 2009

AFCON OFFICERS

Dwayne Ball
President

Linda Parker
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Cathi McMurtry
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David Moshman
Policy Coordinator

Peggy Adair
Legislative Liaison

Robert Brooke
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—Dwayne Ball

For my last presidential column, I thought I would reprise my opening remarks for the AFCON annual meeting that took place on November 14th. For those of you not there, it was a memorable day. Bill Ayers spoke on academic freedom, we gave out a plethora of well-deserved academic freedom awards, and we had almost 100 people in attendance (including two very bored rent-a-cops for security, plus several members of the press). See our website for some pictures and further details. I should emphasize that we made a little money on this event; to some, it was controversial that we would invite Bill Ayers, so if it soothes those persons to know that we did not use their dues money to finance the event, then I'm happy. Linda Parker, our incoming president, and her team of Karen Drevo and Doug Paterson, as well as our ever-faithful treasurer Cathi McMurtry, did magnificent work in creating and accounting for the event.

Let us not forget that the next big AFCON push is to educate the public regarding the Student Expression Bill, which we hope to be our big and successful project in 2010.

So, here's how I opened our annual meeting:

Welcome to the 22nd annual Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska annual membership meeting. I expect this to be an extraordinary day.

We stand for academic freedom. We stand for the principle that people need the right to speak their minds in classrooms and

on campuses without fear of censorship or retribution, if they are going to learn to find the truth.

Dr. William Ayers, distinguished professor of education at the University of Illinois - Chicago, was invited in early 2008 by students and faculty at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln to speak on his research at a conference that took place one year ago tomorrow. Under threats that were physical, financial, and political, that invitation was revoked by the UNL administration.

We consider this dis-invitation to have been the most significant event for academic freedom in this state in several years. The academic freedom of those students and faculty was violated. Hence, we have invited the man at the center of the controversy, Dr. Ayers, here to offer his thoughts on academic freedom to us today.

The point we are trying to make here has nothing to do with the events of the 1960s, about which AFCON members have a wide diversity of opinions, and a diversity that we cherish.

The point we are trying to make today is that the future leaders and citizens of the state, the students we educate, must not be restricted in what or whom they may hear by the political unpopularity of any person or idea. The people of this state ask us to educate their young adults to become thinking citizens, capable of separating good ideas from bad and the spoken from the speaker. They should expect that we will actually do it.

Upcoming Events

AFCON Board Meetings: January 9, February 13, and March 13, 2010.
Loren Eiseley Library, 1530 Superior, Lincoln, Nebraska; 10 AM

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings—Karen Buckley

September 12, 2009—Present:

Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Tom Black, Robert Brooke, Karen Buckley, Nancy Comer, Bob Haller, Cathi McMurtry, Dave Moshman, Laurie Lee, Linda Parker, Rod Wagner.

Opening: Ball called the board meeting to order at 10:08.

Minutes: Minutes of the July 11 meeting will be submitted for approval at the Oct. 10 board meeting.

Treasurer's Report: AFCON's treasury has a balance of \$2006.65, as of Sept. 11, with 37 paid and two guest individual members and 13 paid and two in-kind organization members current with dues. The treasurer's report was filed for audit.

President's Report: Ball's report will be covered within other agenda items.

Newsletter: The deadline for articles for the December Sentinel is Nov. 27.

Legislative Report: Adair distributed handouts, entitled "Incidents Suppressing Student Expression in Nebraska." Ball stressed the importance of maintaining rosters of who will testify and who will write senators and media in support of the Student Expression Act.

Membership Reports: Lee noted that in the UNL Academic Faculty Senate minutes hearings on the proposed budget cuts were to begin Sept. 18 and that the Senate is still discussing the Ayers incident.

Comer noted that Adair addressed the Nebraska Reading Association's July meeting, regarding the Student Expression Act.

Black said he has written leaders of the NSEA on the Student Expression Act.

Old Business: Regarding the annual meeting, Parker said that the contract with the Holiday Inn at 72nd and Grover, Omaha, has been signed. Dr. Bill Ayers, featured speaker, is planning to arrive Saturday morning. Publicity for the event is scheduled to be released Sept. 28.

Nominated for Academic Freedom awards are: David Moshman (moved by Adair and seconded by Lee) for his many contributions to Academic Freedom, including his just published book, *Liberty and Learning/Academic Freedom for Teachers and Students*; Julia Schleck and Amelia de la Lus Montes, UNL English professors who organized a set of events at UNL leading to a public protest against the disinvitation of Dr. Ayers with Steve Ramsey, as a presenter (moved by Brooke, seconded by Parker); and the Millard South student, who was suspended for wearing a "R.I.P. Julius" t-shirt in memory of a friend who was slain (nominated by Lee, seconded by Comer.)

The nominees are contingent upon their acceptance.

Lee then announced that AFCON would join ACLU Nebraska, Nebraska Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Academy of Rock-Northeast Family Center is observing Banned Books Week with "Dangerous Songs, Banned Books and Censored Movies," a celebration of the First Amendment 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1 at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O Street, Lincoln.

New Business: Ball, Lee and Adair volunteered to serve on the nominations committee to present a slate of officers (president-elect, secretary and treasurer) at the annual meeting.

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Adair noted that she will be presenting ("Speechless") at the Nebraska Library Association and Nebraska Educational Media Associations annual Fall Conference Oct. 29-30 in Omaha. She congratulated Moshman on the publication of his new book, with other board members signaling approval with applause.

October 10, 2009—Present: Peggy Adair, Dwayne Ball, Karen Buckley, Nancy Comer, Doug Paterson, Bob Haller, Cathi McMurtry, Dave Moshman, Laurie Lee, Linda Parker.

Opening: Ball called the board meeting to order at 10:14.

Minutes: Minutes of the July 11 meeting were approved following a motion by Adair and a second by Parker. Minutes of the Oct. 10 board meeting were also approved following a motion by Adair and a second by Parker.

Treasurer's Report: AFCON's treasury has a balance of \$2550.38, as of Oct. 9. The treasurer's report was filed for audit.

President's Report: Ball noted that ACLU is suing the Millard School district for violating students' rights, on behalf of the Kuhr children, who were suspended for wearing "R-I-P Julius" t-shirts to school.

Policy coordinator: Moshman spoke briefly about another "disinvitation," this time a Palestine lawyer who had been invited to speak at an Israel and Jewish Studies class at UNO and then the professor decided against having the speaker. The lawyer did speak at UNL, UNO and Creighton assemblies, just not at that particular class.

Newsletter: The deadline for articles for the December Sentinel is Nov. 30

Membership Reports: Parker said that the Nebraska Library Association board

voted to support the student expression act and the NLA president is writing a letter, also in support.

Adair noted that ACLU is suing the Millard School district for violating students' rights, on behalf of the Kuhr children, who were suspended for wearing "R-I-P Julius" t-shirts to school.

Moshman said that the UNL Faculty Senate received the report from the Ayers committee Tuesday. The executive committee is expected to respond.

Legislative Report: Adair and Haller, representing the student expression group, met with Sen. Avery, who has agreed to cosponsor the student expression bill.

Old Business: Lee reported on the Banned Books Week activity at Duffy's Tavern Oct. 1, which AFCON cosponsored with ACLU Nebraska and the NLA Intellectual Freedom Committee. Students from the Academy of Rock included a controversial song with each performance and explained what caused the song to be controversial. Also part of the evening's activities were film clips from "banned" movies and a banned book display.

Parker gave an update on the upcoming annual membership meeting Nov. 14. Attendance will be by pre-registration only; no on-site registration. As president, Ball will open the meeting and then Parker will emcee the program. Adair moved, and Comer seconded, to add Mike Kelly and Steve Ramsey to the UNL Academic Freedom Award nominees, who are being recognized for organizing faculty protest regarding UNL's disinvitation of Dr. Ayers as guest speaker. The motion passed.

Lee, on behalf of the nominating committee said the following slate of officers will be presented at the membership meeting: president-elect, Rod Wagner; secretary, Peggy Adair; and treasurer, Cathi McMurtry.

There being no further business, Ball declared the meeting adjourned at 12 noon. The next meeting will be the annual membership meeting November 14 at the Holiday Inn in Omaha.

November 14, 2009—Present: Peggy Adair, Russ Alberts, Dwayne Ball, Robert Brooke, Nancy Comer, Gerry Cox, Bob Haller, Judith P. Healy, Laurie Thomas Lee, Cathi McMurtry, David Moshman, Max Morrissey, Jane Neal, Sue Oles, Linda Parker, Doug Paterson.

Opening: President Ball called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m.

See Minutes, Page 3.)

Summaries of AFCON Board of Directors' Meetings (Continued from Page 2)

Minutes: Members reviewed the minutes of the October 10, 2009 AFCON board meeting. Minutes were approved following a motion by Lee and a second by Parker.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report dated November 13, 2009 was reviewed and filed for audit.

Newsletter: The deadline for sending articles to Tom Black for the December 18, 2009, issue of the *Sentinel* is November 20.

Membership Reports: Ball discussed recent membership issues that have been resolved through communication.

Student Expression: The Student Expression Group of Adair, Ball, and Haller reported that they continue to make personal contacts to garner support for the Student Expression Bill that will be introduced in the 2010 legislative session. The group will meet with the bill's sponsor, Senator Ken Haar, on December 3, 2009.

Other Business: Parker requested that

members begin thinking about the 2010 AFCON annual meeting and offer suggestions for speakers. Paterson suggested as a speaker the woman from Stanford who was not appointed to President Obama's cabinet as Secretary of Education due to her extensive research on education that is critical of the present system.

Commendations: Members commended **Karen Buckley** for her years of service as secretary of AFCON. Members commended **Linda Parker** and her annual meeting committee, **Karen Drevo** and **Doug Paterson**, for their exemplary efforts in organizing and leading the AFCON Fall Program/Annual Meeting.

Annual Membership Meeting; November 14, 2009—Present: Peggy Adair, Russ Alberts, Dwayne Ball, Nancy Comer, Gerry Cox, Laurie Thomas Lee, Cathi McMurtry, Max Morrissey, Jane Neal, Sue Oles, Linda Parker.

Opening: President Ball called the meet-

ing to order at 12:37 p.m.

Minutes: Members reviewed the minutes of the November 15, 2008 AFCON Annual Membership Meeting. Minutes were approved following a motion by Parker and a second by Lee.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for November 13, 2008, through November 14, 2009, was reviewed and filed for audit.

Nominating Committee Report: The nominating committee of Lee, Ball, and Adair presented the following slate of officers for 2010: President-elect: Rod Wagner; Secretary: Peggy Adair; Treasurer: Cathi McMurtry

Commendations: Members commended **Dwayne Ball** for his service as president of AFCON for 2009. **Karen Buckley** for her years of service as secretary of AFCON; **Linda Parker** and her annual meeting committee—**Karen Drevo** and **Doug Paterson**, for their exemplary efforts in organizing and leading the 2009 AFCON Fall Program and Annual Meeting.



(L-R) Dan, Cassie, Jeanne, and Nick Kuhr

The Kuhr Family, AFCON Academic Freedom Award recipients for 2009

A little over a year ago, a teenager named Julius Robinson refused to join a gang and was shot and killed by gang members. His best friend, Dan Kuhr, wanted to honor Julius' memory and to help raise money for his burial by creating t-shirts that read "Julius R-I-P." The shirts included a picture of Julius in his football uniform and the words "Only God Can Judge Me Now."

But Millard South High School told Dan and his brother Nick, sister Cassie, and friends that they couldn't wear the shirts or (in Cassie's case) even write "RIP Julius" on their hands. Even red wristbands with only Julius' name were to be removed.

Millard South ultimately suspended 23 students. The school later explained that the shirts violated dress code and could be disruptive and that safety outweighed the First Amendment rights of the students.

Parents complained, but the school wouldn't budge. The suspensions would not be dismissed.

Then with the support of Dan's mom, Jeanne, the family bravely took on the school. They filed a lawsuit in October with the help of the Nebraska Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. The lawsuit is filed in U.S. District Court in Omaha and names the Millard Public Schools and Superintendent Keith Lutz as defendants.

As in the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines*, the Kuhrs argue that the school is violating their First Amendment rights, which should not be left at the school-house gate. While the district has the right to censor messages that are disruptive to learning, the lawsuit contends that the t-shirts are not disruptive. The shirts are a way for students to express their grief. The lawsuit asks that the school allow the students to wear the attire. And because the students were fundraising for Robinson's headstone, it suggests that the district pay for that, too.

Dan has since graduated from Millard South, but he, his mother, and his younger brother and sister continue the fight. Because of their outstanding defense of academic freedom, the 2009 Academic Freedom Award was awarded to Jeanne, Dan, Cassie and Nick Kuhr.

THE AFCON ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 14, 2009, OMAHA, NEBRASKA

"Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order."

—West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943), US Supreme Court.

For its 22nd annual meeting, AFCON hosted Dr. William Ayers, Professor of Education at the University of Illinois-Chicago. In 2008, the College of Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln invited him to speak on research in education. After receiving threats of violence, political repercussions, and withdrawal of monetary contributions to UNL, the University disinvited Dr. Ayers, a clear violation of academic freedom.

In support of the principles of academic freedom, especially Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Inquiry, the AFCON Board voted to invite Dr. Ayers to speak. He graciously accepted the invitation, and the title of his presentation was "The Right to Think at All: Academic Freedom and Free Speech in Troubled Times."

This topic was exactly on target for today's political climate. Ayers emphasized the importance of a public discourse among informed and civil citizens. To preserve a democracy, citizens must search, find, investigate, interrogate. Ayers emphasized the importance of personal responsibility for the preservation of a democratic nation. According to Ayers, we can exercise that power through involvement in communities, schools, and universities.

Over 90 people registered for the annual meeting, the highest number since 1983. Media from television stations, newspapers, and the Associated Press covered the event. We even had a healthy number of protestors, who protested peacefully and exemplified the principles that AFCON represents. Another important fact about this year's meeting is that the program was completely self-supporting through registration fees and profits from a book sale.

An e-mail from AFCON Board member, Doug Paterson, summarized the impact of this year's annual meeting. Doug wrote that the program was



Dr. William Ayers

"...the single most successful Annual Meeting in the history of AFCON." He continued that AFCON "...set onto the public stage of Nebraska the genuine core values of AFCON, defended them, put them forward in what I'm sure included some moments of apprehension, and then celebrated them in this most extraordinary gathering and articulation of basic educational values."

—Linda Parker
AFCON President-elect

Please see the AFCON website for a complete list of the Principles of Academic Freedom. <http://www.nebafcon.org/Pages/PrinciplesAFCON.htm>



(L-R) David Moshman and Dwayne Ball,
AFCON President

Dr. David Moshman, AFCON Academic Freedom Award recipient for 2009

David is one of the founders of AFCON, twice president, author of most of our foundational principles and operating guidelines, and the leading (though far from the only) intellectual light of AFCON. While I firmly believe that there is a "lifetime award for service to academic freedom" in Dave's future, we are giving him this award in recognition of his latest book, *Liberty and Learning: Academic Freedom for Teachers and Students*. This new book lays out the ideas behind academic freedom for students and teachers in the public schools and in universities. Alongside Dave's many works, among which are *Children's Intellectual Rights*; *Children, Education, and the First Amendment*; *Developmental Psychology: A Topical Approach*; and *The Daughters of the Plaza de Mayo*, Dave's total contribution to the freedom to think, believe, and express oneself in the service of one's own humanity and everyone else's is impressive, imaginative, and scholarly – Dwayne Ball.



Associate Professor Stephen Ramsay, Department of English, UNL



(L to R) Mike Kelly, graduate student, Department of English; Amelia Maria de la Luz Montez, Associate Professor of English and Director of the Institute of Ethnic Studies, UNL; and Julia Schleck, Assistant Professor of English, UNL.

AFCON Academic Freedom Award recipients for 2009

When the invitation to William Ayers to address the student research conference of the College of Education and Human Sciences was withdrawn, there was no formal and focused opposition or even response from any organized group on campus.

Into this gap came an informal group of faculty and graduate students who felt that this threat to academic freedom should not pass without a critical consideration of its implications. The group's leadership was in the Department of English, with assistance and cooperation from faculty and elsewhere on campus.

The leaders who are our honorees today were Associate Professor Stephen Ramsay, specializing in digital humanities scholarship and the history of drama; Associate Professor Amelia M.L. Montes, a writer, a scholar of Latina literature, and director of the Institute for Ethnic Studies; Assistant Professor Julia Schleck, a scholar of Renaissance literature and early modern travel and colonial writing; and graduate student Michael Kelly, a teaching

assistant working for a Ph.D. in composition and rhetoric.

Steve wrote an essay on the "Paradoxes of Academic Freedom" which was circulated on campus. The group staffed tables in UNL's public areas to encourage attention to the issues. They sponsored a public meeting, to which they invited people knowledgeable about the history and background of the disinvitation and the previous threats to academic freedom, a meeting attended by a variety of interested parties. They and Professor Chris Gallagher, who has since left UNL, continued to exchange emails and perspectives for the rest of the year. (Professor Gallagher received an earlier AFCON award; he, along with our speaker Professor Ayers, are ineligible for the award, which is reserved for Nebraskans.)

The group made manifest that all faculty, including the untenured, and graduate students preparing to enter the profession, have a stake in the strengthening of the freedom to explore ideas and hear speakers in an institution which does not give in to political pressure or threats of violence.

Award Citation, November 14, 2009

To Julia Schleck, Stephen Ramsay, Amelia M.L. Montes, and Michael Kelly:

The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska thanks you for your efforts to make known the threat to the academic freedom of last year's cancellation of Professor William Ayers' speaking to students and faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Your writings, your organization of a public meeting, and your leadership in the informal group of faculty and students who continued to discuss the issues, raised appropriate questions about the administrative withdrawal on the grounds of safety of the invitation by a faculty group to a distinguished scholar to address students and faculty of the College of Education and Human Sciences

For this defense of academic freedom as an essential foundation of a university's life, AFCON awards you its 2009 Academic Freedom award.

NEBRASKA STUDENT EXPRESSION BILL

Senator Ken Haar will be introducing a bill titled “The Student Expression Act” in the 2010 legislative session. The bill clarifies for the first time in Nebraska the right of students to express “thoughts and beliefs through speech and symbols; create, write, publish, perform, and disseminate views; and assemble peaceably with other students on school property for the purpose of expressing opinions.” The bill is in direct response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Hazelwood* decision (1988) which substantially reduced First Amendment rights of students. A copy of the bill as drafted can be found on the AFCON website, www.nebafcon.org.

The AFCON board, a number of AFCON member organizations, and individual AFCON members support this bill because the bill is essential to protecting the academic freedom of both students and teachers. Numerous incidents have occurred across the state where teachers and students have been harmed by censorship of words and actions in the course of pursuing intellectual freedom. A summary of some of those incidents can be found on the **AFCON website and on Page 7 of this issue.**

HOW TO HELP

We can all take an active role in protecting the academic freedom of students and teachers through our individual and collective support of the Student Expression Act. Please consider the following actions when the bill is introduced in 2010. AFCON itself cannot lobby, but we encourage those who can to contact their state senators if they believe this bill should be passed.

1) Spread the word about the Student Expression bill.

Make copies of the bill and share copies with co-workers, students, teachers, parents, and anybody concerned about protecting academic freedom and free expression. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper in support of the bill. Post a Student Expression blog.. Hold a poster contest at your school. Print copies of the bill in student newspapers. Get creative and get the word out.

2) Testify at the public hearing in support of the Student Expression bill.

When the bill is introduced it will receive a number and a hearing date. Anyone can testify at public hearings on legislative bills on their own behalf. If you wish to speak as a representative of an organization, you must first obtain the organization’s permission.

If you decide to testify in support of the Student Expression bill, it is best to keep your message short and to the point. “I support the Student Expression bill because...”

and then give specific reasons. Personal stories are great. Try to keep your testimony under 5 minutes...under 3 minutes is preferable. If you can, bring 12 copies of your written testimony to hand out to the senators.

3) Contact members of the Education Committee and express your support.

It is very important that you contact the Education Committee as soon after the bill is assigned to them as possible. This is a short session so things move (or die) quickly.

Again, keep your message short, to the point, factual, and specific. Ask that the senators vote to move the bill to the floor for full debate. Thank them for their time.

Members of the Education Committee and contact information:

Senator Greg Adams, Chair: 402-471-2756
District 24, York gadams@leg.ne.gov

Senator Gwen Howard, Vice Chair: 402-471-2723
District 9, Omaha gghoward@leg.ne.gov

Senator Brad Ashford: 402-471-2622
District 20, Omaha bashford@leg.ne.gov

Senator Bill Avery (co-sponsor of the Student Expression bill)
District 28, Lincoln 402-471-2633 bavery@leg.ne.gov

Senator Abbie Cornett: 402-471-2615
District 45, Bellevue acornett@leg.ne.gov

Senator Bob Giese: 402-471-2730
District 17, South Sioux City bgiese@leg.ne.gov

Senator Ken Haar (co-sponsor of the student expression bill)
District 21, Malcolm: 402-471-2673 khaar@leg.ne.gov

Senator Kate Sullivan: 402-471-2631
District 41, Cedar Rapids ksullivan@leg.ne.gov

To write to any of the senators:

Senator _____
District # _____, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

4) Contact your own senator and ask for his or her support.

Senators *always* want to hear what their constituents think about a bill. Constituent support is very important when senators consider what action to take on a bill. If you do not know who your senator is, log on to the Unicameral website, www.nebraskalegislature.gov. On the left side, click on “senators” then scroll down to “find your senator” and follow the instructions.

Thank you for supporting the academic freedom of teachers and students!

INCIDENTS SUPPRESSING STUDENT EXPRESSION IN NEBRASKA (A Summary)

- A district superintendent changed not only his answers to student newspaper staff questions, but also changed their questions to him, before allowing publication of an article on teacher pay in the student newspaper. October, 2009. Sources: First person report; Student Press Law Center; iHigh.com.
- A high school principal refused to allow the student newspaper to publish an editorial that encourages students to attend school board meetings. October, 2009. Sources: First person report; Student Press Law Center; iHigh.com.
- Students were suspended from school for wearing memorial T-shirts honoring a student who died tragically. August, 2008. Sources: *Omaha World-Herald*; KETV.com; ACLU Nebraska; Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression
- A high school principal stopped the production of the annual spring school play after a stepparent complained about historically accurate aspects of the play. The principal also forbade production of the play off-campus. February, 2008. Source: *Omaha World-Herald*
- A journalism teacher contemplated retiring or changing school districts after 20 years of repeated student newspaper censorship incidents. January, 2008. Source: First person account
- A school principal abruptly removed a teacher from her duties as student newspaper advisor and journalism instructor, even after two years of her compliance with strict prior review by the principal. June, 2007. Source: First person account
- A high school principal was suspended for supporting journalism students and their advisor when they tackled a controversial subject. April, 2007. Sources: *Omaha World-Herald*; First person account
- A drama teacher lost her position after selecting a highly-acclaimed historical play for the school's production. February, 2006. Source: First person account
- A high school journalism advisor resigned rather than accept reassignment after a student's political cartoon in the student newspaper upset the principal. February, 2006. Source: First person account
- A college newspaper advisor was fired for permitting articles in the student newspaper critical of the administration and the college. April, 2005. Source: First person account
- School library filters denied students access to legitimate educational research articles that appear on approved websites. April, 2005. Source: First person account
- A high school student was threatened with suspension for distributing fliers on campus that opposed the Iraq war. Spring, 2005. Source: ACLU Nebraska
- High school students were told not to discuss elections or politics in class. Fall, 2004. Source: First person account
- University administrators limited campus "free speech" to a small fountain area. September, 2004. Sources: *Daily Nebraskan*; *Lincoln Journal Star*
- Four high school students were suspended for placing political posters of a white African-American student in the school. February, 2004. Sources: KETV.com; *Omaha World-Herald*; First person account
- A teacher gave up sponsorship of the student newspaper in order to keep his teaching job. 2004. Source: Retired teacher
- A high school principal censored an edition of the student newspaper that included a satirical article that poked fun at "life skills" class. October, 2003. Source: First person account
- A nationally-recognized student newspaper was threatened with censorship for being too "real" in its investigative journalism. November, 2001. Sources: *Omaha World-Herald*; Society of Professional Journalists; First person account
- High school administrators forced teachers and students into a blackout of communication with the outside world on September 11, 2001. September, 2001. Source: First person account
- High school teachers told students they are not allowed to say "Merry Christmas" at school. December, 2000. Source: First person account
- Two high school students were suspended for distributing an underground newspaper on campus. Fall, 2000. Sources: *Omaha World-Herald*; WOWT Channel 6; First person account
- High school students were not allowed to hold an after-school Christian club on campus. 1985-1990. Source: *Westside Board of Education v. Mergens* 496 U.S. 226 (1990)
- A student newspaper article was censored by the principal because it contained an analogy. Circa 1988. Source: Retired teacher

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"

rhaller1@unl.edu

David Moshman: "Principles of Academic Freedom"

dmoshman1@unl.edu

John Bender and David Moshman: "Student Freedom of Expression/Student Rights"

jbender1@unl.edu

dmoshman1@unl.edu

Laurie Thomas Lee: "Implications of the USA Patriot Act"

llee1@unl.edu

Presentation of the Readers' Theatre production of A Tangled Web: Student Freedom of Expression

(a cast of adults and students)

ADDRESS FOR THE AFCON WEB SITE

<http://www.nebafcon.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;

REQUEST FOR NEWS FOR FUTURE ISSUES

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

Due date for submissions to the March 19, 2010, issue is **February 22, 2010.**

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 (\$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**