MLA Intellectual Freedom Advisory Panel
August 2, 2017
AACPL Headquarters

In attendance: Steve Labash (retired), Pam Mann (Washington County, via Google), Dianne Whitaker (Montgomery County, via Google), Sara Brown (Baltimore County), Hannah Wilkes (Frederick County), Julie Ranelli (Queen Anne’s County)

Minutes: June minutes not available. Will approve in October.

Reports

• Executive Board: Julie has spent time getting acquainted to the Executive Board. Most recent meeting included talking about advocacy, political climate. In Maryland we have a good library situation because those before us fought and spoke up, so we must continue calling our officials and advocating. No votes on anything at most recent EB meeting.

Julie gave a general overview of the EB: it includes MLA officers and the chairs of divisions, panels, and interest groups.

• Conference: MLA/DLA will be May 2-4, 2018, again at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake. The theme is Evolve. Panel committed to putting forth one program. Discussion: preconference with DLA, crisis communication as discussed at last meeting, revised Youth Access document from OIF, LGBTQ+ reads and responses.

Dianne was formerly collections manager and raised right to view issues: challenges to DVDs not “literary” enough, or those that are offensive to some community members but not others. Could fill an hour panel, especially with discussion time. Could also bring in an academic librarian to discuss issues of political correctness. We will suggest this to Monica.

Settled on proposing two conference sessions: Right to View and LGBTQ+ issues, combined with Youth Access.

• Social Media: Sara Brown and Nay Keppler share this duty. Nay tends to focus on banned books and Sarah on other materials. Seem to be getting good clicks, views, and clickthroughs. Should we be on any other platforms? Maybe in the future, but right now we’ll stick with Facebook.

• IF Manual Revision: not voted on at Executive Board, needs to go to steering committee. Main goal is to update hyperlinks. Revision currently includes references to President Trump by name, recommend removing these and replacing with less partisan language. Sara pointed out that we can and maybe should be political as librarians, but not partisan.

• Banned Books panel: Steve will moderate, as many of us as possible in attendance will be great. Tiffany has proposed mirror spring event in Southern Maryland.

Old Business

• Work plan includes doing fall programs, revising the manual, increasing social media presence, possibility of spring program, presence at MLA/DLA. This is a lot for a year! Also growing memberships and providing LATI training.

• FY 18 budget: $50. Asked to bring in $200. If 25 people attend fall programs, we will make that.
New business

- Acronym: committee vs. panel? We are a panel, along with the Legislative and Program Development Panels. Julie proposed we remove “advisory” and just be the Intellectual Freedom Panel or IFP. We can change Facebook now, Julie will notify MLA and talk to Bob about the list serv, also Monica for the manual.

- Listserv: Should we find a mode of conversation other than the list serv? We feel it is fine, but we will find out if it’s possible to just send a weekly digest and clarify how to unsubscribe so we can share this information with subscribers.

- Areas of interest: Julie asked all in attendance to share their areas of interest within intellectual freedom/why we were attracted to the panel.
  - Julie: children/youth and general access. Fuel for joining was meeting room/sex ed controversies.
  - Dianne: involved since 2006 when faced challenge over freedom to view/filtering on adult computers. Was a branch manager then, became collection manager, and so has seen lots of IF issues. Current interests include balanced collections and keeping the public informed about fair, unbiased, accurate info.
  - Pam: Also concerned about information literacy. In last library system faced various challenges, which fueled interest in joining IFP. Hard to make people understand that it’s not our job to tell people what they can and can’t read, goal is to educate people to that end.
  - Sara: Media/information literacy, access, knowledge of how to use available tools, privacy/surveillance, net neutrality. Also representation/ensuring groups are not underrepresented.
  - Steve: Duty to support colleagues in difficult situations, fake news, net neutrality.
  - Hannah: Access (including youth but especially for those who are economically disadvantaged), privacy, censorship, collection management.

- LATI training: Jamie Watson and Sarah Jane Miller will be doing this August 30. Linda also asks we provide updated resources for LATI manual—asked we get back by December. We suspect what is currently in there is fine but old.

Next meeting is 10/4 at AACPL headquarters. All who cannot make it are invited to attend via Google hangout.