

BCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee Annual Report 2009-2010

By Beth Davies.

At the 2009 BC Library Conference, the IFC co-sponsored a session for trustees and library staff called "What's That Doing in My Library? Intellectual Freedom Stories and Advice" and ran the ever-popular "Ain't on the Globe & Mail bestseller list".

Partnerships and member contributions

In September, we partnered with the Information Policy Committee to have a table at the annual Word on the Street festival in Vancouver. BCLA Browser encourages member contributions who wish to share their best practices in providing library services. The Editor and Editorial Board members may also solicit contributions for articles of a timely nature.

Issues

One of the issues of concern this past year was the impact of the Olympics on free speech. In November, we held a joint Salon with the Information Policy on The Olympics and Free Speech, and a similar session is planned for the 2010 BC Library Conference. There was also much discussion around

the Vancouver Public Library's memo to obscure non-sponsor logos during Olympic programming.

We were also concerned with restrictions on groups' access to meeting room space, with the proposed removal of a same-sex erotica book from a book display shelf, and with a Langley school librarian in a censorship fight with parents and the School Board.

Libraries throughout the province got creative with their Freedom to Read Week celebrations at the end of February. From New Westminster's release of banned books, to the GVPL's blindfolded mannequin, library workers everywhere celebrated intellectual freedom and scorned censorship.

In April 2010, the IFC drafted a letter to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Jason Kenney criticizing his decision to remove references to same sex marriage and equality rights from A Guide to Canada, Canada's new Citizenship guide, and that these references be reinstated in future editions of the Guide.

Beth Davies is the outgoing chair of the BCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee.