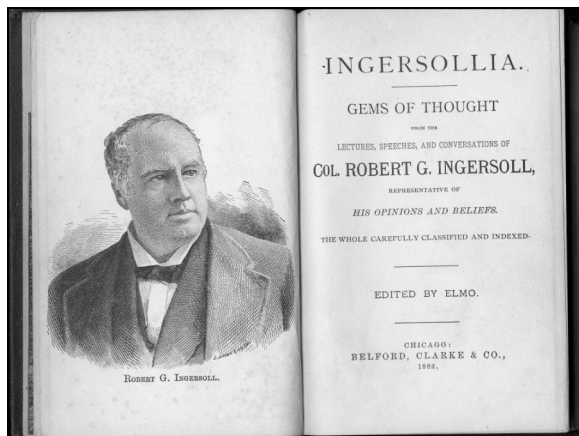


Books from “Free Thought” era added to Library’s collections

With funds donated to the Library by FOOL, a dozen books from the last quarter of the 19th century have recently been added to the “FOOL’s Collection of Censored Books.” Leonard Hitchcock, retired ISU librarian, introduced these recent acquisitions to those attending the FOOL fall event. He



pointed out that the period in which the books were published is often referred to as the Golden Age of Free Thought. Men and women who styled themselves “free-thinkers” espoused a spectrum of opinion ranging from atheism and agnosticism to Unitarianism, and conducted a campaign to discredit established religions and religious

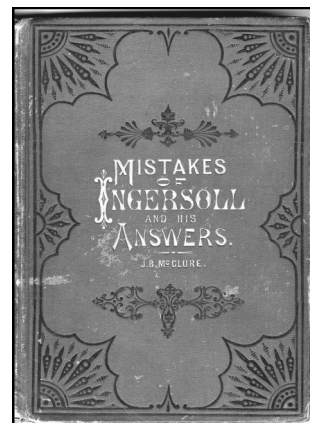
orthodoxy. They published newspapers, founded social action organizations and lectured across the country. Their efforts were countered by Christian evangelicals employing similar tactics. Often the two groups clashed in head-to-head debates, and newspapers regularly covered the public appearances of the combatants, even printing the full texts of their speeches.

Mr. Hitchcock suggested that the Free Thought era provides some lessons about the nature of intellectual freedom. First, that intellectual freedom may admit of degrees, which is to say that it may vary in intensity depending upon the extent to which opinions are disseminated and vie with one another for the public’s allegiance.

Consequently, even in the absence of censorship, if ideas are not circulating, conflicting and generating public debate, intellectual freedom languishes. Secondly, there is a personal dimension to intellectual freedom that pertains to an individual’s willingness to subject his or her ideas to scrutiny. The Free-

thinkers argued strongly that those who refuse to examine all their convictions by testing them against reason and evidence cannot claim to be intellectually free. This argument was, of course, aimed particularly at those holding religious beliefs, since such beliefs are often treated as exempt from critical evaluation and accepted solely on the basis of faith.

Among the newly-acquired works are several by Robert Ingersoll, perhaps the most famous of the “freethinkers” and known to the nation as “The Great Agnostic”. Other works represent the counter-attack against Ingersoll by his contemporary Christian opponents.



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Cartoonist Entertains FOOL

Pat Bagley, editorial cartoonist for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, was the featured speaker at the FOOL fall event on November 7. Mr. Bagley's



Pat Bagley describes one of his cartoons

work has appeared in numerous national newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*, and he is the author of several books, the most recent of which is *Bagley's Utah Survival Guide*. He spoke about his profession, his work methods, and what inspires him to create, illustrating his talk with slides of his cartoons. It was soon apparent that, in addition to being a political cartoonist, Mr. Bagley excels at satirizing social and cultural aspects of life in Utah. The hilarity that his cartoons evoked among those in attendance was ample testimony to his

wit and perceptiveness in doing so. It was also a reminder, to all who call themselves FOOLs, that the real role of the court jester has always been to tell the truth, but to cloak it in laughter.

Those who wish to view Mr. Bagley's cartoons may visit the *Salt Lake Tribune* Web site that provides access to an archive of his work, as well as information about his books and personal appearances. The Web address is: <http://extras.sltrib.com/bagley/>

FOOL honors Joan Downing

The FOOL fall event was also a surprise party for Joan Downing, former Head of Public Services at the Eli Oboler Library and one of the founding members of FOOL. Ms. Downing was honored for her distinguished service to the Library and to the community. She was made a lifetime member of FOOL, and Keeven Shropshire, President of the FOOL Board of Directors, presented her with a lovely desk clock in a wooden case shaped like a book. Kay Flowers, ISU's current University Librarian, in her comments about Ms. Downing, quoted from a 1984 letter from the then University Librarian Ron Swanson in support of Joan's nomination for the ISU Achievement Award. He wrote: "I know it is common for administrators to speak of individuals being an inspiration to others, but Joan is not an inspiration in any common way. Her energy, abounding good humor, and enthu-

siasm for the mission of the University are infectious among her friends and colleagues. In the Library, they have fostered feelings of pride and accomplishment for everything that we try to do." Joan did win the Achievement Award.

Eli Oboler himself hired Joan for the ISU Library in 1968. She had a physics degree from Smith College and became ISU's science librarian. By 1984 she had become the head of the public services division of the Library. She retired in the fall of 1985, but was rehired for a year in 1989 to work as a reference librarian. In 2000, the Library began its effort to create a Friends

group, and Joan was part of the steering committee that planned the organization. She also served as a member of the FOOL Board for the first three years of its existence.



Keeven Shropshire, President of FOOL Board of Directors, presents lifetime membership to Joan Downing