

# ISBN QUARTERLY

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**Mark your calendars:**

- Want to become an ISBN speaker? Next speaker's training, Saturday, Feb. 26, 2005.
- Eid ul-Adha: January 21, 2005.
- Women of Spirit Conference (UNO): Jan. 29, 2005
- Dr. Fidelma O'Leary at D.C. Centre: Jan. 30, 2005.
- Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah (UNO): Feb. 2, 2005.
- Iowa's Conference on Islam (Ames, IA): March 18-20, 2005.
- Corporate Managers Training: May 20, 2005.

## ISBN PLAYS A ROLE NATIONALLY

In September 2004, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) hosted its 41st annual convention in Chicago, IL. As the largest annual convention for Muslims in America, ISNA plays host to several thousand attendees each year.

This year, ISBN, joined several other ING affiliates in a series of workshops designed to showcase the work of Islamic Networks Group (ING) and its affiliates at the national level.

ING's workshops this year included: Diversity Training About Islam & Muslims in Law Enforcement Agencies & Corporations, Presenting Islam in Public Schools-Grades 7th-12th, and Presenting "Cultural Competency" Training About Muslim Patients to Hospitals and Mental Health Agencies. All of the work-



Left to right: Gretchen Harms, Director of the Islamic Speakers Bureau of Nebraska; Tabassum Haleem, Director of the Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest.

shops were well-attended.

In 2005, ISBN is planning to host a city-wide seminar for managers entitled: Develop-

ing Cultural Competency: Arab and Muslim Americans in the Workplace. Visit our website for more details.

## HOMEPAGE REMODELING COMPLETE

Have you visited our website lately? We've gone through some major renovations.

Check us out at: [www.islamicsbn.org](http://www.islamicsbn.org)

Find out more about us, request a speaker, or purchase tickets to upcoming events. It's all there!



Redesigned homepage: [www.islamicsbn.org](http://www.islamicsbn.org)

Thanks to our very generous donors, the Islamic Speakers Bureau of Nebraska, Inc. now has a permanent presence on the World Wide Web.

Is your organization interested in a speaker? Request a speaker online! Want to view past issues of our newsletter? They're there too.

Enjoy!

# ISBN JOINS NCCJ'S WALK-AS-ONE

Have you seen the new river-front? The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) couldn't have picked a better place to hold

their annual Walk-As-One.

On an October afternoon several ISBN speakers, board members and other supporters joined the crowd and walked from the Heartland of America Park, past the Qwest Center, down to the river and back. The scenery was lovely and the weather was perfect!

Walk-as-One is a great event not only for fund-raising for a great cause, but also to bring the different sub-communities of Omaha; especially, different faith groups together to do good for the larger community of humanity. I have participated in this event for the second time, this year. This time it was with my wife and my father who is visiting us from Canada. I will encourage our Muslim community of Omaha to participate in this event every year as a group to show that Islam and Muslims care about humanity, and bringing people closer to work for the common good of mankind."



ISBN speakers register for NCCJ Walk-As-One. Left to right: Dr. Saidi Liwaru, Maisha Liwaru, Tehmina Zeb.

Shakil Ahmed had this to say, "NCCJ's

## OUR VISION, OUR MISSION

*"Now that I know more about their religion, I will be more understanding."*

After many long hours of debate and refinement, the ISBN board of directors is pleased to present our Vision and Mission Statements:

**Our Vision:** We will be the premier educational institution in Nebraska and Western Iowa that accurately presents information about Islam and the diverse Muslim-American

identity.

**Our Mission:** ISBN is a non-profit educational organization committed to providing accurate and balanced information about Islam and Muslims. Our mission is to offer standardized, interactive presentations and cultural sensitivity training provided by certified speakers to inter-

ested parties in Nebraska and Western Iowa. We exist to fulfill our community's need to learn more about Islam and Muslims.

Special thanks to all of the board members for the time and effort they each put into creating these guiding directives.

## ESL CONFERENCE

On Saturday, Oct. 23rd Omaha Public Schools (OPS) hosted its annual English as a Second Language (ESL) conference for teachers and staff. For the third year in a row, our Vice President, Tehmina Zeb conducted a workshop about Muslims' beliefs and practices.

**Tehmina writes:** The supervisor of the ESL department believes it is very important for teachers to be aware of

their Muslim students' religion and culture. My experience as a mother and teacher-aid has made me aware of some of the problems our Muslim children might have to face. I make sure that our presentation makes teachers more receptive toward the needs of



Muslim students. My goal is to emphasize the importance of the five daily prayers, fasting, not eating pork and dressing in an Islamic manner.

One attendee commented, "Now that I know more about their religion, I will be more understanding."

Gretchen Harms and Tehmina Zeb

# ISBN & THE FIRST AMENDMENT

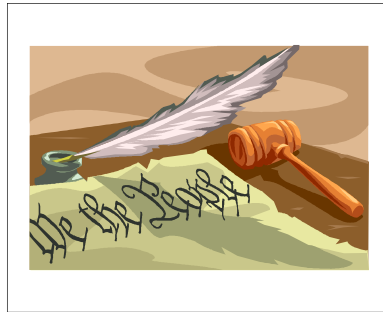
Editorial by Gretchen Harms

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” – The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

A few years ago, while developing a framework for the mission of ING and its affiliates, the significance of the First Amendment was not only recognized, but institutionalized. The first Amendment not only protects our right to

do the work that we do, but it protects the rights of those who listen to our presentations. It doesn't take an expert in Constitutional law to recognize that many of the freedoms we enjoy as Muslims in this country are due to this sentence in the Bill of Rights. But what of the rights of our non-Muslim, fellow citizens?

In public schools, particularly, we must and do respect the rights of teachers, administrators and students, by presenting information about Islam and Muslims in an educational, non-proselytizing way.



An artist's depiction of the final draft of the U.S. Constitution.

This philosophy is critical to the success of our organization.; and this is the same way we Muslims expect Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism to be taught to our children in public schools.

## NEBRASKA & IOWA SOCIAL STUDIES CONFERENCE

On October 9th, the Nebraska State Council for the Social Studies and the Iowa Council for the Social Studies held a conference in Council Bluffs, IA.

For the first time, ISBN was an exhibitor. During the day we met several social studies teachers from Nebraska and Iowa.

We displayed several teaching resources including the videos: “Inside Mecca”; “Muslims”; “Islam: Empire of Faith”, and “Mohammad: Legacy of a Prophet”.

We handed out free brochures about the Council on Islamic Education (CIE), a non-profit teacher's resource company and had several CIE

publications available for perusal, including: “Muslim Women Through the Centuries”, “Beyond a Thousand & One Nights”, and “The Emergence of Renaissance”.

We also handed out the First Amendment Center's brochure “A Teacher's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools”.

*“These speakers delivered presentations to 53 groups, for a total of 1,431 people.”*

## PRESENTATION STATISTICS FOR FALL 2004

For the 2004-2005 school year, ISBN currently has seven speakers: Tehmina Zeb, Maisha Liwaru, Dr. Saidi Liwaru, Zahra Cheema, Sharif Liwaru, Shakil Ahmed, Fatima Ilahi, and Gretchen Harms.

For the Fall Semester, these speakers delivered presentations to 53 groups for a total of 1,143 people. **This is a 225% increase** compared to the same time period last year.

To market the ISBN presentation to schools, over 800 letters were sent to Secondary School Social Studies teachers in twelve counties in Eastern Nebraska and six counties in Western Iowa.

The majority of our presentations were given in high



school World History and World Religion classes.

To inform schools about Islamic Holidays and religious accommodation

in schools, a semi-annual letter was sent to more than a thousand Principals and Superintendents throughout the entire state of Nebraska.

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We're on the Web!  
[www.islamicsbn.org](http://www.islamicsbn.org)

*Educating Nebraskans about Islam and  
Muslims*

## CELEBRATE WOMEN OF SPIRIT XX

Come celebrate the 20th anniversary of Women of Spirit. This year's program features the reflections of three women: one Jewish, one Christian and one Muslim. The program will be held on Saturday, January 29th, 2005 from 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

**Registration forms can be downloaded from the ISBN website's calendar page.**

Early registration deadline is January 10th, 2005.



Ms. Dru Greenwood

**Dru Greenwood**, MSW, is Director of the William and Lotie Daniel Department of Out-

reach and Synagogue Community at the Union for Reform Judaism and the URJ-CCAR Commission on Outreach and Synagogue Community.

**Dr. Maryanne Stevens**, RSM holds a Ph.D. in Religion and Education from Boston College. She became President of the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska on June 1, 1996. College of Saint Mary is the region's only Catholic women's college and as such is dedicated to developing women as leaders.

While at College of Saint Mary she has led the development of several



Dr. Maryanne Stevens

innovative programs such as the nationally recognized "Mothers Living and Learning Program," allowing single mothers of college age to live on campus with their children.

**Dr. Fidelma O'Leary** holds a doctorate degree in Neuroscience from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering from the National University of Ireland. She is an Associate Professor of Biology at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas.



Photo from National Geographic

Dr. Fidelma O'Leary