

ACLU ON A TEAR

It's been a busy year for the religious censors, especially the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Indeed, they've been on a tear, and with Christmas coming soon, look for things to get really mad.

This country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and nothing symbolizes this more than the Ten Commandments. That is why lawsuits aimed at banning displays of the Ten Commandments on public property go right to the cultural heart of America: they are designed to undo our religious heritage. So far the censors have been winning in places like Alabama, Nebraska and Ohio. But this fight is not over, if for no other reason than the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has just decided to accept two Ten Command-ments cases.

City seals that bear religious messages are another source of angst for the ACLU. This past summer, the city council of Oceanside, California, unanimously adopted a resolution making "In God We Trust" a part of its official seal (the words appear below the city's logo; "Liberty" is written on top). Right away the ACLU raised red flags, but it eventually backed off. It did so by noting that "In God We Trust," which is our nation's motto, has withstood previous legal challenges; its nonsectarian character also makes it difficult for the censors to prevail.

Quick Question:

When the ACLU was founded in 1920, which First Amendment right was not cited as one of its first ten goals: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press or freedom of assembly? You guessed it!

Just when the ACLU thought it had won a big victory by getting Los Angeles officials to remove a cross from its county seal, opponents of the decision struck back. On September 14, after four months of haggling, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to strip a small cross from the county seal; this was their way of fending off an ACLU lawsuit. Two weeks later, on September 29, the three supervisors who caved in got sued by locals unhappy with their "leadership." The lawsuit said the supervisors' action was hostile toward religion and a waste of taxpayers' money.

There are more headaches for the ACLU in California, this time courtesy of the Thomas More Law Center. For the past 15 years, the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association has been fighting with the ACLU over attempts by the civil libertarians to remove a giant cross atop Mt. Soledad in San Diego; the mountaintop cross has been there for a half century. No sooner had the ACLU won in a settlement to get the cross removed when a former Navy fighter pilot objected. In September, the Thomas More Law Center filed suit in federal court on behalf of John F. Steel and other veterans fed up with the ACLU's politics of intimidation.

The religious censors never leave the schools alone. It has been a long-standing tradition for the school board of Sussex County, Delaware, to open its meetings with a prayer. No one ever complained until this year. The complainant, Mona Dobrich, a local Jewish woman, took her beef to the ACLU, which, of course, jumped to her side. No word yet on whether this case has been finally resolved.

The ACLU took it on the chin when a federal appeals court recently ruled that a school district in northwest Ohio was within its rights to put fliers about religious events in students' mailboxes. Had school officials put fliers about the

events of NAMBLA—the pro-child rape homosexual organization—in students' mailboxes, it's a sure bet the ACLU would have heralded it as an exercise in free speech.

Another loss for the ACLU occurred recently when it sought to censor a gospel concert sponsored by the Franklin County Children Services agency in Ohio. The government body was attempting to reach out to religious communities when the ACLU went nuts. A federal judge ruled that the concert could proceed because the event's main purpose—helping foster children—was not religious.

But score one for the ACLU: it succeeded in frightening the U.S. Post Offices in Kentucky from forever selling teddy bears with religious messages. Banned are the God Bless America Bear, the God Bless Our Postal Workers Bear and the God Bless Our Troops Bear. All it took was for one Louisville resident to complain about the products of HolyBears Inc., and the ACLU came immediately to the rescue.

So this is what ACLU lawyers like to do—sue over teddy bears with the dreaded “G” word on them being sold in post offices. And they actually think they're making a contribution to liberty.