



Social Responsibilities Round Table Newsletter ALA

NEWSLETTER #47

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ALA midwinter CHICAGO, JAN. 22 - 28

A full slate of well over 1,000 meetings are on tap as the acronymic ALA meets in working session in Chicago for its annual Midwinter Conference. The issues include ERA boycott (a chance to speak to the Illinois legislature by our presence?) and implementation of ALA policy on racism and sexism awareness.

No action was taken in Detroit last summer on the Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness (passed by membership and Council, July 23, 1976). Claiming they needed more time to present a statement which would be a "compatible synthesis" of the resolution and a belief in intellectual freedom, IFC formed a subcommittee to present such a statement at Midwinter 1978. Some interesting discussion can be expected when we see what kind of synthesizing has been done.

Also of interest will be the presentation of recommendations for a national information policy by an ALA Ad Hoc Committee appointed by President Eric Moon. Look for a lively discussion of such topics as access to information, fees for service, and the rights of children.

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TASK FORCE NEWS

GAY TASK FORCE

The Gay Task Force is now seven years old--a year younger than SRRT itself! Here's what we have on the front burner just now:

*Member Stuart Miller is preparing a booklet of tips for gay groups and individuals (non-librarians) on how to get more good gay materials into their public and academic libraries. Suggestions are welcome, especially on: 1) how to make the approach, and whom to approach, about improving a library's gay holdings; 2) the problem of stolen gay books (which sometimes leads to restricted access to gay titles); 3) how to deal with the argument that the library doesn't have the budget for more gay materials.

*By spring 1978 we hope to publish not only a new edition (the 6th) of our widely used non-fiction Gay Bibliography, but also annotated brief lists of lesbian and gay male novels, short stories and biographies. We hear from many gay people who want to be steered to a few "good reads," a handful of easily available fiction and biography they can enjoy, rather than a comprehensive gay literature list or a list for gay studies (though there's need for such lists too). What titles do you recommend for our "good read" lists, and why? We'll appreciate suggestions.

*We are watching out (along with ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom) for censorship attempts on gay materials in the wake of Anita Bryant's anti-gay views Save Our Children crusade. (She's getting a fresh wave of publicity for her anti-gay views now that her book is out.) Please tell us, with specifics, about any censorship attempts you know of.

*A book for teenagers on gay experience is being written by members Frances Hanckel and John Cunningham. They ran the Gay Task Force programs on gay themes in young people's books at the 1975 and 1976 ALA conferences; they also wrote an article, "Can Young Gays Find Happiness in YA Books?" for Wilson Library Bulletin, March 1976. For their own book they welcome reminiscences, anecdotes, and comments about what it means to be a gay adolescent--or to know a gay adolescent.

*We're planning a Gay Film Festival during ALA conference next June! We expect to show a dozen documentaries plus a couple of feature-length story films. We need contributions of money toward renting the films. We also would appreciate help in running the actual showings in Chicago.

-Barbara Gittings

ETHNIC MATERIALS TASK FORCE

Ethnicity in librarianship means diversity in collections and realistic services to minority groups. This is the long term theme of our Task Force, which was begun in the early seventies. We are concerned with sensitivity and awareness among our colleagues towards the ethnic groups in the local communities we serve.

We try to identify the materials that belong in our libraries as a positive reflection of the history, heritage, and common experience of the minority groups in our midst. We aim to encourage the development of innovative techniques in the use of multi-ethnic media and programming for reaching our ethnic patrons.

Finally, we mainly exchange information for the use of our membership about seminal professional tools and creative programs and services that are successfully doing the job with minority groups around the country.

SRRT Task Force Coordinators

Alternatives in Print: Mimi Penchansky,
Queens College Library, Kissena Blvd.,
Flushing, NY 11367
Chicano Task Force: Patricia Tarin,
Los Angeles County Public Library System,
Rio Hondo Region, 1550 Beverly Blvd.,
Montebello, CA 90640
Ethnic Materials Information Exchange:
David Cohen, 68-71 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY
Farmworkers Task Force: Barbara J. Pruett,
Social Sciences Library, Catholic University,
Washington, D.C. 20064
Gay Liberation: Barbara Gittings, P.O. Box 2383,
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Task Force on Women: Diane G. Kadanoff,
25 Grotto Avenue, Providence, RI 02906

ALTERNATIVES IN PRINT

The Task Force on Alternatives in Print has completed work on the new edition of AIP 77/78 which is now available in hard cover for \$12.95, and in paper for \$8.95 from Glide Publications, 330 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA.

SRRT members are still entitled to a special discount for the paper edition, \$5.00.

The new co-ordinator of the task force is:

Elliott Shore
Contemporary Culture Collection
Temple University Libraries
Philadelphia, PA

Write him if you are interested in working on the next edition.

-Mimi Penchansky

CHICANO TASK FORCE

The SRRT Chicano Task Force has worked closely with Reforma for the past couple years but will meet at midwinter to refocus Task Force goals and objectives. One possible emphasis for the Task Force is on the status of Chicanos in librarianship, according to Task Force co-ordinator Patricia Tarin.

We have several tapes, directories and bibliographies to our credit. To do more of this kind of work, we need your help. Join us in spreading ethnicity and diversity in libraries. Watch for our first newsletter, the EMIE News Quarterly. It is edited by Carmine Diodati and Vladimir Wertsman with the help of Carmen Driskell and Joseph Stetson.

Join us at midwinter on Sunday and Monday, January 22 and 23 at 4:30 P.M. for a discussion of a very hot item, namely: Shall the SRRT Task Force on Ethnic Materials consider becoming a round table in order to do a more effective job in promoting ethnicity and librarianship? For the Chicago conference in June, we are considering a prototype workshop on the "Ethnic Connection" which could be used for any ethnic group in the community.

-David Cohen

P.S. Our bestseller is still the Directory of Ethnic Publishers & Other Resource Organizations, available from Jean Coleman at ALA for \$1.50 plus 50¢. A new revision is being prepared by Marjie Joramo of the Hennepin County Library.

Partners in Poverty

By Bonnie Isman

"...where the application of human talent and dedications may assist in the solution of poverty and poverty-related problems..."

-VISTA Mission Statement

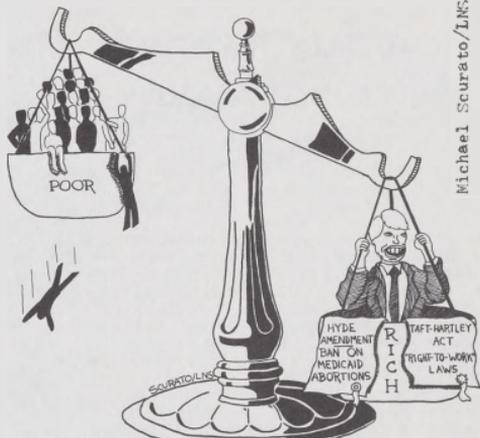
The following is submitted as a cautionary tale of less than success. Its theme is cosponsoring programs by libraries and federal agencies.

Perhaps the federal agency most identified with serving the needs of poor Americans is ACTION. Through the VISTA program, in particular, it provides volunteers to assist in social services for those who live in poverty. The goals of VISTA may be unrealistic, but it's heart warming to think of some 65-16 working "to eliminate poverty and poverty-related human, social environmental problems in the United States"...behind a desk in Washington, D.C.

Our territorial library agency turned to ACTION for help with expanding information services to the residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was agreed that ACTION would place four VISTA volunteers as professional librarians with public libraries in the territory and that our agency would contribute \$2,800/year per volunteer. (A bargain!) The job description for the volunteers required MLS degrees, and the program was described as a mix reference, inter-library loan and user orientation. A solid paperwork foundation could not, however, overcome serious structural weaknesses in this co-sponsored venture.

During the past nine months, four volunteers were sent to the library system. Two had MLS degrees, as specified. One had a bachelor's degree with library science coursework, and one had no library training or experience whatsoever. Three have since resigned from the program, one of whom married a West Indian and continued to work in the islands at a better paying job. All have suffered financial hardship (read poverty) caused by ACTION's low salaries in an area which experiences a cost of living which is at least 25% higher than the mainland's.

It was unrealistic to expect good performance from volunteers who have only a one year commitment to the area, who are unaware in the beginning of the nature of the programs to which they are assigned, and who must spend many months getting their



Michael Scurato/LINS

"THERE ARE MANY THINGS IN LIFE THAT ARE NOT FAIR, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT ACT TO MAKE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RICH AND POOR EXACTLY EQUAL." -- CARRIER

cultural dislocation in the West Indies. On top of this, during ACTION's recent funding crisis, the volunteers' sub-poverty salaries were suspended virtually without notice. The territorial library agency has been forced to reconsider its assumptions that:

- VISTA's are really dedicated to their "mission";
- Community information and referral can be done by non-locals temporarily placed in the islands; and
- Federal agencies are always reliable.

The program has met some of its objectives. Reference service did temporarily increase in the public libraries. Two community information pamphlets were researched and distributed by VISTA's. However, the poor quality of recruitment and the low salaries allotted to volunteers raise major obstacles to a successful, continuing co-sponsored program.

Moral: Evaluate potential co-sponsoring agencies with a critical eye. Be prepared to be strong where they are weak.

SOURCEBOOK

The Boston Women's Music Collective Newsletter is a monthly publication containing news of women performers, songs of local songwriters, and listings of upcoming musical events. Available at \$3. per year from the Collective, Box 91, West Somerville, MA 02144.

Changing Men is the monthly newspaper of the Men's Resource Center of Portland, Oregon (3534 S.E. Main St., 97214). They'll send a sample issue, and ask \$5. for a one-year sub.

NEW SCHOOLS EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER, Pettigrew AR 72752 (10 issues/yr) provides info exchange on alternative ed., including short articles and a People/Places column for jobs. \$12 to individuals; \$15 institutional. Sub includes National Directory of Alternative Schools (available separately for \$3.)



If you're into (or thinking of starting) library workers' unions, it would be worthwhile to look at the COMMUNICATOR, voice of the Librarians Guild of the Los Angeles PL, c/o AFSCME, Suite 319, 1636 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90017 (\$10 yearly).

The 13th ed. of the INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF LITTLE MAGAZINES AND SMALL PRESSES (\$8.95,pap. 11.95,cloth) is now available from Dustbooks, Box 100, Paradise, CA 95969.

Advance to the rear!

ACADEMIA, the COMMUNITY, and FACULTY STATUS

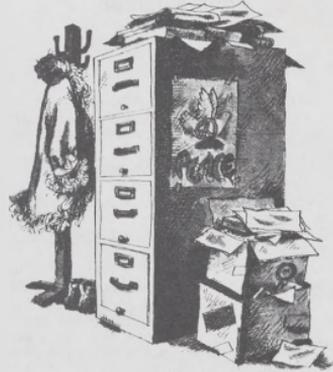
By Jim Dwyer

One of the most ballyhooed trends of the past few decades has been faculty status for academic librarians. Many jumped on the bandwagon apparently believing that this new status would bring about a more professional working atmosphere and a reward structure similar to that granted other faculty without detrimental effects on library services or significant additional responsibilities. Just think of it: we could call ourselves faculty members at cocktail parties rather than mumbling into our drinks that we were mere mortal librarians.

Of course it was as foolish to assume that such a change could come without strings attached as it is to think that "faculty status" means the same thing at different institutions or over time. It was initially assumed that librarians could receive the laurels of tenure through some mixture of excellence in the performance of one's duties, professional development, university and community service, and research and publication. Increasingly, though, as student enrollments and government funds have dried up and institutions of higher learning (as well as libraries of all types) have been forced to tighten their belts, the final criteria has been given greater emphasis. Many untenured librarians who fail to publish scholarly research in juried journals now find themselves on slippery ground regardless of the sum total of their other contributions to their libraries, their profession, and their community.

Fearing job competition from lower paid and increasingly qualified para-professionals (who learned some rather professional skills while the librarians were inhabiting faculty carrels) some librarians have come to regard scholarship as the one duty distinguishing themselves from other library workers. Forget all you ever heard about the theoretical foundation, perspectives, and attitudes gained in library school or the importance of a solid educational background as hallmarks of professionalism. Forget the professional-client relationship; you have little time for that. Put on your research Uberalles and start digging in the fields of specialization.

But how could publish or perish have any but a salutary effect on libraries? We're all cut from the same cloth, nicht war? Sorry, but it isn't so. Those who have a traditional research orientation and an area of specialization are rewarded for their efforts, however marginal, even if they maintain mere competence rather than excellence in the delivery of library services. Those labeled as "service-oriented" (an attitude once thought essential) are forced to divert their energies toward research for which they have little enthusiasm. We can guess what sort of research they are likely to crank out: the very sludge that makes a day of "harnessing the information explosion" seem like canoe trip through a metropolitan sewage system. Is it desirable, or even ethical, for librarians to contribute to this cycle of wasted time, worthless information, and duplicated effort?



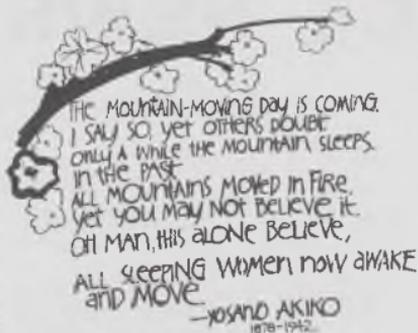
An overriding emphasis on traditional forms of scholarship may, in fact, inhibit the development of better library and community service. I do not mean to impugn the efforts of true scholars, present an anti-intellectual position or imply that everyday library work and research are mutually exclusive functions. The problem is that the latter function is currently being over-emphasized. Granted that the public benefits from solid study, however esoteric it may sometimes seem. To expect a central research orientation from all academic librarians, though, may remove them from public contact and service, limit personnel available for outreach services, and substantially diminish the "free time" which might otherwise be spent in civic involvement. Is it any wonder that much of the public considers universities as no more than "ivory towers" or libraries as "budgetary frills."

Everyone has his or her own special talents which can be developed and used for the benefit of both the individual and society in general. If A is a superb scholar, B excels in teaching (or reference or cataloging), C advances the work of professional organizations and D has special abilities in institutional or community development, why must all be judged by the standard that applies best to the scholar?

What of those librarians who make literary or artistic contributions; aren't their contributions to culture far greater than those of the critic, or the writer of criticism on criticism, or the specialist in criticism on criticism on criticism? Should historian, mathematician, artist-in-residence and librarian all be working the same vineyards and made to fit an increasingly inflexible mold; is there room for but one species in the academic forest? Are we aping a dying species while new ones evolve, stereotypically reacting rather than leading a new way?

In attempting to flee the old mousy image, librarians should be wary not to be baited into the mousetrap of a more circumscribed role. I am not advocating a flight from "faculty status," merely suggesting that our duties and roles must be commensurate with our array of talents. For most of us, our primary contribution is not the publication or scholarly research (or what often passes for it in library lit.) We should be hired, promoted, and rewarded based on a match or individual skills and individual job requirements. Why should we all don cap and gown when it so often hides a rainbow?





CHICAGO

Ethnic Materials Task Force		
Sunday, Jan. 22		4:30pm
Monday, Jan. 23		4:30pm
Task Force on Women		
Sunday, Jan. 22		8:30pm
Monday, Jan. 23		8:00am-6:00pm
Tuesday, Jan. 24		2:00pm
Wednesday, Jan. 25		10:00am
Alternatives in Print Task Force		
Monday, Jan. 23		8:00am
Gay Liberation Task Force		
Monday, Jan. 23		8:30pm
SRRT Action Council		
Monday, Jan. 23		2:00pm
Tuesday, Jan. 24		2:00pm

Work For The ERA! Boycott Unratified States!

The Detroit convention committed ALA to participation in the growing boycott in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. That decision should have some interesting ramifications as we convene in one of the key cities affected by the boycott.

Chicago's own Convention and Tourism Bureau modestly estimates the city's losses at \$15 million already. And officials in the self-proclaimed "convention capital of the world" know that the figure will spiral upwards in the future as they lose additional bookings. Along with Atlanta, New Orleans and Miami, Chicago's potential losses are staggering. A single ALA annual convention is estimated to bring in \$3,750,000 in revenue.

The Chicago Tourism Bureau argues that city legislators solidly support ERA, while downstaters have blocked passage. But in the most recent vote in Springfield (June 2), which fell 6 votes short of ratification, 19 Chicago legislators voted against ERA.

ALA is one of 50 groups boycotting non-ERA states. Among the others are the American Association of University Women, American Federation of Government Employees, American Political Science Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Democratic National Committee, League of Women Voters, National Association of Social Workers, National Council of Churches, National Council of Teachers of English, National Education Association, National Lawyers' Guild, National Women's Political Caucus.

There's talk of a move afoot to rescind the ALA decision. Why not a message to the Illinois Legislature while we're there, explaining and reaffirming our determination not to book future meetings in the state.

NOTHING IS CERTAIN AT ALA CONFERENCES - INCLUDING PAST POLICY DECISIONS AND MEMBERSHIP VOTES. SOME OF THE KEY ISSUES FACING CONFEREES THIS WINTER WILL INCLUDE EFFORTS TO HELP PUSH PAST/PASSED RESOLUTIONS THROUGH THE VITAL IMPLEMENTATION STAGES . . . SEE YA' THERE.

CENSORSHIP...

(continued from p. 6)

to do, and nobody wants to go to jail, but I wish he'd spend a bit of effort in behalf of the challenged materials themselves.

Let me suggest that the OIP isn't really expecting us to follow the suggestions. But the result, whatever their intentions, is a kind of scare tactic when we need sober discussion, education and cooperative effort. As to North's proposed tactics, we can ill-afford such diversions. Librarians in the field know that the pressures and threats are real. Our responses to the problem are many and various and it's here that we can use leadership and defense.

The issue, of course, isn't genitalia. It's our creating boards of review and handing over selection to others. North would even have us seek a judgment from a "court of competent jurisdiction" (yes, we go to them) or by compelling "the responsible official" to issue an opinion. I would prefer North to chase this idea down the other path, and tell me what to do if I have no trouble at all getting an unsolicited opinion. What if the opinion differs from that of the library public? Couldn't their rights stand some defense as well? And if the requested title has just been sent to the capitol for review, who's at fault?

The Intellectual Freedom Office of ALA has been criticized in the past for their lack of practical efforts to back up principles. If this is any indication of the direction practical efforts will take, I'll refrain from that judgment in the future. With 'friends' like this, we are hardly in need of enemies on the right.

do-it-yourself censorship

By Steve Seward

The Intellectual Freedom Office of ALA has once again come roaring to the rescue of librarians with the kind of help some of our worst enemies are offering. The latest moves of the OIF will come as no surprise to readers of the SRRR Newsletter. But this latest outrage shouldn't slip by unnoticed. It's indicative of a situation likely to arise repeatedly as state legislatures complete action on new obscenity legislation in line with the Miller decision of 1973.

These latest proposals, from the typewriter of OIF counsel William North, arrive in the form of a legal analysis in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in Smith v. U.S. (1977), prepared for the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Freedom to Read Foundation. The statement was buried in the September issue of the Intellectual Freedom Newsletter and we could readily write it off as predictable. But when North gets around to specifics, what we have is worse than a 'don't rock the boat' caution.

In his fourth "recommendation" North proposes the following:

"all works purchased or contemplated for purchase by the library which describes normal or abnormal intercourse, excretion, masturbation, or the genitalia, should be identified and submitted to the federal and/or state officials responsible for the enforcement of obscenity and harmful matter statutes for an opinion as to whether the dissemination of such works or any of them would be a prosecutable offense." (p. 145)

Under this definition, most fiction and some important non-fiction would need to be reviewed by 'responsible officials' outside the library.

In pillorying this paragraph have I yanked it unfairly out of context? Read it all if you wish--the tone is alarmist, and the message is that librarians are in peril though they don't know it. On the one hand, I expect our

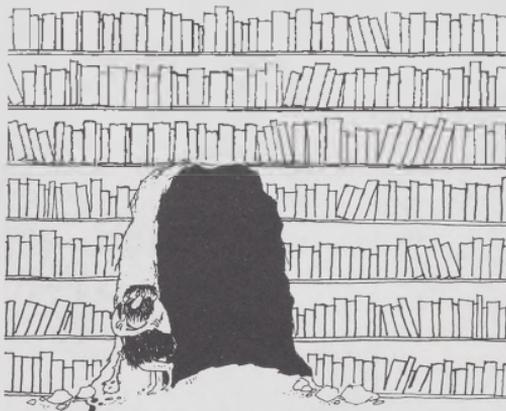


intellectual freedom newsletter to be an alarmist publication. The dangers of censorship are all too often clear and present, and we need warnings of potential trouble. But in his haste to protect librarians at all cost, North would have us relinquish responsibility for selection. Librarians are to invite public officials to review materials and pass on their acceptance under current standards. His legalese adds up to the single-minded goal of keeping librarians out of trouble. Now, I would welcome effective measures of defense from these threats, for any and all involved in the creation and distribution of such materials. But librarians also have a job to do, and I think most of them know it. Someone needs to tell William North.

Selection, after all, is not simply a procedural act. Nor is it a responsibility we can relinquish without a fight.

Imagine librarians sending all material which qualifies under the 'intercourse-excretion-masturbation-genitalia' definition to public officials for review. If this were a Yippie strategy I'd know we were trying to inundate government offices to demonstrate the absurdity of continuing obscenity decisions. We may wish we were so organized as to make that an effective tactic. But we're not, and William D. North is no Yippie. His goal is exclusively to minimize the risk to librarians, and he's serious in urging "implementation of the foregoing policies" (he lists six). It's all a very lawyerly thing

(please turn to p. 5)



A special Irony Award to the Wilson Library Bulletin for the following note we reproduce here in its entirety from the October 1977 issue:

"If one is interested in sexism and the language, he should read Casey Miller and Kate Swift's Words and Women: New Language in New Times, now out in paperback from Anchor/Doubleday (197 p. \$2.50). It should be especially handy for newsletter editors, press release writers, or anyone else wrestling with the problem." (p. 101)

We suggest to WLF a reading of pages 26-31 and 117 on the generic use of masculine pronouns.

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