COORDINATOR'S MEMO

TO: SRRT MEMBERS
FROM: JOHN HOSTAGE

Action Council had a full agenda as usual at the ALA Conference in San Francisco. The new Task Force for the Homeless was made an official part of SRRT. Its coordinator is Jim Byrnes, and the task force is an example of the spirit that new people with fresh ideas always bring to SRRT and keep it vigorous. The round table had its start in 1969, and we've already started thinking about how to mark our 20th anniversary. Anyone have any ideas? Meanwhile, we want to design a new logo for SRRT and use it on a banner at the SRRT booth during exhibits.

People who had participated in the preconference on "Librarians as Colleagues: Working Together across Racial Lines," sponsored by the Feminist Task Force, reported it was an intense and unique experience. Participants felt so strongly about its value that they are looking into the possibility of presenting some kind of program on the same theme at the next Annual Conference.

Action Council discussed a proposal from ALA's International Relations Committee to consolidate all of ALA's activities concerning human rights in other countries in an IRC subcommittee on human rights which would incorporate the SRRT International Human Rights Task Force. Some were wary of what directions a new committee might take and urged that the task force maintain its separate identity. Others thought it might be more effective to work within the committee if a strong voice for the task force's point of view could be assured.

The Gay Task Force has been experiencing a lot of change and revitalization lately, and it has now changed its name to Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Action Council agreed to sponsor a debate at the ALA Conference in New Orleans pitting its own Noel Peattie against John Swan of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table on "Two Views of Intellectual Freedom." The loser will treat the winner to dinner in the Crescent City.

I would like to welcome new members Jody Bush, Cal Gough, Christine Jenkins, and Bethany Lawton to Action Council. They were each elected to a two-year term; in addition, Linda Pierce, former SRRT Coordinator, was appointed to complete Peter Kidder's term. Everyone on Action Council thanks Gail Warner for an excellent year as coordinator; thanks also to Doris Kirschbaum, retiring Secretary, for producing minutes of Action Council meetings in record time, and to Susan Vaughn, who did a fine job as Treasurer.

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CLEARINGHOUSE NEEDED FOR BOOKS FOR NICARAGUA PROJECT

The Alternatives in Print Task Force can no longer operate the project BOOKS FOR NICARAGUA, and is looking for a volunteer to take it over.

Space constraints prevent operation from the present location after September,
1987. If you have space for accumulating a ton of books at a time (at least six by twelve feet), please consider coordinating the project. The job entails serving as the contact person for folks with donations of books (individuals, presses and libraries) and of shipping and pre-shipping packing work. This is a people-to-people project currently working with the Quixote Center, which acts as our third party for subsidizing shipping costs. Details on other aspects of the work are available from the present coordinator, Jackie Eubanks, Brooklyn College Library, Brooklyn, NY 11210; phone 718-780-5510.

If you have no space, consider sending books! and money! This year the Project has collected and shipped two tons of books. SRRT has generously supported the Project by contributing toward the Quixote Center’s costs for shipping one ton of books, and the Task Force is paying for some of the domestic shipping costs, but we’re more than $600 short. Make your checks out to "The Quixote Center" (tax-deductible) and/or "Struggle & Giggle" (not tax-deductible, for shipping within US), and send them to Jackie Eubanks, ALA/AIP/CBEN, at the address above. Books will be forwarded to the new coordinator of the project. Spanish-language books are especially needed.

--Jackie Eubanks

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MARCH ON WASHINGTON

On October 11, 1987, thousands of lesbians, gays, and civil rights supporters will gather in Washington, D.C., for a second National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights. (The first took place in 1979.) March demands include: the legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships; the repeal of all laws that make sodomy between consenting adults a crime; massive increases in funding for AIDS education, research, and patient care. Several related events will also take place; for example, on Monday, October 12, there will be an organizational meeting to found a Lesbian and Gay Congress, to insure that the goals and spirit of the March will continue. For more information concerning the March, write: March on Washington, PO Box 7781, Washington, DC 20044, or call: (202) 783-1828/30.

Additionally, the International Association of Lesbian and Gay Archives is planning a meeting on Friday afternoon, October 9, from 1 to 5 p.m. The meeting, which will deal with issues of concern to representatives of individual archives and libraries, is being organized by Bill Walker of the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society. For more information about the meeting, contact him at: 3823 17th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, or call: (415) 864-2074.

--Ellen Greenblatt

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SRRT Newsletter
September 1987
NEWS FROM THE GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE

1987's Annual ALA Conference was an extremely eventful one for the SRRT Gay Task Force. Participation at sponsored programs and events was high. On Saturday, July 27, between 500 and 600 people attended a wine and cheese reception organized by Flo Mitchell, Leon Bey, Ed Kleppinger, and the San Francisco Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Historical Society at the Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, which houses the largest collection of lesbian and gay materials in a public library.

"How does the Public Get Health Information? The AIDS Crisis as a Case Study," which was co-sponsored with the Intellectual Freedom Round Table earlier on Saturday, also drew a large turnout in addition to garnering local television news coverage. Issues covered during this program concerned how censorship efforts affect the dissemination of information on AIDS, especially to children and young adults.

Librarians even marched down Market Street in the San Francisco Freedom Day Parade on Sunday—an event, which though not an official ALA event, nonetheless made its presence known to the conventioners as its route cut right through the midst of the convention's venue. Our contingent numbered over 100 people at its height, with as many as 150 people marching throughout the day.

Another 300 people attended the program on "Gay and Lesbian Writing in the Bay Area." Members of the panel included Samuel Steward, Monika Kehoe, Nancy Manahan, Jack Collins, Mab Maher, Midge, and David Lambell. Door prizes—autographed copies of books donated by members of the panel—were awarded to lucky attendees.

At the same program, the Gay Book Award for 1987 was presented in absentia to Walter L. Williams for his book The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture.

Along business lines, the Task Force continued its process of restructuring and reorganization. One of the major decisions made by the membership was a name change to the Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The By-Laws Committee came up with a draft to be presented at the mid-winter meeting, to be voted on in turn at next summer's annual meeting in New Orleans.

Additionally, the Clearinghouse Committee of the Task Force disseminated a selector's kit on how to collect lesbian/gay materials. For more information on how to receive this kit, please contact Cal Gough, 491 Seminole Ave. #14, Atlanta GA 30307.

For more information concerning the SRRT Gay and Lesbian Task Force, contact either of the co-chairs, Dee Michel and Ellen Greenblatt. (For addresses, see list of Action Council members and Task Force coordinators, elsewhere in this issue.) —Ellen Greenblatt

A NOTE FROM JIM DANKY

The SRRT booth at ALA San Francisco went well. The following persons signed up to work and deserve credit for helping make the booth a success: Lotte Larsen, Ginny Wocks, Gail Warner, Byron Anderson, Miriam Crawford, Jim Byrnes, Renee Feinberg, Dee Conkling, Linda Pierce, John Hostage, Leon Bey, Jeanne Kocsis, Judy Hoxsey, Gina Entonf, and others too numerous and unrecorded to mention. Thanks!

SRRT Newsletter

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September 1987
"WE ARE NOT PLEASED"

Jim Melbourne, ALA personal member, attended Action Council's final meeting in San Francisco in order to present the "We Are Not Pleased Manifesto." Because many members of the group which drafted the manifesto have a long association with SRRT; because some of the issues raised are closely related to SRRT concerns; and because the group would like wide dissemination of the document among SRRT members, it is printed below in full, with minor editing, prefaced by excerpts from Jim Melbourne's introductory remarks. An open meeting on the manifesto is being planned for Midwinter, San Antonio. Please read the manifesto, give it some serious thought, and send your comments to one of the following: E.J. Josey, New York State Library, State Dept. of Education, Cultural Education Center, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12230; Joan Goddard, Evergreen Branch, San Jose Public Library System, 2635 Aborn Rd., San Jose, CA 95121; John Berry, Library Journal, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017; Pat Schuman, Neal-Schuman Publishers, 23 Leonard Street, New York, NY 10013. (For additional background information, see John Berry's editorial in LJ, April 15, 1987.)

Introduction

Draft #3 of a document entitled the "We Are Not Pleased Manifesto" is being shared at this time for your review, comments, criticism and possible support.

The "Manifesto" is still in working form, and has not been endorsed as the final representation of the concerns of people who also have a stake in the growth and direction of this professional association, and who have put much time and energy into helping the association arrive at the point it now occupies.

The "We are not pleased" group is not an elitist club of worn out radicals, but rather a group of people who by all standards should be joining the ranks of contented "fat cats" of ALA. Many have achieved some of the highest honors and recognition the association has to offer. Yet this group feels strongly that they have an obligation to their own conscience to express their feelings and concerns, and by so doing test the level of tolerance of the association, to recognize the rights of any of its members to criticize the body politic, to voice unpopular views, and not be ostracized or intimidated for having done so.

There are no names attached to the document as yet. This is because the ideas and criticisms recorded in the draft belong to no one group. When what is felt has been expressed in the best possible way, all will be invited to endorse or reject the sentiments expressed.

SRRT is the one organized dissemination channel within the association to make this information awareness task feasible and it is logical that before any manifesto takes final shape, the opportunity to become involved be extended to this critical body.

--Jim Melbourne

The "We Are Not Pleased" Manifesto

In 1969 a movement called the Congress for Change was organized with the expressed mission of challenging the American Library Association to become a more socially responsible and democratic institution by representing the interests of those who work in libraries, while protecting the information rights of those who use them. The movement spawned the creation of many more reform initiatives within the profession, and now nearly twenty years later we are confronted with an association radically different in form and structure, but little changed in the critical areas of social and ethical responsiveness.

As we did in 1969, we come once again to the membership of ALA to state clearly and unequivocally that we who thought we had a solution, now find instead that we have become our own worst enemy. Our success in restructuring ALA as an institution has contributed to the increased bureaucratization of the association as a whole, and has widened the gap between members and the leadership structure.

We who have given much time and critical attention to the ALA now before you have taken a step back to look at the results of those labors, and find that WE ARE NOT PLEASED...

*that we have allowed the dictates of "marketing" to replace the legitimate ethical and moral concerns of providing free and unmonitored library service to our publics

*that we have allowed the rationale of serving selected "market segments" to become a euphemism for the elimination of meaningful information services to Spanish-speaking, disadvantaged minorities, disabled and aging populations, and other informationally and economically deprived groups

*that we have allowed our association to ignore the legitimate demands of librarians for salaries comparable to other professions requiring the same degree of training and responsibility

*that we have allowed our association, ALA, to become fragmented into a myriad of competing Divisions, more intent on extracting increased revenues
from membership, than on delivering meaningful services and programs.

* that we have allowed our Intellectual Freedom Committee to narrow its focus to such an extent that it demonstrates more concern about the potential dangers of censors from the political and religious extremes, than it shows for the current and systematic attempts by the federal government to suppress, control and deliberately distort the information disseminated to the American public.

* that we have allowed ALA to embark upon a planning process, at tremendous expense to the organization, which will have the effect of further removing the inputs by general membership into the shaping of future ALA priorities, goals, and direction.

* that we have allowed, and even encouraged, cooperative technical networks to become clones of commercial data service vendors; that regional networks have devolved to little more than local sales representatives of national corporate concerns, and that neither are as concerned with serving the real needs of library users as they are with 'staying competitive' with other vendors.

* that we have allowed an increasing share of scarce library dollars to be spent on subsidizing the difference between library journal subscription prices, and the prices offered to individuals.

* that we have allowed our Public Library Association, our Association of College and Research Libraries, our Library and Information Technology Association, and other professional development groups to regard the continuing education needs of library workers as another lucrative profit and revenue source, rather than as a vital and neglected need of their members.

* that we have allowed ALA's Executive Board to be a body not elected by and from the members of the Association, but to exist through appointments from its own monolithic Council.

* that some ALA leaders are willing to diminish ALA's commitment to cooperative and state library agencies as well as service to special populations, because the division representing them doesn't meet their arbitrary dollar measures of success.

* that ALA priorities are insufficiently attuned to the professional needs of the working librarians.

* that the dominance of administrators is reflected in ALA and ALA Division priorities which increas-

ingly focus on opportunities for revenue and profit rather than on the compelling professional and service issues before us and our society in the second Reagan term, and the training and continuing education so sorely needed to enable our working librarians to stay abreast of social trends and technological change.

* that from a profession, the members of which are 80 to 90 percent women, we still rely on men to direct our professional association.

* that ALA staff seem more concerned with internal symbols and trappings of power and authority, such as departmental or divisional budgetary differences and new furnishings and equipment, than on effective management of ALA.

* that ALA division staff seem more interested in "winning" imagined competitions with their colleagues in other divisions, than in cooperating with one another in the interest of better library service.

* that our library schools are abandoning libraries, librarianship, and library science in favor of the apparently (to them) greener pastures of something called information science and information management, while shortages of technical services and children's librarians grow.

* that our library directors seem to believe that they and their librarians can and should decide who libraries will serve, not the people who pay for and need the service through the democratic processes available to make such public policy decisions.

* * * * * * * * * *

A NOTE ON MOTHER JONES

According to the 5th edition of Katz' Magazines for Libraries, Mother Jones is indexed in five indexing and abstracting services. But, to the dismay of MJ editors, Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature does not number among the five. This means that people who rely on libraries that base their subscription decisions on the RG list, do not have access to Mother Jones. RG coverage is decided by the Wilson Company, not by ALA's Wilson Indexes Committee. If you think Reader's Guide should index Mother Jones, write to the publisher: H.W. Wilson Co., 950 University Ave., Bronx, NY 10452.
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