COORDINATOR'S MEMO

From: John Hostage

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of SRRT, about which you can read more in this issue. We also plan to mark the occasion at the SRRT membership meeting during the Annual Conference in Dallas. The meeting will be held Sunday night at 8:00 p.m.

After twenty years, SRRT is still evolving and growing. The concerns of SRRT reflect the changing times through the work of its task forces. Some months before the recent oil spill, Elizabeth Morrissett, who lives in Alaska, came to Action Council with a proposal to start a task force on environmental concerns. She will be having organizing meetings in Dallas and eagerly seeks new members. SRRT task forces are given permanent status after a trial period to show member commitment to the task force.

Last summer's debate on intellectual freedom between Noel Peattie and John Swan has led to a book titled The Freedom to Lie: a Debate About Democracy, published by McFarland.

My term on Action Council and as coordinator ends after this conference. I want to thank all those who have helped and supported me over the past couple of years.

RECOMMENDED READING FOR SRRTrs:


20 YEARS OF SRRT: A NEWCOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

by David W. Reser

Now that SRRT has been around for two decades, it may be difficult for new ALA members to imagine the circumstances around which the first petition to form a social responsibilities group within ALA was circulated in 1968. A thorough examination of the SRRT Archives held at the University of Illinois reveals a turbulent period which had seen the recent assassinations of key political and social leaders, forceful anti-war demonstrations, and race riots around the country, providing fertile ground for such an organization to grow. The group of around 125 who attended the first official organizational meeting of the newly approved round table in January of 1969 set the groundwork for the creation of an organization of librarians which would provide a forum for the discussion of the responsibilities of librarians in relation to the important problems of social change which face institutions and libraries; provide for the exchange of information among all ALA's units about library activities with the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems; and act as a stimulus
to the Association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs—objectives which remain unchanged after twenty years.

From its inception SRRT has been an issue- and action-oriented group: the first official communication of the Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries was a memo from the chair of the Organization Committee, Bill DeJohn, entitled "Ready for Action!".

Many of the social issues faced by SRRT members over twenty years have changed, as illustrated by the fact that none of the original 1969 Task Forces are in existence within SRRT today. The organization of SRRT was a radical departure from the typical ALA committees or round tables, stressing voluntary initiative and action, non-hierarchical structure and democratic procedures. Though often attacked for its loose structure, it is this looseness which has given SRRT the flexibility to adapt, change and act in a timely manner to constantly changing social conditions.

Founded in part to be the conscience of ALA, SRRT has managed to work through ALA to provide this impact. Whether proposing organizational changes to ALA, providing constructive criticism to ALA leaders and publications, or petitioning for changes in conference locations based on socially responsible motives, the SRRT Action Council and Task Forces have been a necessary watchdog for an organization which has grown to over 47,000 members. (SRRT's current membership stands at almost 1000). SRRT has also impacted ALA's organization in that several of the former SRRT Task Forces have become committees and round tables on their own, including the Government Documents Round Table, Intellectual Freedom Round Table, Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, and the Ethnic Materials and Information Exchange Round Table. By providing an election forum and endorsing (or choosing not to endorse) candidates for ALA offices, SRRT has attempted to make ALA leaders more responsive to the social responsibilities of libraries.

Another important goal of SRRT was to provide for the exchange of information about social responsibilities. The SRRT Clearinghouse (absorbed into the Action Council in 1982) was originally organized under the coordination of Joan Marshall to provide mailing lists of concerned individuals, copies of bibliographies, project reports, newsletters, meeting reports, and as a forum for information exchange similar to earlier attempts such as the newsletter Fourth John. The current SRRT Newsletter, also celebrating its twentieth anniversary, has seen dramatic changes over its lifespan under various editors, but has consistently reported on SRRT conference activities, Action Council, Task Forces, affiliates (State, national, and international), and provided general news and information of concern to the socially responsible. It has been expanded over the years to include letters, editorials, petitions, book reviews, and more.

In an article marking SRRT's tenth anniversary in 1979, Herbert Biblo stated that SRRT "has shown the vitality necessary to survive beyond its original need." The vitality of the activist nature and tradition of SRRT has been shown in the past in such varied ways as monetary contributions to the Angela Davis Defense Fund (1971), filing an amicus curiae brief in a case concerning the civil rights of prisoners (1972), or sending a telegram to then President Thieu of South Vietnam protesting the suppression of free expression (1975). Although the issues facing SRRT have changed over twenty years, the future of the organization and the need for action remains intact. The remarks of Eleanor Cardiff, referring to SRRT members in 1971, remains true today: "They are not mad Don Quixotes tilting at windmills; they are St. Georges slaying dragons that have been subjugating our society and our profession into an attitude of 'let George do it.'" In this, the twentieth anniversary year of SRRT, I am proud to become one of the 2 percent of ALA members who will tackle the social responsibility issues of the next twenty years.

(I would like to give special thanks to the staff of the University Archives, U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.)
"To provide a forum for the discussion of the responsibilities of libraries in relation to the important problems of social change which face institutions and librarians; to provide for exchange of information among all units about library activities with the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems; to act as a stimulus to the Association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs; to present programs, arrange exhibits, and carry out other appropriate activities."

When one read the foregoing goal or objective for the Social Responsibilities Round Table, in 1989, these words do not sound revolutionary at all. If you were a recent graduate from a typical ALA accredited library program and you were unaware of American library history, you would believe that this is a typical unit of ALA whose mission is to be concerned about the social responsibilities of librarians and libraries as institutions. There were many members of ALA and the profession who felt that librarians should be neutral and not concerned about social issues. How could librarians remain neutral in the late 1960s, when all around them they lived in the midst of a civil rights struggle, the war in Vietnam, the police riot at the Democratic national convention in 1968, the incredible trial of Angela Davis and the murder of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, and the beginnings of the War on Poverty. While all of these activities were part of the harsh realities of the time, nevertheless the American Library Association was continuing to conduct business as usual and was oblivious to the outside world.

There seemed to have been an entrenched ALA leadership that was impervious to any change within society as well as change within the organization. There were a few of us in ALA who felt that our participation in the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, the war against Vietnam, and other social advocacy efforts should find a home in our professional organization, the American Library Association.

At the 1968 Annual Conference which took place in Kansas City, there was a call for a meeting to discuss a formation of a unit which would become the Social Responsibilities Round Table. Dorothy Bendix of the Drexel University Library School and Kenneth Duchac, who at that time was with the Maryland State Department of Education, Patricia Glass Schuman, Andy Armitage, and several others helped to develop the philosophical rationale and basis for such a unit in the Association. Out of that meeting came a small steering committee meeting that was to be held in Philadelphia the following September. Dorothy Bendix served as host for the Philadelphia meeting, and several of us came from all parts of the country to work on plans and objectives to make the organization permanent. It was soon decided that we should have a major program at the next annual conference, which was to take place in 1969 at Atlantic City. We reached the consensus that one of the problems that we librarians and library activists saw in American society was that libraries, by and large, had failed the American people. With this thought in mind the theme for the Atlantic City conference emerged as "The Failure of Libraries." This program was one of the most exciting programs that I had ever attended in ALA at that particular time. While there were some of us in ALA who were concerned about our becoming empowered within our association, at the same time, there were library school students who also were activists and genuinely concerned about the malaise in library education. Following the meeting of the Congress for Change in Washington, D.C. in 1969, the library school students converged upon the ALA conference on June 25, 1969. Some of the student leaders included James C. Welbourne of the University of Maryland, Ellen Gay Detlefsen, a recent graduate of Columbia University, and Thomas Bonn, Syracuse University, who prepared statements that were read at the conference. There was even fermentation in the largest divi-
sion of ALA, for ACRL members were demanding that the ALA Council recognize faculty status for academic librarians. Truly, these were considered by the establishment to be revolutionary times within the American Library Association.

It was not difficult for those of us who came together to forge the development of the Social Responsibilities Round Table, for we had been working on many social fronts within American Society. There were those like myself who had been deeply involved in the civil rights movement; Kay N. Cassell, who had been involved in the attempt to empower academic librarians with academic status; Mary Lee Bundy, who was concerned about making library education socially relevant, and Eric Moon, who paved the way in publishing by writing hard-hitting editorials, which pricked the conscience of the profession. There were many others who wanted to see change not only within American society but within their professional association as well. The formation of the Social Responsibilities Round Table provided me personally with a renewal of my flagging spirit, for it finally seemed as though there were other people like myself genuinely concerned about changing the face of American librarianship and making our professional organization equally concerned about librarians and the people who use libraries as well as libraries as institutions that it had historically championed.

As I review SRRT from a twenty year perspective, I am convinced that the formation of SRRT made ALA more relevant. Our victories did not come easy! When SRRT voted to provide $300 for the defense of Angela Davis, we had to make a special appeal to the ALA Executive Board to grant us permission to use the money for this purpose. Patricia Glass Schuman and Jeanne English appeared before the Executive Board and made an impassioned plea for approval that was granted. We were not to be denied, for we felt that our cause was right and just.

It was not easy, for at the 1970 Annual Conference in Detroit. I presented an anti-Vietnam war resolution that was roundly defeated by those conservatives in the Association who said that the war was not a library issue. In spite of the fact that money was being spent to destroy people. Money was being squandered—taken away from libraries that could have been used to eradicate the plight of the poor in our country.

After the defeat of the resolution, I led a delegation of more than 300 ALA members out of the Cobalt Convention Hall to protest the lack of positive action on the Anti-Vietnam Resolution. I might be the only past president of the Association who led a delegation out of an ALA convention hall.

Over the years SRRT has been the conscience of the Association as well as of the profession. Those of us who were social advocates and activists felt that there needed to be a flexible unit within the ALA structure that would be a forum as well as a place for action. Over the years I am convinced that SRRT has lived up to its goals and mission. I also believe that SRRT has kept the American Library Association honest.

Miriam I. Crawford also wrote a good essay on SRRT's past twenty years, with her reflections on its future. The article, entitled "Social Responsibilities After Twenty Years," was published in the June 1988 issue of the SRRT Newsletter.

SRRT: A NEW AGENDA (OR: BACK TO OUR ROOTS?)

This is an action plan to discuss in Dallas, its purpose being to increase SRRT's membership and influence:

1. Expand the SRRT Newsletter, including more Task Force and conference program reports, reviews, Action Council news and documents, short issue-essays, and editorials.
2. Produce a new brochure, containing a brief history, aims, activity-checklist, Task Force contact data, membership applications, and selected bibliography on SRRT and library activism.
3. Join national coalitions and endorse boycotts, campaigns, and legislation as ALA SRRT (e.g. Shell, GE,
Nestle-American Home Products, grape and tuna boycotts, National Coalition for the Homeless-sponsored bills, Athletes for Equality campaign), announcing such acts with press releases, etc. to library and other relevant media/groups.

4. Lobby ALA, ALA units, and other library organizations and agencies on such issues as minority recruitment, education, and promotion, access to alternative media and viewpoints, cataloging reform, services to poor and homeless people, and VDT [video display terminal] hazards and guidelines.

If you are unable to attend the Dallas conference, send comments and suggestions directly to either of us or to any Action Council member.

—Sanford Berman
Hennepin County Library
12601 Ridgedale Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55343

—Elliott Shore
Historical Studies - Social Science Library
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, NJ 08540

SRRT'S CURRENT MEMBERSHIP STATUS

As of September 1988, membership in the American Library Association numbered 47,249—a 4.7 percent increase over the previous year’s membership. Within ALA, the unit showing the largest membership increase was the Ethnic Materials and Information Exchange Round Table (11 percent). The unit with the largest membership decline was the Junior Members Round Table (-8.8 percent). SRRT demonstrated a solid 5.9 percent increase in membership, with 895 personal members and 95 organizational members.

(source: Patricia Scarry, ALA)

BLACK STUDIES PROGRAM IN DALLAS

The topic for the Black Studies Discussion Program at ALA in Dallas will be "How Publishing Affects Blacks."

CUBA TOURS FOR LIBRARIANS: A REPORT FROM TOUR LEADER SEETH GODFREY

The recent tour of Cuba attracted 14 librarians from 10 states. The Cubans were very organized and receptive to the idea of having North American librarians meeting their Cuban counterparts. In addition to the library visits we had time for the beach, city sightseeing, a visit to a rum factory and sugar mill, and a meeting with the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. Of course, no trip would be complete without an evening at the Tropicana.

Future library tours to Cuba have been arranged, varying in length, price, and itinerary:
* Nov. 23-Dec. 3, 1989: Havana, Isle of Youth, Santiago de Cuba. $975
* Jan. 4-19, 1990: Havana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Camaguey, Santiago de Cuba. $1,075
* March 8-18, 1990: Havana, Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo. $945

Price includes: hotel accommodations (double occupancy); two meals a day; English-speaking guide; roundtrip airfare from Miami; all air and ground travel in Cuba; airport taxes.

For more information, call (203) 786-5547 (day) or (203) 776-6108 (evening), or write:
Seth Godfrey
10 Glen Road
New Haven, CT 06511

June 1989
GAY AND LESBIAN TASK FORCE REPORT

Annual Program News:

"Our Best-Kept Secret: Creating, Collecting and Preserving Gay and Lesbian Materials"
—June 26, 1989 2:00-5:30 p.m.
Sheraton Dallas Hotel, Austin and Houston Rooms

Help is still needed. Contact: Leon Bey, 1362 Harvard Blvd., Dayton, OH 45406

Gay/Lesbian Read Aloud

GLTF will sponsor a two-hour program of readings during this year's Annual Conference. Persons interested may read from their own work, or from works written by someone else. The location of this event is the Stouffer Hotel, Grand Ballroom B. Anyone interested in reading should contact Joseph Eagan, P.O. Box 22810, Baltimore, MD 21203. Please include the following:

*your name, address, telephone number
*where you will be staying in Dallas, plus phone number
*what you would like to read, and the length of the reading in minutes. Readings should be around 15 minutes maximum. If there is time left over, additional readings may take place. We hope to make this an annual event, depending on the response. As always, GLTF events are open to anyone interested.

Gay/Lesbian Book Award

Gay/Lesbian Book Award Committee Chair Adam Schiff has announced the committee's choices for the 1989 award. There are two winners: The Swimming Pool Library by Alan Hollinghurst (Random House) and After Delores by Sarah Schulman (Dutton). As of this writing, Mr. Hollinghurst is not able to attend. We are awaiting a response from Ms. Schulman and/or Dutton representatives. The awards will be presented at the Annual Program at 2:00 p.m. on June 26.

—Roland Hansen

BOOK REVIEW


The Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program "seeks to deal with the roots of conflicts and not merely the symptoms." Working with inner-city New York City schools since 1972, their work has been recognized and used in nationwide school programs. This volume is the first trade edition although there have been five previous editions and twelve printings. The authors have taken the concept of creative conflict resolution and incorporated it into the daily activities of the classroom. The skills that need to be taught and learned are self-esteem, cooperation, communication, creative problem-solving, and conflict resolution. This book is highly recommended. Making the process of conflict resolution fun will teach and encourage kids to use these skills in their daily lives, as well as in the future.

—Sue Kopp

NEW LC SUBJECT HEADINGS OF INTEREST

Feminist psychology
Gay accommodations
Martin Luther King Day
Nonsexist language
Social work with the homeless

Revised headings:
old: Cocktail waitresses
new: Cocktail servers
old: Hotel maids
new: Hotel cleaning personnel

SRRT Newsletter 6 June 1989
GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARIANS INTERACTING WITH SOUTH AFRICA

The African Studies Association Archives-Libraries Committee has developed guidelines for librarians in keeping with the international boycott of South Africa which has been modified to support the South African democratic movement while still isolating the apartheid regime. The guidelines will be presented at ALA in Dallas as part of the SRRT International Human Rights Task Force panel on Sunday, June 25.

In addition to general principles and recommendations regarding the role of librarians in relation to South Africa, (for example, "Librarians are encouraged to be of service to the South African mass democratic movement in the context of their professional work"), the guidelines address recommendations for collection development, reference service and outreach, recommendations regarding professional travel to South Africa, and recommendations for action. The guidelines encourage librarians to collect a balanced range of materials, including those counter to the pro-apartheid materials often distributed free of charge by the S.A. government. Librarians are also encouraged to question professional travel situations—whether pro-apartheid or anti-apartheid causes would be served by the travel.

For more information, contact Corinne Nyquist, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY College at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY 12561 (914)257-2139.

LIBRARIANS' RESPONSE TO CENSORSHIP OF Satanic Verses: EASY WAY OUT?

In response to an item in Library Hotline reporting a demonstration by librarians against bookstore decisions to remove Satanic Verses from their shelves, Sanford Berman submitted the following to the editor of LH:

Sure, yanking Satanic Verses was an act of censorship. But chain bookstores practice a far more pervasive and insidious kind of censorship every day: the exclusion of unorthodox, small-press, and alternative publications. For example, how many Waldenbooks or Dalton stores carry anything published by women's, feminist, or lesbian presses such as Naiad, Shameless Hussy, Seal, Firebrand, or Cleis? How many stock titles issued by radical and labor publishers such as Charles H. Kerr, Black Rose, Monthly Review, South End, and New Society? How many offer works from gay, ethnic, and sex-positive houses such as Africa World, Shakti, Gay Sunshine, Red Sea, Arte Publico, and Down There?

Demonstrating at Waldenbooks about Rushdie is too easy. And it delivers the wrong message, implying that except for this one delinquency the chains are apostles of free speech and intellectual freedom. They're not. Only independent and alternative bookshops are truly committed to diversity and freedom of the press. So instead of self-indulgently picketing Waldenbooks, the time would be better spent by patronizing and supporting the many alternative bookstores who not only can't compete financially with the well-heeled giant chains, but also often get vandalized and threatened by rightist goons and bigots.

The SRRT Newsletter (ISSN 0749-1670) is published quarterly by the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. It is sent to members of SRRT as part of their membership and is available to others on subscription for $10.00 per year. Subscription is open to both members and non-members of ALA. Correspondence and manuscripts may be sent to SRRT/ALA, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611, or directly to the editor at: Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-5610 (BITNET: SOKOL@WSUVM1)

Editor: Chris Sokol
Editorial Board: Elizabeth Morrissett
              Linda Pierce
              John Sheridan

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: JULY 24
This newly-formed task force will be meeting in Dallas at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, as well as Monday afternoon from 4:30-5:30. Look for locations in the conference program. We hope to get organized so that not only the Alaska oil spill of 1989, but other environmental threats can be publicized and information exchanged. Bring your samples of publications and media and your ideas to any of the above meetings.

—Elizabeth Morrissett

SRRT MEETINGS AT ALA DALLAS

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SRRT BOOTH AT DALLAS

Persons with materials for the SRRT booth, or who would like to volunteer time to staff the booth, should contact Elizabeth Morrissett at Alaska Pacific University Library, 4101 University Dr., Anchorage, AK 99508-4672 (907/564-8284—four hours earlier than Eastern time).