



LSSIRT
Library Support Staff Interests Round Table

LSSIRT Newsletter

President's Corner



LSSIRT President Dorothy Morgan

The Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP) Advisory Committee will hold an Open Forum at the ALA Midwinter meeting in Denver, CO, on Saturday, January 24 from 10:30 a.m. till noon in the Colorado Convention Center, room 702. We will present our final implementation recommendations and invite your feedback. Comments will be accepted until January 31, 2009 when revisions based on the comments will be made. All documents relating to LSSCP, including expanded explanations of the material below are available at www.ala-apa.org/lsscp/

Comments may be sent to Jamie Bragg (jbragg@ala-apa.org) or to Jamie at ALA Headquarters, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.

Seasons Greetings and Happy New Year from the LSSIRT President

It's hard to believe that a new year is just around the corner OR when you read this newsletter, we may well have reached the new year of 2009!

Since the last newsletter, it's been a busy time for each and everyone one of us.

I've written previously about getting ready for the journey that we all must take together. I must admit the train has left the track and we are full steam a head and in the right direction.

From the continuous development of a strong strategic plan to the library support staff certification program, there is always something for us to do.

The Steering Committee, LSSIRT members, ALA liaison, and families never cease to amaze me. They truly exemplify the holiday spirit of

giving from the heart. From being the first to respond to committee appointments to encouragement and participation from emails and other communications, to support staff helping others, our library community has been enriched by the experience and support of others.

While we all celebrate the holidays differently, my hope is that this holiday season will afford you the opportunity to spend some time with the special people in your lives.

To quote from a recent article I read from an author and poet Mary Anne Radmacher, "May your walls know joy... may every room hold laughter...and every window open to great possibility."

I may have missed wishing each of you a very happy and safe holiday season, but I have the opportunity now to wish you a GREAT NEW YEAR!!

Now for some exciting news about certification.

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Captain Your Destiny and “Sea” Where It Takes You!



Presented by Dorothy Morgan at 2008 Empowerment Conference

In 1984, it all started for me as a part-time library page and I must admit it's been uphill ever since. My library career has indeed enriched my entire life.

Today I will be talking about your growth and fears and all that is embedded within. I will be talking about challenges, mostly change and attitude that addresses anyone's life both personally and professionally. Taking charge of your development assures a culture of ownership, integrity, respect, innovation, and excellence in all you do. People who are highly skilled, work together, and are motivated to achieve results really define who we are as library support staff.

Buckminster Fuller wrote, “There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly and that is kind of like looking at life changes from the outside in. But when you look at change from the inside out, what the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.” Most people see others as they are, but a leader can see people as they could be. We can continue to grow ourselves when we help others to grow and develop personally and professionally.

An unknown author wrote, “I held my breath; I stepped outside and let the change begin. I took a step and with new strength I'd never felt before, I kissed my comfort zone goodbye and closed and locked the door. “You see, I never enjoyed changed, until I realized how boring life would be without it. In fact, I feared it. And, since life is all about change you can't enjoy it if you're scared all the time. I believe the skill of

working through change is underrated. I say skill because you may be born with it; you may not, but everyone can learn to cope with change. There is a price for a new change but to be evolved as a person at the end, the new life journey could be priceless. Learning to accept change, for me, is thinking of change as a positive challenge. I try to focus on the opportunities that change can bring to me, rather than the obstacles I need to overcome.

And, then there's attitude. Attitude isn't simply a state of mind; it is a reflection of what we value and it is with this state of mind that I remain in charge of my attitudes. I'm sure we all can quote different proverbs about attitude, but it's important to know that no one else has the power to alter our attitudes without our permission. Remember, life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I respond to it. It is with this state of mind that I remain in charge of my attitudes. Facing challenges makes you a survivor. If I could encourage you to change one thing about your attitude, it would be this: Stop thinking of your obstacles as obstacles and start thinking of them as invaluable opportunities to grow, gain insight and act creatively or proactively in each situation. My point is that change is inevitable, it will not slow down. What can be enhanced in our lives is the ability to adapt to those changes.

Marcus Buckingham, author of *The One Thing You Need to Know: the Secret of Success* says we should eliminate the things we hate doing from our lives and focus on doing the things we love even better. All library workers face some of the very same obstacles: compensation, lack of career advancement, lack of educational opportunities, heavy workloads, and lack

of recognition, burnout, and isolation. Many paraprofessionals cope by drawing upon their own interpersonal skills, independent decision-making, and an intimate knowledge of library procedures and applications.

Making small changes that you are in control of is a good way to practice handling change. Saul Alinsky said, “Change means movement, movement means friction, friction means heat, and heat means controversy.” There is always risk involved. Risking a little gives you experience and takes the sting out of it. The changes libraries face today are driven by a variety of factors that affect us deeply, even though most of them are exter-

**“It's Choice — not chance
— that determines your
destiny.”**

—Jean Nidetch

nal to the library itself. Accepting change is a life skill that is learned. You can resist change, or you can embrace it; it is up to you. The outcome is directly related to how YOU choose to handle the change.

In 1997, Larry Oberg wrote, “Today in libraries around the globe, staff are learning new skills, filling new assignments and changing the workplace for the better! Administrators are finding ways to fill jobs with some new



and some formerly 'professional only' job descriptions, with intelligent, capable paraprofessionals." Those words still apply, over 10 years later. Library staffing patterns are further complicated by the need to adapt to new technologies. Faced with the prospect of extinction, most librarians have chosen to redefine their roles, their mission, and their profession. In so doing, they have all but given up performing traditional process work of the library, work that characterized the role of librarians a generation ago.

Carla Stoffle, in her 1996 book entitled *Choosing our Future: College and Research Libraries*, wrote that librarians must place a higher value on the contribution of support staff, examining their ideas and suggestions on an equal basis with those of librarians. She advocated for libraries to move away from staff who perform narrow tasks within the tightly defined job descriptions toward staff who are empowered to make decisions about the work they do and how they do it in a manner that, in her words, results in "delighted customers."

Look at the opportunities gained by support staff over the past several years: the establishment of LSSIRT (15 years ago), Library Journal's Paraprofessional of the Year Award, COPE-3 (The ALA Third Congress for Library Support Staff held in Chicago in 2003), National Library Worker Day, special membership rate for support staff joining ALA, and more inclusiveness of library workers in professional journals. We now have many more opportunities to contribute to our profession. When we talk about new technologies, just look at how our jobs have moved

into dramatically different roles as new services are implemented. We are challenged to develop and implement those services while maintaining traditional services, usually with no increase in staff. Advances in Acquisitions, Technical Services, Cataloging, and the ubiquitous Web have become the platforms for electronic patron service. What becomes inherently important to recognize is that library support staff are the backbones of libraries. We are Webmasters, systems administrators, and library skills/information literacy instructors. We are supervisors in charge of entire departments, paraprofessionals who run their own "Information Provider" enterprises, and that is just the beginning.

But, you may be asking yourself, "What's in it for me?" When you Captain your destiny, you are attesting to taking care of your career. That it matters enough to you. Your goal is what you have set as your vision or your imagination to guide you through everything you do. You need to focus your thoughts on reasons that you can succeed, rather on why you can't. You need to see change as a glass half full rather than half empty.

Our belief systems shape the way we look at the world and our perspective also changes what we actually see. And, since I love butterflies so much, I'll end with a short story about a butterfly. A man found a cocoon. One day, a small opening appeared, and the man sat and watched the cocoon for several hours as the life form inside struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress; it wasn't moving. So the

kindly man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But something was strange. The butterfly had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly, because he expected that at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to support the body that would soon contract. But neither transformation happened. In fact, the butterfly spent its short life crawling around with a swollen body and deformed wings. It was never able to fly. What the man in his compassion and haste did not understand was that the restrictive cocoon, and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the small opening of the cocoon, are nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings, so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we were allowed to proceed through life without any obstacles, we would not be as strong as we could have been. Not only that, we would never be able to fly. Change forces choices. We can choose to embrace these changes as our destiny and find the positive in them. Change is life. The Choice is yours. Captain your destiny and "sea" where it takes you!



Midwinter Meeting, Denver, Colorado, Jan. 23-28, 2009



If you are attending ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver, here are some important events:

- Exhibits open, Jan. 23 at 5:15 p.m. followed by All-Conference reception on the Exhibits Floor.
- Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP) Advisory Committee meeting, 7:30 a.m.-4:30

p.m., Jan. 22, Colorado Convention Center (CCC) room 204. All are welcome to observe.

- Steering Committee/Membership Meeting, Saturday, Jan. 24, 8 a.m.-noon, Colorado Convention Center room 304. Open meeting.
- Library Support Staff Certification Program Open Forum, 10:30 a.m. to noon, Jan. 24, CCC room 702.
- LSSIRT Sweet Treat Meet and

Greet, 7-9 p.m., Jan. 24, home of Jim Hill, 474 Logan Street, Denver. For information, call (303) 744-2559. No RSVP needed.

- ALA-APA Council meeting, Jan. 26, 10:15-11:15 a.m., CCC Four Seasons Ballroom
- ALA Council Sessions will occur daily from Jan. 25-28 in the CCC Four Seasons Ballroom. Times vary; consult program booklet.

LSSIRT Councilor news — Jennifer S. Kutzik



Camila Alire

ALA President-Elect Camila Alire has named LSSIRT Councilor, Jennifer S. Kutzik, to her Presidential Initiative Reactor Advisory Group (REACT). Alire's leadership initiative

is tentatively titled: "Libraries: The Heart of All Communities."

President-Elect Alire has formed a Leadership Workgroup (responsible for the creativity/design of the Initiative) and a Reactor Group. Councilor Kutzik will represent all library support staff on the REACT group and add a grassroots perspective. In addition, she will keep support staff apprised of the work on the initiative. This is a two-year appointment.

ALA Council will be conducting the business of our association during the Midwinter Meeting. Included on the agenda will be discussion of the Task Force on Electronic Participation re-

port. This group was charged with examining the current meeting practices of ALA and developing recommendations for increased virtual opportunities for ALA members to participate in meetings and member benefits while accommodating those persons for whom travel is a hardship (whether financial or physical). The Task Force completed a 16-question survey of over 1600 ALA members in June 2008 concerning current e-participation practices and views about ALA policies. The documents from this Task Force may be accessed at: <http://tinyurl.com/7jnhhd>

The two candidates for ALA President-Elect are: Roberta Stevens and Kenton Oliver. Ms. Stevens is currently at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Her website is: <http://www.robertastevens.com/> Mr. Oliver is Executive Director of the Starke County District Library, Canton, Ohio. His website is: <http://www.kentonoliver.com/> Midwinter Meeting attendees can meet the can-

didates at an Open Forum on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 11 am to 12 noon in the CCC Four Seasons Ballroom.

ALA Executive Board approved shortening the 2010 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference by one day, ending on Tuesdays rather than Wednesdays.

ALA Committees and the Washington Office are working on a proposal to Congress and President-Elect Obama that public libraries be given a one-time infusion of \$100 million in stimulus funding.



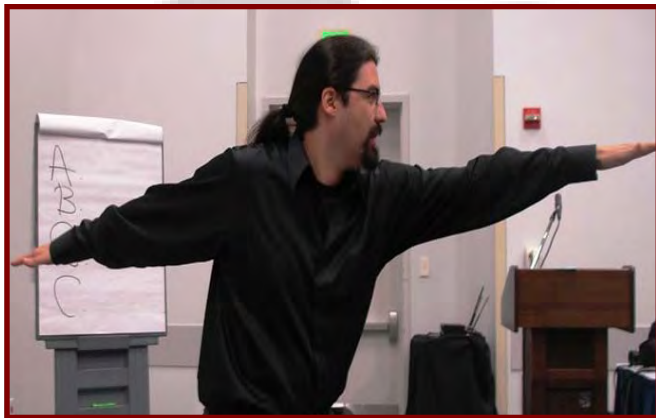
Contact your LSSIRT Councilor by calling 970-491-2503 or E-mail at: Jennifer.Kutzik@Colostate.edu



LSSIRT President Dorothy Morgan doing the Hula at Buca Di Beppo



Hula Dancers at this Annual's Exhibits — Aloha!



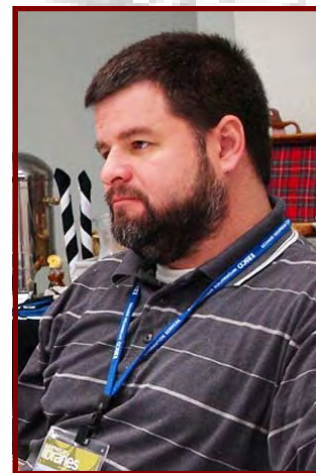
Michael Stephens at the Empowerment Conference



ALA president Jim Rettig



ALA Council Meeting at Annual Conference



J.P. Pendleton, LSSIRT Steering Committee Member-At-Large

ALA's Library Support Staff Interests Round Table

ALA Staff Liaison information:

Darlena Davis
ALA/LSSIRT
50 E. Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
Email: ddavis@ala.org

Please send questions regarding LSSIRT Newsletter content to:

Kerrie Stramler
Email: stramlerk@u.library.arizona.edu

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LSSIRT Steering Committee:

President: Dorothy Morgan
Email: dot@lpl.org

Secretary: Kareen Turner
Email: akturmer@uark.edu

Membership: Mary Nation
Email: mickeymousetation@hotmail.com

Publications/Communications Committee:

Chair: Jennifer Kutzik
Email: Jennifer.Kutzik@ColoState.Edu

Newsletter Co-Editor: Kerrie Stramler
Email: stramlerk@u.library.arizona.edu



<http://www.ala.org/ala/lssirt/lssirt.cfm>

Our mission is to provide an arena within ALA for programming, communication and networking for library support staff.

Sign-up for the LSSIRT Members-Only E-list!

For timely updates and for networking with LSSIRT colleagues, be sure and sign-up for the very low volume LSSIRT e-list.

To sign-up, send an e-mail to Martha Parsons at parsons@halcyon.com with your ALA membership number and ask to be subscribed.

