SRRT By-Laws Report

The By-Laws Committee of the Round Table—Jackie Eubanks, Chairman; Helga Eason, Hugh Atkinson—has submitted its suggestions for ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE to the Chairman of the Organizing Committee. By the time of the annual meeting, we should have the outline of a dynamic beast of a group. Whether the Round Table remains a skeleton or becomes a handsome beast, however, depends on you. Your actions in small groups and in the large Round Table put meat on the bare bones of organization, and support the back bone of the Round Table.

In summary, the provisions of the proposed ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE call for two committees to coordinate activities: a Steering Committee which is responsible for annual meeting programs and for the coordination of activities of national project groups of personal members; and a Clearinghouse Committee, which is responsible for the newsletter and for reporting activities of all working groups, including affiliate members.

These two committees are elected from among volunteers solicited each year to replace a portion of the committee.

Work groups to act on specific problems can be formed by members at their own will, as well as by the Steering Committee. Some elements of game theory have been incorporated into the O&P for work groups, including the important note that a time commitment be made by all work groups that are formed, to encourage action and to prevent a plethora of status-conscious "standing committees." Since groups can be formed at will on projects, budget for these groups will be based on need rather than on a rigidly planned program of expenses. When the need of any group goes beyond the resources of the Round Table and the resourcefulness of the members of the group, any group can ask for voluntary support from the other members of the Round Table.

The Organizing Committee will have reviewed the proposed O&P by June; it is hoped that copies will be sent to you before the Atlantic City meeting.

Jackie Eubanks

SRRT Atlantic City Program

THE FAILURE OF LIBRARIES: A CALL TO ACTION will be held June 24, 8:00-10:30 p.m., Dennis Hotel, Borton Hall. Miss Kathy Weibel is preparing a multi-media exhibit in conjunction with the program. The program information send in mid-March listed Don Roberts as a tentative speaker; he will be with us.

We intend, with the assistance of the Congress for Change, to actively publicize the program meeting at Atlantic City.

The business meeting of SRRT, which will include a report from the Congress for Change, will be held June 26, 4:30-6:00 p.m., in Room 20, Convention Hall. Anyone interested, and we hope there will be many, is urged to attend.

Patricia Schuman

SRRT Clearinghouse

An SRRT Newsletter is, I believe, a must in the future. It will not only be a means to disseminate information about working groups, but more importantly, will serve as a stimulus to action. Concerned librarians now have a formal, national organization through which to express their concern. One of our first concerns should be to broaden the base of our group—we want to show all of those librarians who deplore even just one social injustice that they can do something as a librarian about it. A newsletter, which has full coverage of activities and broad circulation, can show them.
What is happening

OHIO

Mrs. Nora Rothman, a library school student, informed the Clearinghouse of a new experimental course begun this semester in the Graduate Library School of Case Western Reserve University: The Library in the Social Revolution. The course was taught this semester by Mr. Goldwyn, but most of the library school faculty is involved in the effort to establish the methods and format of the course in the future.

There is a new State Plan now in a bill before the Ohio Legislature. Suggested are library regions—cutting across county lines if needed, but mainly embracing a number of counties—to be called Associated Library Service Organizations (ALSO's). Any type of library in the region may join an ALSO to extend service to its own clientele through cooperation with all the other associated libraries of the region. The plan is designed to help, in particular, the weaker, poorer areas, but should be of great benefit to all. Almost any service conceived of as necessary or valuable to an immediate, or to the greater, library community may be planned through an ALSO.

PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. Andrew Armitage, who is active in the "Alliance" and the "Congress for Change," reports that: "Last fall members of the library school faculty of the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh and students formed the Permanent Association for Intellectual Resources (PAIR) to combat censorship activities in Western Pennsylvania. This type of organization, working with the ACLU, can provide an effective counter-group to the CDL. Members can, and have here in Pittsburgh, taken the witness chair to testify in defense of intellectual freedom. It seems to me that some nationwide activity of this type might be of interest."

Mr. Armitage also made a provocative suggestion: "Issues - money. With the coming ABM fight - the question of funding the insane pile of junk comes up. Funds are going to be cutback from HES to pay for the war and for playtoy weapons such as the ABM - and part of that money will be removed from federal programs affecting library service. The Round Table cannot duck taking a political stand on this issue - not merely taking a stand - but organizing a letter campaign - the time is coming for debate and many senators and congressmen are undecided. As a minor profession we should find a place to stand on such issues."

How about it! Write letters on this issue, and similar ones, identifying ourselves as librarians who are concerned enough not merely to write to a Senator, but to have joined a library organization such as the SRRT or Congress for Change—through which to express our concern as librarians in, hopefully, other dynamic and meaningful actions.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

The Prince Georges County Memorial Library planned a Social Responsibilities Seminar on April 3d: Community Services and Means of Meeting Social Responsibilities. High John Library was to be the topic of the morning meeting; reports from three branch librarians on their activities in their communities were to be given in the afternoon.

ALBANY, NEW YORK

Mr. E. J. Josey and Miss Fay Blake are organizing a local Social Responsibilities Round Table. The first meeting will be held in Albany, May 22d.

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MISSOURI

Ann Webb, at a meeting of librarians of St. Charles County, organized a quickie question on social responsibilities as a basis for discussion and with the intention of clarifying what is meant by social responsibilities. Co of her questions was: "In 1966, the State of California considered a very stringent censorship law. An organization called CLEAN lobbied for the law, and newspapers took stands for or against the bill. The California Library Association never publicly announced its opposition to the bill. Was there any reason why the Association should not have? Was there any reason why the Association should speak out? Could the California Library Association have had any real influence on the final outcome? Can you think of other issues in which librarians should consider trying to affect legislation by working as a group?"
NEW YORK CITY

The first meeting of the New York chapter of the newly formed ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table was held March 9, 1969. About sixty librarians attended this meeting which was held in the Jefferson Market Branch of the NYPL. Public, university, and special librarians attended.

Sanford Goin chaired the meeting, the main business of which was the formation of small groups to work on topics and projects suggested from the floor. The suggestions were varied and, after much discussion, six groups formed to work on specific projects. All of the groups have been active, and I have information about a few.

1. Specific telephone reference for poverty patrons. This group has since concluded that the qualification of "for poverty patrons" is artificial and have expanded their goal to providing tools which will aid any referral agency in providing the information necessary to get any New York City citizen with a social problem to the right agency. They are compiling and intend to publish, a list of subject headings for use in telephone reference of this type. They are collecting, and will organize and publish a bibliography of materials (city, state, federal, private informational pamphlets, directories, etc.) in which the needed information can be found, and they are compiling a list of agencies, organizations, which are active in the area of social problems. In the course of their activity, they have made contact with outside groups and presently have one non-librarian, from the Mayor's Telephone Reference Service, working with them.

2. Create library service for Neighborhoods and Colleges.

3. Community involvement in action.

4. ALA reform. An example of this group's activity is the communication--sent to all library schools and library publications in addition to other groups--on the proposed ALA constitution change which is included elsewhere in this newsletter.

5. Access to libraries study. This group originally planned to study the proposition that persons of certain classes and races have unequal access to libraries. The drastic New York City budget cut which has affected everyone's access to libraries diverted their efforts for the present. They have participated in demonstrations protesting the library budget cuts. For one of these, in front of the New York Public Library on 42d St., they constructed a "beautifully horrifying dragon" in which they paraded; the dragon had "Blood budget" written on one side and "Death to culture" on the other. They participated in an equally dramatic fashion, in a demonstration before the Main Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library on the first Sunday that that library was closed as a result of the budget cut.

The groups listed above are all long-term project groups. One quickie group also formed. Sanford Goin organized a group of librarians--and publicized it in a local newspaper and on the radio--to march in New York City's annual Peace March behind the banner: Librarians for Peace.

On May 6th an emergency meeting of all the members of the New York Librarians' Round Table on Social Responsibilities was called to prepare a statement to be presented the following day at the New York City Council budget hearings. The statement follows:

"We librarians vigorously protest any and all of the cuts in public services, welfare and medical as well as cultural. Ironically enough, the scheduled evening and weekend cuts for libraries, museums, parks, etc. discriminate against the ordinary working person who can use them only during the deleted hours, yet his tax burden is the highest in N.Y.C. history.

"While we trust that these cuts will be rescinded, if they are not we hope that the people of N.Y.C. will not allow this attack on their welfare, culture and recreation to take place. We believe they have the right to keep their institutions open, and we encourage the people to reclaim them. As librarians, we offer our assistance to those communities which demonstrate their wish to maintain their former library hours.

"In any event, we pledge our continuing efforts to enrich the services of the library, and to encourage much needed community involvement in our future course."

A NOTABLE CONTRIBUTION

Mr. Don Rein, President, Servitium Book Co., Inc., 41 Riverdale Ave., Yonkers, N. Y., has contributed $300.00 (which was sorely needed) to the Program Committee. He has also volunteered to print the New York Round Table's Newsletter.
Proposed
ALA Constitution change

COMMITTEE FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE ALA
NEW YORK ROUND TABLE ON
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIBRARIES

To whom it may concern:

As members of the library profession we are naturally interested in the progress of ALA. We therefore note with concern the text of the following proposed amendment to Article VI of the ALA Constitution:

Any action of the Council may be set aside by a majority vote by mail in which one-fourth of the personal members of the Association have voted. Such vote by mail shall be held upon petition of two hundred members of the Association. The petition must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Association no later than ninety days after the measure has been approved by Council, otherwise the action of Council becomes binding.

At present, members may set aside any action of Council by a three-fourths vote at any meeting of the Association, or through petition procedures. We believe that the proposed amendment nullifies the opportunity for a fair balance of opinion. Ninety days is surely insufficient time to inform the membership and secure two hundred signatures. Argumentation by mail is scarcely a satisfactory or efficacious way to rescind a Council vote. This amendment, if adopted, will further discourage the participation of the general membership, negate proportional representation and undermine the professional objectives of ALA.

As concerned librarians we ask you to undertake the following appropriate actions: 1) Attend the ALA convention in Atlantic City and cast your vote against this undemocratic amendment. 2) Write to Council members and/or ALA Headquarters. (Consult the November 1968 ALA Bulletin for the roster of Council members.)

We will appreciate suggestions and opinions concerning this matter. Please forward these to: Edsel Ford McCoy, Chairman, COMMITTEE FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE ALA, 545 Glenmore Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11207.

Carrying the message

On Wednesday March 12th a panel of three members of the New York Librarians' Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries participated in a colloquium at Pratt Institute's Graduate Library School. Mr. George Hathaway, Mrs. Patricia Schuman, and Mr. John Clune told a group of about 35 students and faculty about the objectives and experiences of the pilot Round Table and how it was anticipated that this experimental group would fit into the newly recognized national Round Table. They also tackled larger questions, such as the role of the socially conscious professional both in a changing society and within ALA. The response of those who attended was extremely gratifying and is ample evidence that many graduating librarians wish to be involved and to act, as librarians, on the social issues of today. One student, for instance, asked the panel for their views on how to structure into library school curricula a core course dealing with the social responsibilities of libraries and librarians. Another student brought up the problem of the insufficient access to material in America on both sides of controversial issues such as the civil war in Biafra. These are vital issues which might easily fall within the purview of local action groups formed within the compass of a regional Round Table.

SRRT Clearinghouse (continued from page 1)

That is for the future. For the present, this newsletter is intended as a stimulus to action on your part. I, as the Clearinghouse Committee, have had very vague responsibilities since Mid-Winter. A few people have written me; the information they sent is included in this newsletter. I know about activities in New York since I live there, so New York activity is heavily represented. But what about the rest of the country? We need a real newsletter for wide distribution in Atlantic City—one that will stimulate attendance at our program and business meetings, and that will convince those well-meaning, but inactive, librarians that social responsibilities can and are being confronted by librarians as librarians. Please fill out the form and send it to me as soon as possible.

Joan K. Marshall
The CLEARINGHOUSE COMMITTEE of the new ALA SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ROUND TABLE is looking for information to clear.

We want to get out a news letter before we meet at Atlantic City.

I think that an important activity of our new Round Table will be keeping librarians across the length of the country informed of what the librarians along its breadth are doing to fulfill our social responsibilities, and how we are doing it.

The dissemination of this information is necessary to stimulate ideas, coordinate action, assist one another, and—you name it.

It has been almost two months since the Mid-Winter meeting of ALA and the formation of our Round Table. Do you have any proposals for possible activities of the national Round Table? for a Round Table in your region? If you have any "could we's?" concrete proposals, proposals with suggestions for implementation, send them to me.

Has there been any social-responsibility-conscious activity in your region since Mid-Winter. Meetings, formal or informal, discussions, etc.

Please, send me comments, ideas, information.

Sincerely,

Joan K. Marshall, Chairman
Clearinghouse Committee, ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table
Brooklyn College
Bedford Ave. & Ave. H
Brooklyn, New York 11210
WANTED: UNREASONABLE LIBRARIANS

What our free society needs at this moment in time is the likes of a Will Rogers or George Bernard Shaw, either of whom could slay pseudo-political dragons in a sentence or two. You remember Shaw maintained that all progress depends on the unreasonable man. Are you unreasonable? Do you see things taking place to which you strongly object? Of course you do. And do you then give public utterance to your gut-reactions? Or do you tend to reserve your remarks for the crowd you know best, hoping that somehow your views will spread and, osmotically, penetrate the skins of a wider, action-oriented audience?

Of course, there's little risk in sounding off among the like-minded. But the feeling, deep inside, that impels one to speak out with conviction among a group of strangers - most of whom are known to entertain hostile philosophies - is the mark of Shaw's reasonable man.

Insularism in a profession which deals with the public has to be self-defeating. Would it be socially responsible of librarians, for example, to care particularly about the problems of the Lions, or those of the Rotarians, Kiwanians, the Teamster's Union, the Society Sanitary Engineers, the School Board, or the City Council? Librarians couldn't spare the time, and to be frank, probably couldn't be less. And these organizations in turn have a pitifully meager knowledge of and interest in the library and its problems. Little chance exists that there is any inclination to share each other's ache and pains in this best of all possible societies. Yet the library has special position in the complex system of group interaction. It should be the one respected institution that can do something about real problems and aspirations and the worthwhile concerns of special interest groups. The library's big guns, back in the stacks, are wed with a concentration of "know-power" that makes it a genuine, if often overlooked, bastion of democracy. Yet in spite of the some resources at their command, librarians tend to view the contemporary scene from a somewhat parochial point of view. The "social responsibility" has a nice round sound but what does it mean to you, and you, and you? If, for instance, it implies that average librarian is going to do or say the unpopular thing, parade a view in public that runs the chance of alienating the power structure, forget it. This is, at least, wishful speculation. Librarians, at this juncture are just not "unreasonable" enough. The ability to y out a socially responsible action requires a long term program of pre-conditioning that will, in time, bring about among the mass librarians the kind of positive response they are at this point, by background and inclination, in no position to give. Until they are made in an action image, until they are convinced that they can speak out with conviction and with authority "social responsibility" will remain an impressive but empty term.

Then, there is the all-important matter of conditioning the public for the action-oriented posture we would adopt. Does the public and accept the library in this kind of role? You know the answer to that if you've ever been under the censor's lash. As long as the public pay the rent and the salaries they alone will decide - for better or worse - what the library's position will be. On the big prove issues libraries can only be effective in the activist role to the extent that they have sold the idea and earned understanding acceptance as an action force by the community.

his, obviously, is an educational and public relations job - and it will be a long and tough one. Sometime, somehow, libraries are to have to take a leaf from the public relations book of top-flight firms who engage in a national business. No successful organization ever overlooks the fact it is a composite of many parts - all accountable, in the final analysis, to the public; that, above all, profits from these parts pay the stockholder dividends.

In the library context the top administration, starting first at the national level, would do well to plan procedures that will reach to local taxpayers, consistently, pointedly and convincingly in a major program aimed at creating a climate favorable to the spread acceptance of the library's importance and value in an activist capacity. An activist role is, at the outset, therefore, not only a need at the national library organizational level, to create a unification of objectives and to avoid fragmentation of effort in the iteration of diverse interpretations of what constitutes social responsibility. This means there must be a continuing vigilance in top, head on, library brush fires wherever they flare up. Where a single library faces the guns of the censorship group the whole structure stands on trial. Here we could do worse than adopt the philosophy that has contributed to unionism's success over tax: support the locals and the national image will take care of itself.

Tional advertising, publicity and public relations constitute the primary forces which must be called into action to work, over the term in creating the "umbrella" under which local promotional follow-through can capitalize, at the grass roots. Operating in a where, at least, an awareness and general accord with library aspirations has been created, all libraries will be positioned locally to accomplish a "reaching out" into the community which would not be possible otherwise.
Libraries require marketing which is basically the same kind of marketing that moves automobiles, candy-bars and television sets. But as likely to be tougher. After all, libraries are not the new brand on the market. They will be in a position of asking the public to forget the old familiar package and buy a repackaged product. Changing the identity raises problems the new product doesn't have to face.

A concurrent and basic ingredient in the success of establishing a new library philosophy is so obvious it isn't even talked about much. This, of course, is the necessity for libraries generally, by attitude and example, to be prepared to accept an activist role when the time comes. If librarians as a whole can come to feel that this role truly represents the striving for a new plateau of service and identity that will bring a revitalization of strength, vigor and dominance to the library structure, the battle will be half won.

But, if Shaw was right we'd better get used to being unreasonable because that's what it will take to get the job done.

by

Roy Schumacher

Public Information Specialist

MISSOURI STATE LIBRARY
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI