



Social Responsibilities Round Table Newsletter ALA

Newsletter # 57

ISSN 0065-9096

September, 1980

ALA PRIORITIES

SURVEY OF THE PRIORITIES OF MEMBERS OF ALA, a Summary Report by Mary Jo Lynch, Director, Office for Research (January 1980, 1979-80 ALA COUNCIL DOCUMENT #11) was reviewed at Planning Committee hearings on June 30 in New York City during the ALA Annual Conference. Pages V-1 and V-2 of the Document are reproduced below; and the SRRT Action Council statement on the Survey, submitted by James Dwyer, Action Council member, which was prepared in response to the document, follows.

V. Analysis

A. Official ALA Priorities.

One of the reasons why the Future Structures Committee recommended the survey of priorities was that the Committee questioned the validity of the six "official" priorities of the Association. These six had been adopted in 1970 when the ACONDA report was accepted. It seems logical, therefore, to examine the results of this survey in the light of those six priorities. They are stated in the current "ALA Policy Manual" as follows:

The Association's highest current priorities are recognized and officially established to be: Social Responsibilities, Personnel Resources; Intellectual Freedom; Legislation; Planning, Research and Development; Democratization and Reorganization of the Association.

Substantially increased amounts of the Association's budget shall be directed toward implementation of these priorities.

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on equal terms:

THE CLASSICS

a report on the Tools for Consciousness-Raising program,
ALA Annual Conference, 1980, by Donnarae MacCann

Affirmative action programs rest securely on the realities of history. But the history of inequality is still waiting to be written. When librarians examine their own evolution, will they be able to conclude that literary classics have been offered to the community on equal terms?

Literary classics have an unparalleled capacity to satisfy, delight, rehabilitate, and instruct. They stretch the boundaries of their own era, while also being, in various degrees, bound by convention and local prejudice. Given this complexity, works of literature will inevitably be the subject of endless interpretations. Libraries are serving the public unfairly if they supply predominantly one-sided interpretations. And libraries compound the problem further if they organize and label classic writings in race or sex-biased categories. Literary historians are among those who see the need for reform in these areas.

Feminist literary historians are gradually redressing some long-standing imbalances in literary criticism. But they face a four-sided problem, as Professor Alison Sulloway, the speaker at the Tools for Consciousness-Raising program, pointed out. First, the book world needs to understand the existence of important socio-historical contexts in literary works; second, critics and scholars need to interpret the full social context in their works of analysis, or at least to acknowledge such sociologically full studies in their bibliographies and in their classroom discussions; third, the library professionals need to acquire analysis (this requires a considerable acquisitions crash program since scholarship has become less race and sex-biased only in recent years); and fourth, libraries need to organize literary materials under bias-free subject headings.

Dr. Sulloway, a professor of English at Virginia Tech, described her own training as a literary historian. The need to examine socio-historical aspects of literature was an accepted principle. But some phases of literary history remain to be explored. For example, the task force speaker referred to the extensive treatment of Milton's world view in literary criticism, and she described the consistency with which Milton scholars neglect Milton's peculiarly heavy treatment of the creation myth and the way he blames Eve for all humanities subsequent woes. Libraries offer the tools the scholar needs in analyzing Milton's connections with national upheavals, classical Puritanism, theories of prosody, and so on. But Milton's masculinist use of the Eve principle is generally ignored; and useful comparisons between the perspective of women in *Paradise Lost* and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* have yet to be made.

Dr. Sulloway referred to masculinist literary approaches to Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Austen, and to an attitude that is both masculinist and racially white in the works of Twain and Faulkner.

She referred to the many admirable features in the works of these writers, as well as the unconsciously biased aspects of their work. But while the historical biases of an era can be expected to affect writers living within those eras, there is no justification for the endless perpetuation of the same regional and period biases in the many later works of literary analysis and history.

In the case of Jane Austen especially, scholars have failed to appreciate feminist influences upon her novels. Whereas the plots, structures, dialogues, authorial comments, symbolic images and tone all express Austen's preoccupation with the disenfranchisement of women, scholars of both sexes still tend to deny this evidence. Occasionally they go so far as to insist that even so articulate a heroine as Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* was a quintessentially frivolous feminine character. It was necessary (so they maintain) that her undisciplined mind be kept in check by the stern masculine moral syntax of the masterful hero, Darcy. There are even critics who presume that novelists Austen, Eliot, and the Brontë sisters do not belong in the robust company of Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope.

In Dr. Sulloway's attempt to re-examine literary studies and to repair some of the gaping breaches, librarians have been hard-working partners in locating and supplying books. But the need for libraries to balance their holdings with many new, historically-inclusive materials, and the need to organize them to facilitate a breadth of socio-historical approaches became increasingly evident.

The closing remarks in Professor Sulloway's paper included praise of Sanford Berman's "quiet, witty, yet impassioned *Prejudices and Antipathies (1971)*" (which indicated sexist, racist, and other kinds of discrimination in cataloguing systems), and "the splendid 1977 thesaurus of Joan Marshall and her colleagues, *"On Equal Terms*."

Bias-free cataloguing is an awesome problem in a world of rapid change. Nonetheless, literary historians find that some of the ludicrous cataloguing practices of the past are a serious obstacle. Professor Sulloway described in detail the ease of the scholar in locating materials on seemingly ubiquitous female diseases, and the near-impossibility of discovering where feminist perspectives have been seriously reflected in a book's content. Clearly, the movement to re-catalogue is not a symbolic exercise.

Library acquisitions have a profound effect upon the evolution of literature. New works depend, in some degree, upon the level of scholarly activity surrounding older works. It will take a conscious concerted effort to equalize library collections in the field of history and literary criticism. But this effort will produce a more fully realized intellectual freedom in libraries and in society.



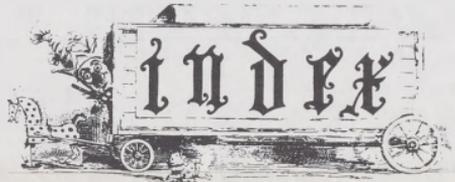
SPACE AGE HARDWARE STONE AGE DATA

by Sanford Beriman, Hennepin County Library, Edina, Minn.

Information Access Corporation's widely-touted Magazine Index - produced in COM, print, and on-line formats - nicely demonstrates the Jekyll-and-Hyde character of much "new technology". MI operates in a truly impressive, high-tech way, but if its mechanics are distinctly advanced, its content is just as surely ancient.

To travel - by button - from A to Z on a ROM reader takes only moments. Included on that one, single-alphabet microfilm reel are subject and author entries for material published in 372 magazines since 1976, the whole package being updated monthly. Now that's futuristic. However, not quite so far out is the fact that no entries appear under the subjects NUCLEAR POWER or SPACE SHUTTLES. Instead, they're tagged ATOMIC POWER and REUSABLE SPACE VEHICLES, terms hardly derived from Buck Rogers' vocabulary. Similarly, there's no descriptor for HOUSE PLANS, not even a "see" reference from that familiar phrase to MI's absolutely Byzantine rubric, ARCHITECTURE, DOMESTIC - DESIGNS AND PLANS. Further, nothing on buses, trucks, and truck drivers is directly findable under those current, commonplace words. For unknown reasons, this Wonderware product prefers such Baroque nomenclature as MOTOR-BUSES, MOTOR-TRUCKS, and MOTOR-TRUCK DRIVERS. And although at least one indexed periodical, The Futurist, has devoted much space to the topic of "Appropriate Technology", MI apparently doesn't recognize that increasingly important subject. There's simply no heading for it.

From the standpoint of what's indexed, there are plentiful "standards", an abundance of safe, mainstream, "respectable" titles like American Scholar, Barrons, Black Enterprise, Business Week, Changing Times, Esquire, Foreign Affairs, Harvard Business Review, House Beautiful, Ladies Home Journal, National Geographic, Reader's Digest, Time, US News and World Report, and Yale Review, but - beyond the token CoEvolution Quarterly, Mother Earth News, Mother Jones, and Progressive (4 out of 372) - few upstarts, few activist, visionary, grassroots alternatives, and no gay nor Latino publications: no Akwesasne Notes, Alternative Sources of Energy, Aztlan, Big Mama Rag, Body Politic, El Gallo, Gay Sunshine, Gray Panther Network, Green Revolution, In These Times, Jump Cut, Madness Network, New Age, No Limits, Off Our Backs, Open Road, Radical America, RAIN, Revista Chicano-Queena, Seven Days, Southern Africa, Utopian Eves, nor Working Papers for a New Society.



Tentative assessment of the \$1,480-per-year microfilm/print service: a 21st Century medium for neolithic messages.

SOURCEBOOK

GAY TASK FORCE PUBLICATIONS

For all orders: Checks to "Barbara Gittings, Gay Task Force", Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Censored, Ignored, Overlooked, Too Expensive? How to Get Gay Materials into Libraries. A Guide to Library Selection Policies for the Non-Librarian. 1979. This explains library selection policies in a general way and tells what an individual or group can do to get a library to buy more gay books and periodicals. Also, sections on what to do if your request is refused, on why gay books are sometimes kept where you have to ask for them, and on donating materials to the library. \$1 prepaid (includes mailing); also bookstore/bulk rate.

A Gay Bibliography. 6th edition, March 1980. Selective non-fiction list, 563 items grouped under topics: History and Biography, Law and Civil Rights, Human Sciences, Literature and the Arts, Religion, etc. Separate sections for films and filmstrips (annotated), periodicals (213 titles), and directories and bibliographies. 1 or 2 copies, \$1 each; 3-9 copies, 85¢ each; 10 or more, 70¢ each (includes mailing). Canada orders, pay in US currency or add 15% for currency exchange. Outside US and Canada, add 25% total for surface mail, 75% for air mail. Orders under \$25 must be prepaid.

Gay Materials Core Collection List
Gay Teachers Resources
A Short Lesbian Reading List

Gay Aids for Counselors
Gay Materials for Use in Schools
Gay Resources for Religious Study

Above lists: 2 copies, 25¢; 3-10 copies, 10¢ each; 15 or more, 7¢ each, prepaid (includes mailing).

Above lists: 2 copies, 35¢; 3-10 copies, 15¢ each; 15 or more, 10¢ each, prepaid (includes mailing).

ALSO AVAILABLE: Gay Subjects, Special Formats: Books and Periodicals for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (list). Print edition, 75¢ prepaid. Audio cassette and Braille editions available from other suppliers; information on request or with list.

SURVEY

(continued from page 1)

1. Social Responsibilities.

The meaning which this phrase should have for ALA was explicated in a "Report to the Executive Board" dated August 18, 1970 in which the ALA Executive Director presented the precise wording of any changes made by Council in the ACONDA report. According to that memo the Council intended to:

Define the broad social responsibilities of ALA in terms of (1) the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or even solving the critical problems of society, (b) support for all efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on, and the facts regarding, each problem, and (c) the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service clearly set forth in the position statement.

In connection with these social responsibilities the ACONDA report, as amended by Council, recommended that ALA establish an Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged and Unserved. The current office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged is a result of that recommendation. Table 8 shows the five questionnaire items which are directly related to the work of this office:

Item	Rating as of primary importance		Rating as of little or no importance		Rank of score in listing of top 5
	% of respondents	Rank of 49	% of respondents	rank of 49	
27. Literacy	26	43	21	7	34
28. Physically disabled	50	25	5	37	24
29. Ethnic/racial	45	33	7	24	35
30. Economically disadvantaged	47	29	7	27	37
31. Institutionalized	45	32	7	28	42

made funding the primary sr priority. One is reminded of adage that when one is surrounded by alligators it is difficult to remember that your objective was to drain the swamp. Likewise, funding and other legislation must be secured before librarians can effectively carry out their societal duties. Seen in this light, five of the six highest priorities in the survey may be considered sr objectives.

SR is not as easily isolated from library activities or programs as library architecture, on-line catalogs, or other, more discrete phenomena. Unfortunately the report unfairly categorizes SRRT in a very narrow fashion. One should note further that the categories used in the original questionnaire are entirely different from those used in the analysis of the questionnaire. On the former there was no "SR" category which was probably wise considering the breadth of the concept. Another possible methodological flaw was the use of broad questions and other, narrower questions subsumed by the former. As an example "Removing barriers" generally was ranked sixth overall whereas service to the illiterate, disabled, poor, minorities, and institutionalized were ranked much lower.

Interestingly enough, the general question is included in IF while the specifics made up the bulk of the sr section. (Further methodological analysis supplied by Betty Turock, Rutgers GSLIS, will be appended).

To: PLANNING COMMITTEE
 FROM: SRRT ACTION COUNCIL
 RE: SURVEY OF PRIORITIES OF MEMBERS OF ALA

A superficial reading of this report might lead one to believe that social responsibilities (sr) have become a relatively low priority of ALA members. A closer reading reveals that those few items designated as sr issues are in fact only small aspects of sr.

To the contrary, the concept of sr is broad and pervasive, effecting many areas of library service.

Working against fees and working against barriers, for example, are listed in the Intellectual Freedom category even though SRRT has taken a leadership role in bringing these issues to the fore of ALA discussion and action. Eliminating barriers imposed by racism, sexism, ageism, etc., clearly a central sr concern, was ranked sixth in importance.

SR is also implicit in establishing guidelines or standards for library service. Then again, perhaps only fiscal constraints rather than the principles of equal opportunity and equal access are important in establishing such guidelines. We doubt that many ALA members would agree with such a cynical analysis.

More importantly, the top three priorities which emerged from the survey involve crucial legislative and political activities. For years SRRT has worked to motivate librarians to become part of the political process. The Coalition to Restore Quality Library Service (California) has had the leadership and active participation of SRRT and Women Library Workers members who have

On page VI-2 the Committee on Future Structures recommends that the survey be conducted again and then evaluated. The number and scope of "Important concerns not covered" suggested by respondents reveals the inadequacy of the original survey instrument. (Among those suggestions were a program dealing with unfair labor practices, promoting part time professional jobs, library service to the Spanish speaking, etc., clearly sr issues). Decisions relating to funding, programming, etc. should not be based on the survey alone.

The report includes the key question "Who decides what is good for ALA?" Does one judge the health and interests of the patient by remote sensing such as a survey or by a variety of closer measures? We suggest that the Association's priorities should be shaped by the activities of its members and by the needs of this nation's citizens. Noting the interest and participation in SRRT program and those of SRRT-generated groups such as GODORT and the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship it is difficult to conclude that sr is actually a low priority of members. The key to understanding the disparity between survey results and actual sr participation is the realization that sr is inappropriately construed in the analysis of the survey.

We also suggest that the Association pay close attention to the recommendations of the White House Conference on Libraries, many of which deal with such crucial social issues as literacy, outreach, and equal access to information.

Viewed in an appropriate, broad context it is clear that social responsibilities are a primary priority of both ALA members and the citizens who are the beneficiaries, supporters, and reason for existence of publically supported libraries.

LIBRARY UNION TASK FORCE

REPORT OF ALA MEETING

by Judy Furesh

On Tuesday morning, July 1, 1980, the SRRT Library Union Task Force held its first organizational meeting. Coordinator Joan F. Higbee welcomed the approximately thirty people attending and reviewed the brief history of the Task Force. Founded at the 1980 ALA Midwinter meeting, the group is charged with eight initial objectives. The forum rapidly appeared to begin fulfilling the first two: to bring together individuals from a wide range of labor organizations and library bargaining units, and to serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas. Individuals from a variety of organizations and institutions were eager to share experiences. Among those represented were Detroit Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, New York Public Library, the Illinois Valley Library System, the Chicago Teachers' Union, United Faculty of Florida, APT, AFGE, and AFSCME.

Don Panzera of the Library of Congress Professional Guild, AFSCME Local 2910, discussed efforts begun at AFSCME's International meeting to discover problems common to library locals and to share contracts. Nancy Peace, faculty member of Simmons Graduate School of Library Science mentioned that she will be teaching a course in the fall on collective bargaining for librarians and that she has been working on a project to collect and index contracts. It was agreed that those present would send copies of their contracts to her at Simmons College and the project would serve as a contract collection center for the Task Force.

Other business included decisions to put out a new newsletter and compile a directory of library unions. Members of the steering committee were selected to represent different types of institutions and unions. They are Mary Biblo, private school, AFT; Lawrence Brenner, medical library; Billie Connor, public library, AFSCME; Miriam Crawford, state university library, AFT; Kenneth Miller, Jr., public library, UAW; Don Panzera, federal library, AFSCME; and Barbara Pruett, Coordinator, SRRT Action Council.

Another outcome of the meeting was the drafting of a resolution which was proposed by Jackie Eubanks and later adopted at the general ALA Membership meeting on Thursday, July 3. In the wake of a narrow defeat of a motion from the Massachusetts Library Association recommending a minimum salary for beginning librarians, it was proposed by Joan Higbee and seconded by Sharon Adley, Chairperson, Staff Organization Round Table, that "the ALA

Executive Board direct the ALA offices to research and report all union contract and non-union beginning salaries for the membership of ALA". Included in the resolution were directives to publish the information gathered before the 1981 annual meeting in survey form with union and non-union differences noted and to make the full data available from the ALA Office for Library Personnel Resources to individual members and to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Information Resources.

1980 ALA MEMBERSHIP

DOCUMENT #22

LIBRARY UNION TASK FORCE RESOLUTION

Whereas, the ALA membership meeting of June 30, 1980 narrowly defeated the motion from the Massachusetts Library Association recommending a minimum salary for beginning librarians, and

Whereas, the beginning salary of librarians in federal service at the GS-9 level is \$17,035, and,

Whereas, some other beginning librarians in other libraries start as low as \$10,000, and

Whereas, the SRRT Library Union Task Force is concerned about fair and appropriate conditions and salaries for all workers in libraries, and

Whereas, the ALA is an educational association with interest in the high quality of service in libraries,

Therefore be it resolved that the ALA Executive Board direct the ALA offices to research and report all union contract and non-union agreements beginning salaries for the membership of ALA, and

Be it further resolved, that this information be published in survey form before the 1981 annual meeting with union and non-union differences noted, and

Be it further resolved, that the full research data be made available to individual ALA members from the ALA OLFR and Headquarters Library, and sent to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Instructional Resources.

Joan Higbee, ALA/ARRT Library Union TF Coordinator

Sharon Adley, Chairperson, Staff Organization Roundtable



The Peace Information Exchange Task Force was also successful in having its two resolutions pass both membership and Council votes at the 1980 Annual Conference. They are:

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #20

Availability of Selective Service Information in Libraries

Whereas the selective service registration is in effect,

Therefore, be it resolved that librarians should have available information on the full range of alternatives within and without the military services for those young persons who are facing the prospect of conscription. (passed membership and Council)

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #21

Information on Disarmament and Conflict Solving

Whereas in a democracy, decision-making information is essential,

And, whereas the horror of a nuclear holocaust is universally acknowledged,

And, whereas today, the United States and other nations possess more than 50,000 nuclear weapons and continue to build them,

And whereas in the present complex world situation managed information in press and television coverage of world events is dangerous,

Therefore, be it resolved, that librarians should make available and readily accessible information on possibilities for disarmament and alternative ways of solving conflict. (passed membership & Council)

both resolutions were moved and seconded by:

Elizabeth Morrissett, ALA Member
Coordinator, Peace Information Exchange T.F.

Joan Goddard, ALA Member

Feminist Task Force

At the 1980 Annual Meeting the SRRT Task Force on Women became (officially) the SRRT Feminist Task Force. Members are pleased to be taking this new name because it is so much more an indicator of the direction which the task force has taken since the creation of the Status Committee, and the tf hopes that in the future it will continue on this more radical path. The new steering committee members are:

Coordinator: Elizabeth Futas
Steering Committee:
Diane Kadanoff
Suzanne LeBarron
Carole Leita
Diane Davenport
Sheila Hess
Barbara Scheele
Sarah Pritchard
Susan Searing

The pre-conference on the status of women brought several resolutions to the ALA Membership for votes; all passed, as did those brought to Council.

1980 ALA MEMBERSHIP
DOCUMENT #16

Resolved, that the American Library Association support the world-wide Nestle boycott. (passed)

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #17

Resolved, that Council charge the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship with the responsibility for developing continuing coalitions of occupational organizations in women-dominated professions, including unions, professional associations and organizations of clerical workers, hospital workers, teachers, etc. The coalitions should look at the area of unemployment and should propose and lobby for economic and social solutions through legislative, educational and social service programs.

The Council further charges the Committee to report to Council on the development of coalition activities at the 1981 Midwinter meeting in Washington and at future conferences and meetings of ALA. (passed membership & Council)

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #11

Resolved, that the Executive Director of the Association find the funds for two members to be trained at the University of Washington's Career Development and Assessment Center who will in turn train others to staff the ALA Placement Office at annual conferences and midwinter meetings. These people will give individual professional counseling to those seeking jobs. In lieu of payment for their services, these counselors would receive a stipend covering room and board. This program will be administered by OLFR.

MEMBERSHIP DOC #15

Resolved, that the Council of the ALA direct the Committee on Accreditation to revise the 1972 Standards for Accreditation to include Affirmative Action reports with regard to faculty, staff, and students. (passed, membership & Council)

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #13

Resolved, that the phrase "(including discrimination and sexual harassment)" be inserted in Policy #54.13, Program of Action for Mediation, Arbitration, and Inquiry, of the ALA Policy Manual, line 6, following "fair employment practices". (passed membership & Council)

MEMBERSHIP DOC. #12

Resolved, that the Office for Intellectual Freedom and the ALA Washington Office work together to prevent the passage of the Family Protection Act. (passed membership & Council)

Ethnic Materials Task Force

by David Cohen

"Serving Your Ethnic Community" was the topic of a multifaceted program (consisting of speakers, slides, films, and group participation) at the 99th annual ALA Conference, which was attended by more than 100 librarians. Prof. Arnulfo Trejo (Arizona), Doris Scott (Chicago Public Library), Ruth Ann Thomas (Rutgers University), Prof. David Cohen (Queens College) and Joyce F. Cupples (Australia) made short presentations of various programs and approaches aimed at serving ethnic groups.

The second part of the program, moderated by Natalia G. Davis, Director of El Centro Hispano de Informacion, Brooklyn Public Library, was devoted to a discussion of various projects and achievements by libraries from the East Coast (Norwalk Public Library, Queens Borough Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, Langston Hughes Library, Community Library and Cultural Center, South Bronx Project of the New York Public Library, and Temple University); the West Coast (Oklahoma Public Library, Seattle Public Library, Tucson Public Library, Dallas PL, National City Public Library); and the Canadian Public Library System and the University of Guam. During the program, appropriate literature - pamphlets, fliers, posters, memos - was distributed by participating speakers. A total of 25 programs was presented; the complete list is available on request.

At the business meeting of the Task Force, it was reported that a petition for a Round Table had been filed with the Executive Director of ALA. Because the petition names could not be authenticated in time for the Conference, the petition was held over until the Mid-Winter Conference. At that time the Committee on Organization will consider the petition and make its recommendation.

With respect to an award for a librarian who has done an outstanding job in promoting and developing non-racist, non-sexist and unbiased materials, a sub-committee was set up consisting of Vladimir Wertsmen and Dorothy Heath to develop a set of criteria which would be the basis of this award.

Proposals for a program for the Task Force for San Francisco included the following topics to be considered at Midwinter:

- Building foreign language collections
- Dealing with the new immigration
- Report on the 1980 census relating to minorities
- Bilingualism in libraries

For further information, please contact:
Vladimir Wertsmen, Public Relations Liaison
Telephone: 212-387-3800

LIBRARIES AND THE SMALL PRESS

in the light of ALA Mid-winter, 1980.

By David Ferguson

In a crowd of acronyms, plentiful enough for aerospace to envy, it was fun to wear a set of generally unexpected letters, COSMEP Newsletter, Non-member, PRESS. Yet I felt at home. Small Press people are, after all, librarians of a sort, in that we exist to bring writers and readers together on a nonprofit or less basis. We select works we feel will be of interest to others regardless of how few in number those others turn out to be.

And we are both occasionally viewed by the general public, if we are viewed at all, as something of an oddity. A library administrator gave me an example of the attitude. At one conference he visited the bar with an undesigned lapel. The man drinking next to him put an arm on his shoulder and observed, "You know, there're 20,000 librarians in this hotel. Isn't that creepy?"

As I talked with the administrator about the Small Press it occurred to him that there ought to be an ALA Task Force on the Small Press. It was such an obvious need that I could hardly believe such a Task Force didn't already exist. However, with the exception of Alternative In Print, there are no bridges designed specifically to connect libraries and the Small Press.

Alternatives In Print is a catalog of Small Press materials originally focused on political and alternative life-style publications. Jackie Eubanks, Mimi Penchansky and other members of the Alternatives In Print Task Force of ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT, pronounced to rhyme with alert) organized in 1969 to compile and produce this book. The current edition, just released by Neal-Schuman, Publishers, lists publications by author and title and includes 750 titles in foreign languages. The project that resulted in this expanded edition was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities co-ordinated by Elliot Shore, curator of the Small Press collection at Temple University. Alternatives In Print now sells for \$39.95. (The remaining nickel will buy you a poem.)

The most heavily traveled bridge, one from the Small Press to the world at large, began fifteen editions ago: Len Fulton and Edna Ferber's International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses (\$11.95 paper, \$15.95 cloth). In many ways it has made possible the growth of the Small Press that its size now reflects. Other source books under the Dustbooks imprint: The Small Press Record of Books in Print, The Directory of Small Magazine & Small Press Editors & Publishers as well as The Small Press Review.

Distribution is the major problem of the Small Press. COSMEP tried a Book Van project and the Coordinating Council of

Literary Magazines (CCLM) went through a \$439,636 Ford Foundation grant for a Pilot Distribution Project, yet the problem is still very much with us. Even those publications that manage to survive through sheer will or grants or a combination of both have great difficulty in reaching an audience. The main avenue for distribution of BOX 749, the magazine a group of us publish in New York, is the street where I manage to sell it between intermittent, brief and unprofitable conversations with the police.

As selectors, editors and librarians have their work cut out. Many of us, who, as writers, have been passed over by the commercial elite do not relish the irony of having to become selectors. It is the most demanding part of the job. Who is to say this is good and that bad? Each Small Press has its own approach. A few no longer take unsolicited manuscripts. For myself, I believe judgments, however difficult, can be made in good conscience. (For one thing, there are so many of us that we need never fear becoming exclusive arbiters.) Letting the 1000 flowers bloom doesn't mean everything out of the ground is a flower.

Which brings me to the dilemma of librarians unable to read everything in the Small Press or the Big Press for that matter. Resources, such as reviews, though good, are sparse and it is hard for librarians to get a handle on the Small Press.

Libraries used to take Small Press works more as a matter of course. But budget cuts and the extraordinary proliferation of presses have recently made it more difficult for libraries to subscribe.

(Some Small Press people are themselves disturbed by this proliferation, fearing dilution. Felix Stefanile of Sparrow Press attributes this multiplication to the increased availability of grants, and the clamor for grants to COSMEP members, although COSMEP itself does not give grants. My own experience has been that active COSMEP members more often favor working toward publication independent of grants, CCLM, the single most powerful non-governmental dispenser of government grants to little magazines, was started by William Phillips, editor of the Partisan Review. CCLM has tended to fund most lavishly the larger, older and university connected magazines, although election by the Small Press community of three of the five grants committee members has modified the tendency.)

A. D. Winans, editor/publisher/poet, long active in COSMEP and COSMEP/west, helped form a distribution co-op, Western Independent Publishers (WIP). One accomplishment of WIP

was to bring Small Press to libraries. But the business of general distribution is less susceptible to informal organization than is the small, individual press. It's often hard enough for a commercial distributor to succeed, WIP, along with a number of other Small Press efforts at distribution, has gone out of business.

In the east, Alex Harvey, chairperson of COSMEP for 1979, initiated Small Press Racks In Libraries (SPRIL). SPRIL provided a workable method of acquainting librarians and public with the Small Press while giving librarians a chance to see what needs these publications met. Yet the NEA Literature Panel discontinued funding despite the contribution made by presses in giving their publications freely to the project. Perhaps a SRRT Task Force could look into ways librarians could help the Literature Panel recognize the value of such efforts.

Despite currently discouraging circumstances libraries remain a most appropriate and logical place for Small Press to be made available to the public. In the 1950s, when Sparrow Press started, library subscriptions made presses possible. Sixty percent of Sparrow's subscribers come from libraries, schools and other institutions. "If it were not for the libraries, we should be hard put to explain our activities," says Stefanile.

Frederick Crews, in a New York Review of Books piece on the Partisan Review, described most other little magazines as "mayflies of the literary world," a world composed, presumably, of more durable bugs. Lack of longevity, though not a dependable index of worth, is a problem for libraries. To some extent it becomes a chicken and egg situation. If more libraries subscribed more magazines and presses would survive. The notion that the fittest literature will make it in the marketplace is optimistic, if not disingenuous. If larger and smaller Littles share any understanding it is that immediate popularity and literary merit or political validity seldom coincide. Good work and hard thought do not drive shallowness from the marketplace. All commerce of the mind ultimately depends on accepted conventions of support, one way or another, and libraries seem to me one of the most important.

Regularity of publication is another virtue that has not been a conspicuous attribute of the Small Press. (Some years ago a publication called The Incredible Bureaucrat, avoided the problem squarely by conceding that it came out "with alarming frequency.") An increased presence of Small Press in libraries would help some of us to publish more predictably, an understandably desirable objective from the librarian's point of view no less than ours. We are both dedicated to reaching people with the written word. Small Press editors work hard at no pay just to be in touch with a public. The more writers and readers have access to our publications in libraries the more we, as publishers, will be able to serve them. The library is a place where we keep in touch with each other.

Librarians are interested, many even anxious to include Small Press works. The 300 catalogs of the 1978 New York Book Fair that I took to Chicago were snapped up with enthusiasm. I could have taken 1000. From a number of random conversations and from what I heard at meetings I came to suspect that there is more happening in libraries concerning

the Small Press than is generally perceived. But it happens locally and on an individual basis. For example, Jack Rittenhouse, a librarian in Albuquerque, is collecting works of authors in New Mexico, including Small Press publications. There are some 60 Small Press collections in libraries across the country. These collections are a good idea, but it would be even better if Small Press publications were more generally available. Librarians wanting to complete the record, especially of poetry, fiction and political thought, will have to become increasingly familiar with the Small Press.

The more I think about the possibilities of cooperation between ALA and COSMEP the more it makes sense. We could isolate some of the problems librarians have in dealing with the Small Press. Solutions could be worked out together. A Joint Committee or SRRT Task Force could facilitate exhibition of Small Presses at both Mid-winter and Annual Conferences.

COSMEP could also work with members of ALA in setting up poetry readings and other joint ventures. Certainly, any support from Small Press for libraries under attack by Proposition 13 thinking would be welcome.

In fact, why not create a National Small Press In Libraries Project co-sponsored by COSMEP and ALA?

Novelist Frederick Busch, in an essay, "When People Publish" (The Ohio Review, Spring/Summer, 1979) looks at the place of libraries in his life:

What is published is, more or less, what will sell. Perhaps it has always been the case, if to a lesser degree. But the library, anyway, was the place I went for what was written, not for what was selling. It was the dark continent; it was the place for discovery. I think this no longer is the case.

It is that continent of discovery that must survive. Those of us in libraries and the Small Press who work to enhance the availability of such public sharing, despite the prevalence of a commercialism, ostensibly democratic, that insists on making the least possible choice available to the largest number, might do well to work together.



Editors' note: The following article was submitted after this issue had gone to press. Because of its timely nature, it is included in the "1980 Conference" Newsletter.

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