

SRRT Newsletter

Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association

**December
2005
Issue
152/153**

SRRT Programs at Mid-Winter 2006

SRRT All Task Force Meeting
Saturday, January 21, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

SRRT Action Council I
Saturday, January 21 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project
Saturday, January 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

OLOS Subcommittee on Library Services to the Poor and Homeless
Saturday, January 21, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

FTF Feminist Task Force Committee Meeting
Sunday, January 22, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project
Sunday, January 22, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Progressive Librarians Guild Meeting
Sunday, January 22, 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Sunrise Celebration
Monday, January 23, 6:30-7:30 a.m.

FTF Amelia Bloomer Project
Monday, January 23, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

SRRT Action Council II
Monday, January 23, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

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We Need People for Task Forces!

When you join SRRT or anytime thereafter, you have the option of selecting one or more task forces to join. Belonging to a task force is a great way to make a productive contribution to SRRT and the library world. Throughout this newsletter you will find information about each task force and the exciting programs they will be presenting at Mid-Winter. Most of the task forces are in need of new members or new leaders: people with vision, ideas, and energy. Feel free to email the coordinator, or if you attend ALA conferences, introduce yourself at one of the meetings or programs and get involved! Read the mission statements, history, and more on the Web sites.

SRRT Task Forces and Contact Information

Alternatives in Publication (AIP)

<<http://www.libr.org/AIP/>>

Carol Gulyas (carolgulyas2@comcast.net)

Task Force on the Environment (TFOE)

<<http://www.ala.org/ala/srrt/tfoe/taskforceenvironment.htm>>

Fred Stoss (fstoss@buffalo.edu) and Jonathan Betz-Zall (JBetzZall@cityu.edu)

Hunger, Homeless, and Poverty (HHPTF)

<<http://www.hhptf.org/>>

John Gehner (Jgehner@hhptf.org)

Feminist (FTF)

<<http://libr.org/FTF/>>

Jennifer Baltés (jenny_baltés@hotmail.com)

Sarah Dentan, Coordinator-Elect (sarahdentan@gurmail.com)

International Responsibilities (IRTF)

<<http://www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/>>

Tom Twiss (ttwiss@pitt.edu)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (MLK)

<<http://libr.org/MLK/>>

Virginia Moore (Ginny.Moore@pgcmls.info)

Information Policy in the Public Interest (IPPI)

<<http://libr.org/IPPI/>>

Sam Trosow (strosow@uwo.ca) and Mark Rosenzweig (iskra@earthlink.net)

Letter from Elaine Harger, New SRRT Coordinator

Dear SRRT Members,

Greeting from the new coordinator of Action Council, SRRT's governing body. I'm Elaine Harger and I've served on Action Council as the representative of one of SRRT's affiliates, the Progressive Librarians Guild. I also served as AC secretary from 1996 to 1999, and have been chair or co-chair of two SRRT task forces: the International Responsibilities Task Force (2003-2004) and the Library Union Task Force (1991-1993).

I am in my second year of working as a high school librarian in Snoqualmie WA. I've also worked at a K-8 public school in New York City, at a historical society, and at a school of labor studies. Prior to getting my MLS at Columbia University, I had several clerical and paraprofessional jobs at three university libraries and one law library. Over that past 25 years I've witnessed the transition of libraries from sleepy labor-intensive, paper-based institutions to caffeinated, merchandized, downsized and computer-dependent ones. I'm neither nostalgic nor a luddite, but am aware of both the losses and the gains this transition has wrought within the world of libraries.

My membership in ALA dates back to 1987 and I attended my first ALA conference and SRRT meeting in 1989 in Dallas. I knew I'd found a group of library soul mates during a heated debate over whether or not ALA should continue its support of the cultural boycott against apartheid South Africa - with SRRT in the pro-boycott camp.

Much has changed since then - Nelson Mandela was released from prison and became president of post-apartheid South Africa. The Soviet Union collapsed and the U.S. has taken on the imperial mantel of the world's super-militarized super-power. In my mind, the need is dire in the U.S. today for the ethos embodied in the idea of social responsibilities, and we in the library world are well positioned to spread the word and engage in deeds that reflect our commitments.

For me, a simple definition of social responsibility is embodied in the ancient "golden rule" - treat others as you wish to be treated. This means that if we want clean water and air for ourselves, we must work to ensure that every human being enjoys the same. If we wish to sleep comfortably and eat heartily, we must provide comfort and food for all. And, if we want our lives free of violence, we need to work for the abolition of violence everywhere.

To these ends, SRRT, its task forces and members engage in a broad spectrum of activities within ALA that promote equality and opportunity for all, international human rights, environmental well-being, economic justice, and freedom of expression in thought, in language, in lifestyle, while recognizing the social responsibilities inherent in individual freedoms. SRRT programs, publications, awards and resolution all contribute to our belief that libraries and librarians must recognize and help solve social problems and inequities in order to carry out their mandate to work for the common good and bolster democracy.

I look forward to offering whatever talents I possess in helping Action Council support the work of SRRT members.

Elaine Harger, 10/22/05

Welcome From the SRRT Newsletter Editor Erik Sean Estep

Fellow SRRT Members,

Hello, as that great progressive and library supporter Mick Jagger once sang, “please allow me to introduce myself.” My name is Erik Sean Estep and I’m the new SRRT Newsletter Editor. I volunteered to take this position for several reasons. First and foremost, I wanted to make a contribution to SRRT. I’ve been a member for several years, but apart from a book review, my main activity had been reading and posting to the list serv. Second, someone asked me! I also take this position with some trepidation, knowing that Sally Driscoll did such a wonderful job and that I had no experience as an editor. However, I have written consistently for a variety of publications in the last fifteen years.

I am in my fourth year as a Social Sciences Librarian at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. I came to librarianship after a fairly disastrous attempt to get a phd in Political Science and a terrific stint working in AmeriCorps. However, librarianship was not a default career choice by any means, working in libraries had always been in the back of my mind. The service ethic of librarianship and the chance to work at in a profession that is outside (mostly) of the market was very appealing.

As for my political views, I’ve always considered myself a democratic socialist. In a country that is increasingly starting to resemble Iran, I feel lonely in my admiration for Sweden. I only mention my politics to let you know where I’m coming from. It should **not** influence your writing for this newsletter.

I joined SRRT after reading and being impressed with the work of many members. In particular, I thought that Rory Litwin’s *Library Juice* was a thoughtful and funny publication that I looked forward to reading every few weeks or so. Kathleen De La Pena McCook’s work on libraries and poverty continue to be an inspiration to me. Since joining, I’ve come to admire other members work as well. What is amazing about SRRT is the diversity. The variety of progressive views within SRRT is healthy and vital for a small “d” democratic organization.

Enough about me. In this issue, I hope you will find some interesting items. There is an article about an important non-profit literary press which should give us some ideas about forming alliances. There is also an announcement about a new progressive African librarians group. If you have any thoughts and ideas about this newsletter please let me know. I’m always willing to listen. In the future, I plan on bringing back a robust book review section and we will feature more stories about members.

In Solidarity,

Erik Sean Estep

ALA Council Report to SRRT, July 2005

By Al Kagan, SRRT Councilor

The Social Responsibilities Round Table had a remarkably successful Annual Meeting in Chicago. We not only passed resolutions through the ALA Council calling for the withdrawal of all US military forces from Iraq and for opposing government disinformation and media manipulation, but we also finally passed a resolution encouraging workplace speech. I think this is due to several factors: a great shift in public opinion throughout the country, the reinstatement of official ALA Membership Meetings, our liaison work with important ALA Council committees, the election of a significant number of progressive councilors, and the very hard work of quite a few people. A lot of organizing over a number of years is beginning to pay off. We should all feel very good about SRRT's impact on the profession.

We were able to pass the "Resolution on the Connection between the Iraq War and Libraries" by first passing it at the ALA Membership Meeting, which automatically forwarded it to the ALA Council agenda. Our ten years or so struggle to reinstate a reasonable Membership Meeting quorum finally took effect in Chicago. The bylaws revision brought the quorum down from 1% of membership (about 660 now) to 75, so it was no problem to do official business. I think the ease of passage at the Membership Meeting is a direct result of the shift in public opinion as seen in the polls, our ability to explain the connections between money going to war and the lack of funding for everything else, and the connection between the so-called "war on terror" and the resulting attack on civil liberties (especially the USA Patriot Act). Significantly, we rarely heard the usual argument that this was not "a library issue." Our "Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information" explained this link very well. For the first time since 9/11, I am feeling optimistic about reversing the brutality of current policies. Things will probably have to get even worse before they get better, but there is evidence that people are waking up. Here are the resolved clauses of the two resolutions:

Resolution on the Connection between the Iraq War and Libraries

Resolved that the American Library Association calls for the withdrawal from Iraq of all U.S. military forces, and the return of full sovereignty to the people of Iraq.

Resolved that the American Library Association urges the United States government to subsequently shift its budgetary priorities from the occupation of Iraq to improved support for vital domestic programs, including U.S. libraries.

Resolved that the American Library Association calls upon the United State government to provide material assistance through the United Nations for the reconstruction of Iraq, including its museums, libraries, schools, and other cultural resources.

Resolved that this resolution be sent to all members of Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the President of the United States, and the press.

Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information

Resolved that the American Library Association go on record as being opposed to the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics.

Resolved that the ALA encourages its members to teach and nurture 21st century information literacy skills among the American public to help them detect disinformation, media manipulation, and missing information.

Resolved that ALA encourages libraries to actively seek and acquire alternative information resources that provide a broad context for public understanding and evaluation of news and opinion.

Resolved that the resolution be shared broadly with members of ALA, the press, the public and government officials.

The SRRT "Resolution on Workplace Speech" has a long history. It began in 1999 when then Councilor Sandy Berman introduced a proposed amendment to the Library Bill of Rights. He pointed out that ALA advocates free speech for everyone but ourselves. The ALA Council firmly rejected that proposal, but Sandy asked that we revive the idea as a general Council resolution which we presented at Midwinter 2005. There was still much opposition by library administrators and the matter was referred to ALA's lawyer and the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee. The Council received a report back in May of this year which basically said that the idea was "contrary to case law" and therefore should be dropped. However, vigorous discussion on the ALA Council listserv garnered much support. Further work with the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee in Chicago led to the following language which was subsequently passed by the Council:

Resolution on Workplace Speech

Resolved that ALA Council amend Policy 54 (Library Personnel Practices) by adding:

54.21 Workplace Speech

Libraries should encourage discussion among library workers, including library administrators, of non-confidential professional and policy matters about the operation of the library and matters of public concern within the framework of applicable laws.

SRRT had one other resolution in Chicago, to establish an "Endangered Libraries List." It was discussed for a long time, referred to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC), and then finally rejected by the Council. This was obviously a take-off on the Endangered Species List. The idea was to follow-up on the good work ALA had done on the Salinas Public Library and another small library in Texas and the guidelines that were developed for dealing with such cases. We envisioned that local libraries and library communities could use such a list to get national attention to address their needs. Unfortunately, some library administrators saw this as a threat rather than a useful support.

There were several other successful progressive resolutions of note. The SRRT endorsed "Resolution on Threats to Library Materials Related to Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation" was promoted as a document that brought together and reiterated current policies. The Committee on Legislation brought two important documents. The "Resolution on the USA Patriot Act and Libraries" urged Congress to pass legislation restoring library rights to library users, opposed further extension of such provisions now being debated in secret in Congress, and urged continued education on sections 215 and 505 of the Patriot Act. Their second item was the "Resolution on the Right of Communities to Provide Broadband Internet Services." This resolution supported pending legislation, S.1294, and opposed H.R. 2726 which denies local control over broadband deployment. REFORMA supported and the Council passed a "Resolution in Support of Immigrants' Rights to Free Public Library Access." Council also approved a resolution urging the President of the United States to declare National Deaf History Month, annually March 13-April 15.

Three other Membership Meeting resolutions were passed but the ALA Council only approved one of them, a resolution to "Decrease Division Dues for Retired Members." It urges the ALA divisions to "investigate the establishment of" lower membership dues. The Council rejected resolutions on equal access to resources in non-Roman alphabets and on having the ALA Executive Board promote ALA Membership Meetings. As always, I will be happy to try to answer any questions.

**The ALA Council *adopted* this resolution on Wednesday, June 29, 2005.
Resolution on the Connection Between the Iraq War and Libraries**

WHEREAS, The justifications for the invasion of Iraq have proven to be completely unfounded; and

WHEREAS, The war already has taken the lives of more than 100,000 Iraqis and more than 1700 U.S. soldiers; and

WHEREAS, These numbers will continue to mount as long as the U.S. remains in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, During the current occupation, many of Iraq's cultural treasures, including libraries, archives, manuscripts, and artifacts, have been destroyed, lost, or stolen; and

WHEREAS, As long as U.S. forces remain in Iraq, the inevitable escalation of fighting threatens further destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. is spending billions of dollars every month for the occupation; and

WHEREAS, Even a small fraction of these resources would be more than sufficient for rebuilding and greatly enhancing the libraries and educational institutions of both Iraq and the U.S.; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association calls for the withdrawal from Iraq of all U.S. military forces, and the return of full sovereignty to the people of Iraq; and, be it further

Resolution on the Connection between the Iraq War and Libraries/2

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association urges the United States government to subsequently shift its budgetary priorities from the occupation of Iraq to improved support for vital domestic programs, including United States libraries; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association calls upon the United States government to provide material assistance through the United Nations for the reconstruction of Iraq, including its museums, libraries, schools, and other cultural resources; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution be sent to all members of Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the President of the United States, and the press.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association

Wednesday June 29, 2005

In Chicago, Illinois.

NOTE: This resolution on the war in Iraq is the version passed by ALA Council, which was amended from an earlier version endorsed by SRRT-AC, which originated in SRRT's International Responsibilities Task Force.

RESOLUTION on DISINFORMATION, MEDIA MANIPULATION & the DESTRUCTION of PUBLIC INFORMATION

Whereas the American Library Association recognizes the contribution librarianship can make in giving support for efforts to inform and educate the people of the United States on critical problems facing society (Policy 1.1); and

Whereas the mission of ALA is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all (Policy 1.2); and

Whereas ALA has as one of its officially stated goals that government information be widely and easily available (Policy 1.3: Priority Areas and Goals); and

Whereas inaccurate information, distortions of truth, excessive limitations on access to information, and the removal or destruction of information from the public domain are anathema to the ethos of librarianship and to the functioning of a healthy democracy; and

Whereas evidence exists revealing that some U.S. government officials and agencies use disinformation in pursuit of political and economic power, as well as war, thwarting the development of an informed citizenry and constituting a "critical problem facing society"; and

Whereas the list of documented instances of government use of disinformation continues to grow, and includes:

- the distribution to media outlets of government produced "video news releases" under the guise of independent journalism;
- the use of commentators paid by government agencies to express views favorable to government policies in clear violation of Federal Communications Commission regulations;
- the censorship of scientific studies warning of the true threat of global warming;
- the fabrication and deliberate distortion of information used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq;
- the removal of public information from U.S. depository libraries; and
- heightened assaults on constitutional rights under the guise of "national security"; therefore be it

Resolved that the American Library Association go on record as being opposed to the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics.

Resolved that the ALA encourages its members to teach and nurture 21st century information literacy skills among the American public to help them detect disinformation, media manipulation, and missing information.

Resolved that ALA encourages libraries to actively seek and acquire alternative information resources that provide a broad context for public understanding and evaluation of news and opinion.

Resolved that this resolution be shared broadly with members of ALA, the press, the public and government officials.

Moved by Elaine Harger

Seconded by Peter McDonald

June 26, 2005

Supporting Documentation:

ALA policy references:

1 Mission, Priority Areas, Goals - Introduction

2 Mission

3 Priority Areas and Goals

1. *The Rights of Users and the USA PATRIOT ACT*

NOTE: This version of the resolution on disinformation was endorsed by SRRT-AC on 6/27/05. A slightly amended version was passed by ALA Council. The Council version can be accessed at: www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governanceb/council/councilagendas/annual2005a/CD64.doc

Task Force News

International Responsibilities Task Force

At the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, SRRT Action Council and ALA Council passed two resolutions that originated in the International Responsibilities Task Force. One was Elaine Harger's "Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information," a resolution which opposes "the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information." The other was the "Resolution on the Connection Between the Iraq War and Libraries," that calls for withdrawal from Iraq of all U.S. military forces, and the return of full sovereignty to the people of Iraq." Many thanks to IRTF members and to SRRT members on ALA Council who worked so hard on both of these resolutions!

Also at ALA, more than 50 people attended our program "Destabilization, Disinformation, and Libraries: From Chile to Cuba, to Venezuela," jointly sponsored by SRRT and by the Progressive Librarians' Guild. Venezuelan-American attorney Eva Gollinger provided a history of recent U.S. destabilization efforts in Venezuela. Al Kagan narrated a PowerPoint presentation by Chilean librarian Clara Budnik on libraries under the Pinochet dictatorship. And Ann Sparanese spoke on what librarians can do about destabilization and disinformation programs-- a topic that became the focus of the discussion. Rhonda Neugebauer chaired the meeting.

At our task force meeting we elected LaJuan Pringle chair of IRTF and Al Kagan co-chair for 2005-2006. I will continue as Webmaster for the IRTF website. The task force approved preparations for moving the Website to the libr.org server and for adding two new "alternative resources" pages: one on Venezuela by Dana Lubow (now at <http://www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/venezuela.htm>), and one by LaJuan Pringle on Sudan. the tentative title we selected for our 2006 program is "Lies My T.V. Told Me: International News in the Mass Media."

Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force

In June I attended my first ALA annual conference and SRRT meetings, which added much to my perspective on advocacy work in the library field. Among other notable events, Jonathan Betz-Zall proposed that the Task Force on the Environment (TFOE) and the HHPTF undertake a joint presentation at ALA annual conference in 2006—more details forthcoming.

I am grateful for the encouragement expressed by SRRT members and others in Chicago. I would especially like to thank Laura Crossett (<http://www.new Rambler.net>) and the Progressive Librarians Guild student chapter at the College of St. Catherine (<http://stkatesplg.blogspot.com/>) for their interest and involvement in the HHPTF.

As the new coordinator in 2005, I focused my time and energy on writing about poverty issues as they relate to the library profession and to the world at large.

In addition to the occasional post at <http://www.hhptf.org>, I have had an opportunity to contribute to Kathleen de la Pena McCook's "Community Building" column in *Reference and User Services Quarterly*. The guest column ("Poverty, Poor People, and Our Priorities") is slated for publication by or before year's end.

In September, a serendipitous collaboration occurred with library legal consultant Mary Minow, who presented a webcast on legal issues related to library services and homeless people (<http://infopeople.org/training/webcasts/09-27-05/>). I co-authored an article with colleague Kali Freeman, which we posted online (<http://www.hhptf.org/?id=5>) in conjunction with Minow's presentation and resources.

In September, I also prepared HHPTF promo materials for display at the Minnesota Library Association annual conference in Minneapolis. Although I was unable to attend in a formal capacity, I spoke with new MLA executive director Barbara Vaughan. She expressed interest in learning more about the HHPTF and its work.

At present, I am guest-editing an issue of *Counterpoise* (formerly a SRRT publication), which has poverty as its theme. The invitation to participate in this project arrived shortly after Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact on the Gulf region and its citizens.

Other ongoing projects include the following:

- ◆ Interviews with John Pateman and John Vincent, a profile of social exclusion initiatives in England
- ◆ Surveys of ALA units *and* the country's largest metropolitan library systems with regard to their implementation and application of ALA Policy 61 ("Library Services for the Poor") in partnership with the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS)
- ◆ Creation of a working group to evaluate a condensed, library-oriented version of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC)'s "Outreach to People Experiencing Homelessness" curriculum, online at <http://www.nhchc.org/outreach1.html>
- ◆ Preparation of an article treating U.S. poverty for consideration by the journal *Information for Social Change* (<http://www.libr.org/ISC/>)
- ◆ Fielding occasional queries from librarians and support staff about policies and services that address poor people
- ◆ Expansion of the [hhptf.org](http://www.hhptf.org) Web site to include useful resources and links

In 2006, I intend to make a concerted effort to solicit the involvement of new faces and voices in the HHPTF's endeavors. If you would like to contribute your time, talents, and ideas, please contact me.

I look forward to connecting with you at Midwinter in San Antonio!

John Gehner, Coordinator
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Alternatives in Publication (AIP)

The Alternatives in Print Task Force of SRRT is planning a program for ALA Annual 2006 tentatively titled "The Ethnic Press, Libraries, and Community Building: How Librarians Can Strengthen the Ties." Nancy Kranich, whose work in the media consolidation and civic engagement arenas are right on target for this topic, has graciously agreed to lead the panel. We also have enthusiastic support from the Independent Press Association in New York, a member of which will also speak on the panel. We are now looking for one or two publishers who can also speak on the panel. EMIERT has expressed interest in co-sponsoring the program. If anyone would like to join AIP and be part of making this program happen, we would welcome your help in establishing a program committee.

Carol Gulyas
AIP Coordinator

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force

MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY TASK FORCE MULTICULTURAL IDEA EXCHANGE IN CHICAGO

In preparation for the 5th Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multicultural Idea Exchange, the Task Force held its regular meeting during the SRRT All Task Force Meeting. The Idea Exchange Program was held from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at the Palmer House Hotel with challenging panelists presenting highlights of the 2005 King Holiday programs in their libraries to a small but generously enthusiastic audience. Following introductions by the Task Force Chair, the panel discussion began with the public library representative, Bianca Roberts. Roberts is a second-generation librarian following in her mother's footsteps. As the Manager of Youth Services for the St. Louis County Library System in St. Louis, Missouri, she proudly provided details about their activities with the theme "Dream Weavers: Looking Forward, Honoring the Past." This was the theme for the 2005 Black History Month celebration.

Roberts explained that the opening ceremony was held at the Headquarters Library in January. It highlighted their Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday observance, which kicked off the Black History Month events. "Dream Weavers" opened with a ceremony that featured Dominique Dawes, the first African American gymnast to qualify and compete in the 1992 Olympic games in Barcelona, Spain. According to Roberts, all of the events had been planned "to expand knowledge, to offer information, and to provide opportunities for participation through presentations that would highlight historical truths and showcase contemporary talent."

Panelist Rosa S. Burnett, Director, InfoNet Library Services at Southwest Tennessee Community College spoke from wide experience which included her work in elementary and high schools as well as more than twenty years in academic library service. In her presentation, she discussed the numerous programs and events throughout the campus for the observance of the King Holiday along with the various ways in which the library had provided activities,

information, and special services to the college and the community. Burnett especially emphasized the sustained high interest that was generated by the library exhibit. The room-sized exhibit by Loretta Petty, Library Assistant, featured a suited figure posed as a life-size replica of Dr. King seated in an armchair. His book, "I AM A MAN," was placed in the collar of the shirt for the head and he was surrounded by protest posters on sticks, books, videos, pictures, and other media to show works by and about the renowned crusader for equality, justice, nonviolence, and peace.

The panelists brought examples for the Materials Exchange and Rosa Burnett's handout featured a color print of the Petty Exhibit with a listing of websites for information about Dr. King and the Holiday observance. Bianca Roberts brought handouts about "Dream Weavers" and more that included posters, programs, essay contest information and commercial catalogs on diversity. Moreover, the Audience Idea Exchange was a lively session with members of the audience offering highlights of their programs in public and academic libraries along with a detention facility and a military camp.

In addition to the Multicultural Idea Exchange, the Task Force participation continued in the Diversity Fair. Since its inception and continuing, the King Holiday Task Force placed an exhibit that featured highlights of the 2005 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration with historical hallmarks. In addition to bring attention to the observance of the King Holiday, there is a distribution of the items provided by the panelists and the audiences of the Multicultural Idea Exchange program. A special opportunity was given this year when there as a request to leave the handouts for the Poster Sessions.

Members of the Task Force attending the Idea Exchange and helping to facilitate were Mary Biblo, Ellen Utley, and Elizabeth Wilkins. A special thanks goes to Deidre Conkling, SRRT Action Council Director and ALA Councilor At Large, for assistance with setting up the Diversity Fair Exhibit. The King Holiday Task Force sponsors the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multicultural Idea Exchange and the Diversity Fair Exhibit each year at the ALA Annual Conference. During the Midwinter Meeting, it presents the Sunrise Celebration that is Co-Sponsored by the Black Caucus (BCALA), World Book, Inc. and the ALA

Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS). New members are welcome to actively "Keep the Dream Alive."

THE 2006 ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.SUNRISE CELEBRATION

This Annual one-hour event is a moving and uplifting tribute to the life and works of Dr. King, with special emphasis on our efforts toward equity of access in the library profession. This always well-attended celebration includes ALA leadership, and often a guest speaker or culturally enriching presentation from the local community. Sponsored by the SRRT Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday Task Force and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA). A Midwinter Meeting "must attend!"

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia B. Moore
Chair

The Eubanks Award

If you are looking for a way to get involved in furthering the Independent Press and battling media consolidation, we could use your organizing skills and enthusiasm!

The Alternatives in Publication Task Force (AIP) is eager to revive the Jackie Eubanks Award, but we need your help. The award honors the late Jackie Eubanks, former AIP task force member and vigorous champion of alternative views in library collections. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in promoting the acquisition and use of alternative materials in libraries. Byron Anderson, who was on the original Awards committee, has offered to be available for advice, but this is a project that needs someone to take ownership, guide the process of finding an awards sponsor, and establishing a structure that can be carried from year to year. It's a great opportunity to make a difference.

Please let me know if you would like to join AIP and lead the process!

Full information can be found at the AIP website:

[Http://www.libr.org/AIP/eubanks.html](http://www.libr.org/AIP/eubanks.html)

Carol Gulyas

cgulyas@colum.edu

Selected Bibliography on Disinformation

- 1964 *Gulf of Tonkin Resolution*. Washington DC: U.S. Congress
- 1971 *Pentagon Papers*, by Neil Sheehan et al. New York: New York Times
- 1975 *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, by Philip Agee. London: Allen Lane
- 1978 *Dirty Work: the CIA in western Europe*, by Philip Agee, & Louis Wolf. New York: Dorset Press
- 1982 *The Real Terror Network: terrorism in fact and propaganda*, by Edward S. Herman. Boston: South End Press
- 1985 *Storm Over Chile*, by Samuel Chavkin. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company
- 1988 *Agents of Repression: the FBI's secret wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, by Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall. Boston: South End Press
- 1989 *The "Terrorism" Industry: the experts and institutions that shape our view of terror*, by Edward S. Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan. New York: Pantheon
- 1990 *COINTELPRO Papers: documents from the FBI's secret war against dissent in the United States*, by Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall. Boston: South End Press
- 1997 *Warriors of Disinformation*, by Alvin Snyder. New York: Arcade Publishing
- 1999 *Cultural Cold War: the CIA and the world of arts and letters*, by Frances Stonor Saunders. New York: The New Press
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Progressive African Library & Information Activists' Group (PALIAct)

The African Progressive Librarian and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct) is an initiative of a group of progressive African librarians and information workers. We recognise that current "leaders" in the African information field have done little to break the colonial and imperialist policies and practices in meeting the information needs of working people in Africa, or to make the profession more relevant to the needs of African librarians and information workers. We have therefore decided to take the initiative to set up an alternative organisation – the Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group - PALIAct.

PALIAct will provide a new vision to help create a people-orientated information service that can meet the information needs of workers and peasants. It will work towards providing an anti-imperialist and a Pan African world outlook among African librarians and information workers. It will also seek to set up an alternative information service in partnership with the potential users of the service as a way of showing what our "official" libraries and information workers should be doing. PALIAct will form partnerships with progressive information and other workers within Africa and overseas.

The Project will bring together the resources, skills, and labour of those who accept its vision for a relevant information service, based on the principles of equality, equity, social justice, and democracy.

The PALIAct Vision

To develop a people-oriented information service run and managed by/on behalf of workers, peasants, pastoralists, fisher people and other marginalised individuals and groups whose information needs have not been met. The new service will be based on equality for all African nationalities, for women, disabled people, classes, ...

The PALIAct Stand

PALIACT recognises the right to relevant information as a basic human right. This right must be enshrined in the constitution of all African countries and be endorsed as an active programme by the African Union.

The struggle for a relevant information service is intimately linked with the political struggles of the people for organising a society that ensures that material, social, cultural and political needs of the people are met. PALIAct believes that the opportunity for making fundamental changes created as a direct result of political victories in the early period of struggle for liberation was lost. The opportunity that history had brought to our doorsteps to provide a people-orientated information service was lost. Instead of challenging the very basis on which library and information services were built, we allowed ourselves to be manipulated into making merely quantitative changes in library services, but failed to make any qualitative changes. The *classes* who were served by the colonial library service continued to be served and the needs of working people who had always remained outside the remit of such services remained unmet. Their experiences, their cultures, their very language remained outside the walls of impressive library buildings. Thus the advantage gained in the early period of struggle for a society and an information system which served the needs of *all* its people was lost. The struggle for such an information service continues to date.

As an example, information about lives, thoughts and achievements of African heroes such as Cabral, Kimaathi, Lumumba, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Pinto, to name a few, is hardly known or taught in African schools and Universities. Few African libraries collect works about or by them. In this respect, African information workers have not served their communities well.

The PALIAct programme is therefore an activist agenda to ensure that the information rights of African people are recognised in theory as well as in practice. While PALIAct struggles to ensure that this right is restored to the people of Africa, it will set up pilot projects to develop ideas and practices that will guide its programme to ensure the ultimate creation of a people-orientated information services.

The PALIAct principles

In its commitment to developing a people-orientated information service, PALIAct is committed to:

- The principles of social justice, equality, equity, human welfare, and the development of cultural and social democracy; thus we shall actively address historical inequalities in the information field in Africa;
- Achieving equality of access to and inclusiveness of information services, especially extending such services to the workers, peasants and the poor, the marginalized and those who have been discriminated against;
- The provision of a relevant service to those active in the struggles for social justice and who are working towards the creation of a liberated Africa;
- Supporting the collection, organization, preservation and dissemination of the documents of people's struggles in all forms and languages;
- Making available alternative materials representing a wide range of progressive viewpoints from within Africa and overseas and which are often excluded by traditional libraries, mass media and educational and information systems;
- Encouraging the exploration of alternative models of services; promoting and disseminating critical analysis of information technology's impact on libraries and societies; and support the fundamental democratization of existing institutions of education, culture, communications;
- Undertaking joint, interdisciplinary research into fundamental library issues (e.g. into the political economy of information in the age of neo-liberalism and corporate globalization) in order to lay the basis for effective action in our spheres of work;
- Investigating and organizing efforts to make the library-as-workplace more democratic and encourage resistance to the managerialism of the present library culture;
- Promoting international solidarity among librarians and cooperation between libraries across borders on the basis of our joint commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related covenants which create a democratic framework for constructive cooperative endeavours;
- Organizing in partnership with other activists in the cultural and educational fields, to help put issues of social responsibility on the agendas of international bodies such as IFLA and UNESCO; Opposing corporate globalization which, despite its claims, reinforces existing social, economic, cultural inequalities, and working towards the creation of a democratic globalism and internationalism which respects and cultivates cultural plurality, which recognizes the sovereignty of peoples, which acknowledges the obligations of society to the individual and communities, and which prioritizes human values and needs over profits.

Membership

Membership of PALIACT is open to all who agree with the Vision and Principles of PALIACT, and agree to contribute their labour, skills or other resources to the Project.

Programme of activities

Short term:

1. Set up a core group of PALIACT activists to launch the Group.
 2. Each group to initiate a pilot project based on PALIACT principles, on voluntary basis or from funds provided by friendly organisations. Activities to raise funds would be a good starting point, e.g. film shows.
 3. Collect and disseminate relevant progressive material in the information field from a working class point of view.
 4. Influence syllabi and teaching programmes in African Universities teaching information studies so as to reflect African, anti-imperialist and working class point of view and sources in their teaching programmes.
 5. Actively recruit members for PALIACT from African libraries and Universities.
 6. Set up of a web presence for PALIACT.
 7. Set up a discussion board to get views on the future of PALIACT from progressive librarians in Africa; invite support from outside Africa once an African-based group is established.
- Seek financial support for PALIACT to carry out its work, e.g. UNESCO, IFLA, COMLA and progressive librarians groups in other countries.

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Subverting Marketplace Censorship

When John O'Brien founded the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* and non-profit Dalkey Archive Press, in 1980 and 1984 respectively, he was partially motivated by the desire to subvert what was going on in both academia and the marketplace. Academia was basically ignoring the authors he was reading, while the marketplace was entering its current form, in which books are treated solely as commodities rather than works of art to be cherished.

The first issues of the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* featured essays on Gilbert Sorrentino, Ishmael Reed, Douglas Woolf, Wallace Markfield, and Aidan Higgins, and constituted some of the first pieces of criticism to appear about these authors in the United States. At the time, only a select group of readers were familiar with these authors, and they weren't being discussed, or even reviewed, in mainstream publications.

Although this is simplifying things, one of the reasons for this silence is the fact that Sorrentino and company were working in a tradition that was outside of mainstream literature coverage both inside and outside of the academy. Sorrentino's works harkened back to the writings of Rabelais, of Sterne, of Flann O'Brien, and incorporated aspects of contemporary French writing (such as the *Nouveau Roman*), which, again, wasn't really being discussed, taught, etc. Professors didn't have the critical tools to talk about novels that deconstructed deconstruction, novels that subverted the critical norms prevalent at the time. With its inception, the *Review* wasn't just filling a niche, but was a subversive act in itself, one that upended (to some degree) the way literature was being discussed and the fact that the critical tools of the time assisted in constructing a particular "canon" of realist literature that could, and implicitly should, be taught in the university.

And that's really the point. Works by these authors didn't fit into the prevalent academic model. They worked outside of the accepted tradition. They were "difficult," "unstable," "subversive." This was true outside of academia, in the marketplace as well. The major mergers of big commercial publishers were a few years off, but publishers were already starting to value books based on their annual sales instead of their inherent quality. Sorrentino's *Splendide-Hôtel* was no longer in print, and if history had progressed sans John O'Brien, the library copies would've dissolved into bits of dust and glue and this incredible work of literature would've been lost to all future generations of readers.

Which is where Dalkey Archive Press comes in. It really wasn't enough to subvert the academy, especially if the books that should, and now were, being discussed were no longer available to students. There was now a place in the marketplace for Dalkey Archive Press to fill—a place wherein a not-for-profit press could bring works back into print and through innovative marketing and crucial support of philanthropists, keep these subversive, incredibly important works of literature in print forever. Restore artistic quality to the evaluation of literature. Make sure readers in the future will have access to these works. Anything else would essentially be censorship. Not of the Big Brother flavor, but rather of the Marketplace.

A world without Dalkey Archive, without progressive librarians dedicated to promoting this type of literature, would be a world in which bookstores and libraries would be inundated with popular works of fiction, and more literary works would disappear as soon as their sales level started to drop off.

Obviously, this is an undesired outcome. Everyone would agree that the best works of art should be available, that culture should be preserved and celebrated for its accomplishments, no matter how many people view, read, or watch it.

There's an even more detrimental side effect of this situation—its effect on international works of art. To commercial publishers, most translations are acts of economic suicide. They cost a lot more to produce than works written in English (think translation costs, extra marketing costs, extra editorial costs) and aren't as widely reviewed or discussed (except in places like the *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, *Context*, and a few other literary magazines), thus don't sell as well. In most cases (Marquez, Rushdie, Murakami aside), publishers lose about \$13,000 when they do a work in translation.

I'm not going to argue that someone, be it the government, a foundation, a few wealthy individuals, should correct this situation—which isn't a bad argument to make—rather that politically, this situation of Marketplace Censorship will lead the U.S. into an even more dire state of isolationism. Publishers aren't dumb people. If they're losing money hand-over-fist on translations, they'll stop publishing them. They'll focus on non-fiction works, cookbooks, and works of fiction by authors names we can all pronounce. Like Robert Parker. Like John Grisham. Stories set in places we're familiar with, filled with ideas that are comfortable and understandable. Books that don't challenge their readers, or, more importantly, don't open reader's minds to other ways of living, other ways of experiencing the world.

And this is where both Dalkey Archive Press and progressive librarians come together in a way that's not only subversive, but also absolutely necessary for culture as a whole. The first original work of fiction Dalkey Archive Press ever published was a French novel entitled *Our Share of Time* by Yves Navarre. And nowadays, in addition to the reprints of important books that have been neglected by the marketplace, Dalkey Archive Press is now publishing more original works in translation than any other press in America. Books like *Things in the Night* by Mati Unt (from Estonia), *Night* by Vedrana Rudan (Croatia), *Chinese Letter* by Svetislav Basara (Serbia), *Voices from Chernobyl* by Svetlana Alexievich (Ukraine), *Koula* by Menis Koumandareas (Greece), and *Embracing Family* by Nobuo Kojima (Japan). All of which are fantastic books—for different aesthetic reasons—that should be read by the English-speaking public. That give us insights into other cultures, while also being amazing works of art. Works that will last for a hundred years, and whose audiences will grow over time thanks to the mission of Dalkey Archive Press and the work of progressive booksellers and librarians who acknowledge that reading works from outside of our borders isn't just fun, it's necessary, and it cultivates an interesting exchange of ideas. (Referring to a comment above, how would Sorrentino have developed as an author without access to French works of literature? What would future writing be like in a world bereft of international literature?)

It's crucial that booksellers, publishers, and librarians all work together to promote international literature. In 2004, Dalkey Archive Press helped establish the "Reading the World" program, an innovative idea featuring a collaboration between five publishers (from the non-profit Archipelago Press to the gigantic Knopf), and over 150 booksellers to display and discuss twenty works of literature in translation throughout the month of May. This year the program will feature ten publishers, 200 booksellers, and forty works of international literature. But still, without libraries this isn't enough. In order to subvert the censorship of the marketplace, to counteract the isolationism of the U.S., to alter the flattening effect of globalization, we need to all work together. It's doubtful that Reading the World will result in a utopia, but it's a start. So anyone who agrees that reading international literature is an important act (both politically and aesthetically) should participate in this program. Display these translations in May, talk to patrons about international literature, and contact me for more details.

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IFLA Report to SRRT

by
Al Kagan

The 2005 IFLA meeting was held in August in Oslo, a beautiful, rich, and diverse city. As opposed to many other countries, Norway has clearly used much of its oil wealth for the benefit of the people. The standard of living is very high, and it is a very expensive place to visit, especially considering the slide of the US dollar.

Under the leadership of IFLA's first African President, Kay Raseroka from the University of Botswana (outgoing), the organization has adopted a vision based on three pillars: Society, Membership, and The Profession. The work of a small group of SRRT members along with others from various countries has obviously made an impact with the formalization of the Society pillar. Beyond the spectacle of the cultural events and ceremony, the most important aspects of the Oslo meeting were the programs and committee work. There was only one resolution introduced at the Council, a non-controversial request regarding the merger of two sections.

Although I also participated in a spring committee meeting, this was my first IFLA conference as an official member of the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Committee. FAIFE is one of IFLA most important core initiatives and it gets high visibility. As with other IFLA bodies, there is a need to open up the decision-making process, and I have spent considerable and worthwhile efforts in this endeavor. I am pleased to report that FAIFE has recently received a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) based on emphasizing the Society pillar and closer collaboration with IFLA's Action for Development through Libraries Programme Core Activity, the body that focuses on library development in poor countries. One result of this grant will be a concentration of programs and performances on HIV/AIDS issues at the next two annual conferences.

Because of my previous work in convening the IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group and in concert with the SIDA grant, I was asked to write an article for the 2005 IFLA/FAIFE World Report. This third report is titled, *Libraries, National Security, Freedom of Information Laws and Social Responsibilities*, and it is available for sale from the IFLA Headquarters. My article is titled, "IFLA and Social Responsibility: A Core Value of Librarianship." It includes a discussion of SRRT as a model as well as noting other progressive international efforts. It also gives an overview of IFLA's checkered history in this realm since the 1970s. One can guess the topics of the other articles from the title of the report, however as in previous editions, the main body provides country information developed mostly through survey questionnaires. Eight-four countries are represented. For the first time, data was collected on so-called national security legislation and libraries involvement with women's literacy.

FAIFE held a pre-conference seminar on "Documenting Censorship" and a program on "Libraries and Human Rights." The discussion was stimulating, and I made sure to explain SRRT's position on the need to repeal the entire PATRIOT Act. It was particularly disconcerting to hear of plans in the UK and The Netherlands to follow in the footsteps of the USA. The good news is that the library communities are mobilizing to fight off this legislation. This again shows the importance of SRRT's work within ALA. We can help counteract the impact of US legislation on the library world at home and throughout the world, and we should not underestimate the potential value of our efforts.

SRRTAC-L

The SRRT discussion group SRRTAC-L is open to all SRRT members and is a relatively low-traffic (less than five messages a day unless there's a hot topic brewing) way of keeping up with SRRT's issues and discussions in-between conferences. Help decide SRRT's future directions and join in some lively debates. If you would like to join the SRRT discussion group, send the following message in the body of the email, to listproc@ala.org: subscribe SRRTAC-L [your first name] [your last name] To unsubscribe: unsubscribe SRRTAC-L

SRRTMEM

SRRTMEM is an unrestricted email list for announcements from American Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table. Announcements come from the SRRT Coordinator, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and the Director of OLOS. The purpose is to keep SRRT members and other interested people informed as to SRRT's activities and to provide information about how to get involved. To subscribe to SRRTMEM, send the following email to listproc@ala.org: subscribe SRRTMEM [your name] To unsubscribe from SRRTMEM, send this command to listproc@ala.org: unsubscribe SRRTMEM

SRRT'S WEB SITE

Want more information on SRRT? Want to find contact information for the many SRRT Task Forces? Turn your browser toward the official SRRT Web site: <<http://www.libr.org/SRRT>>

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