

SRRT Newsletter

**June
2006
Issue
154-155**

Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association

SRRT Programs at Annual 2006

Preparedness Matters-Planning for a Disaster: A Mini-Workshop
Friday, June 23rd, 1:30-5:30 p.m.

All Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Alternatives in Publication Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Feminist Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Homelessness, Hunger, and Poverty Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Information Policy in the Common Interest Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

International Responsibilities Task Force Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Task Force on the Environment Meeting
Saturday, June 24th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday MultiCultural Idea Exchange
Saturday, June 24th, 1:30-3.30 p.m.

All the News You Never Get: Breaking the International News Blockade
Sunday June 25th, 10:30 a.m-12.00 p.m.

The Ethnic Press, Libraries, and Community: How We Can Strengthen the Ties
Sunday June 25th, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Action Council II
Monday June 26th, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

15th Annual Free Speech Buffet
Monday June 26, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

More Meeting Info Inside

Highlights In This Issue:	
Letter From the Coordinator	3
Task Force News	8-11
EPA Libraries	12-17

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 SRRT Coordinator

Dear SRRT Members,

As the annual ALA conference in New Orleans approaches, I imagine that each of us have been thinking about the many things that have, and haven't, been happening in that region of the country.

What are our social responsibilities in the face of the natural, political, economic and cultural aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? I've been struggling with this question and am still seeking answers. The most pressing aspect of the question concerns my upcoming role as a conference attendee during the days between June 24th and 27th.

We've all heard of homeless New Orleans residents living in hotels who were forced to leave to make rooms available for tourists during Mardi Gras. Recently there was the story from Loyola University law professor Bill Quigley about the elderly couple who have been sleeping in their car since January, parked next to a *locked*, 250 foot FEMA trailer that was put in the yard of their devastated home. See the full story at:

<http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0329-20.htm>. I've read that the current population of New Orleans is now only one-third of pre-hurricane size. That means over 300,000 people are displaced. That's nearly the entire population of Toledo, Ohio! And that's just counting people who lived in New Orleans.

As a socially responsible librarian I feel like I should be camping in a tent to show my solidarity with all those left homeless by Katrina, FEMA and our mean-spirited government which would rather kill for oil than help *all* the people of New Orleans rebuild their homes.

I can't attend a "business as usual" ALA Annual. Yes, of course, we need to do our association work and we will. I'll be chairing SRRT Action Council meetings as usual, attending my COE meetings, going to programs, participating in the PLG discussion group, business meeting and dinner, hobnobbing with indy-press publishers and friends at the Free Speech Buffet. We also need to spend our tourist money at the Café de Monde, the Voodoo Museum, for our red-beans-and-rice, and – yes – our hurricanes and mint juleps, and I'll be doing all that as well. But, I'll also be participating in the volunteer activities ALA is planning, and we've got people in SRRT and PLG working to organize volunteer opportunities for people who can't manage ALA's full-day volunteer events.

But volunteering isn't enough. The Katrina/FEMA/\$\$\$-mentality that has abandoned communities in the region shows us clearly that social responsibility is *not* an active part of society in the U.S. Yes, we feel bad, we donate, we speak woefully – all in absolute sincerity – but that doesn't help much, a mere drop-in-the-bucket. A mean-spiritedness permeates our society, from the hostilities now directed toward immigrants from Capitol Hill to the daily negligence of so many needs.

Come join us at the SRRT MEMBERSHIP MEETING during the conference to discuss what we should be doing to spread the idea, spirit and activism of social responsibility within our own communities.

Elaine Harger
Coordinator, SRRT-AC

ALA Council Report to SRRT, Midwinter 2006, San Antonio

SRRT and other progressive councilors had mixed success at the San Antonio conference, but who would have ever thought that the ALA store would be selling lots of "Radical Militant Librarian" buttons for \$2 each? The larger political environment, as well as our efforts have certainly helped us move our agenda. Our Resolution in Support of Academic Freedom was endorsed by the Intellectual Freedom community as well as ALCTS and the Oregon chapter and sailed through Council. This concerns David Horowitz's so-called Academic Bill of Rights which is being used to attack academic freedom and stifle free speech on college and university campuses.

The SRRT Action Council discussion showed firm support for a graduated dues schedule, but our efforts to address this issue in the context of a proposed ALA dues increase was largely defeated. I think most of us would support a moderate dues increase if it were implemented in a progressive way, but the Council refused to even call for a report about doing a future study, and sent the resolution to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC). Some SRRT members feel it is now important to try to defeat the dues increase or at least motivate a large negative vote to show the ALA staff and Council that we expect more fairness on how we finance the association. Watch for this on the spring ballot.

Those who were at the Action Council meetings know of our long discussions on what to do about Madeleine Albright being invited as a keynote speaker for the Annual Conference in New Orleans. Peter McDonald was able to raise the broader issue of the process for determining keynote speakers under New Business at Council I. President-Elect Leslie Burger has engaged the issue and it appears that our voices have been heard. We will need to monitor this issue in New Orleans.

After much debate, and on a close vote, the Council voted against the confirmation of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. The Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) should be congratulated for bringing this forward. It appears that faxes were sent in time, and the various lobbying efforts across the country did make a difference. Alito was confirmed on one of the closest votes in recent memory, certainly not a mandate for future reactionary court decisions.

The International Relations Committee brought back and successfully passed a revised resolution on the Rights of Librarians and Library Workers to Travel. It includes both US librarians traveling anywhere and others traveling to the US for library activities.

The Legislation Committee brought several resolutions that sailed through Council. The most important ones were probably on the reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act, opposing the EPA's threats to water down the Toxics Release Inventory Program, and opposing the IRS decision to stop wide distribution of tax forms in libraries. The

resolution on the PATRIOT Act was accompanied by a live call-in to Congress so Councilors could communicate the policy just passed. The Council voted to support amending sections 215 and 505 instead of following SRRT's lead in calling for an end to the entire Act.

Finally, let me comment on the President's Program, the Executive Board election, and the SRRT Councilor position. Those who went to President Gorman's program saw him and the ALA Council get ambushed by New Orleans Romanian-American author Andre Codrescu. The agreed topic was library education, but Mr. Codrescu took ALA money to instead support Robert Kent's agenda in promoting the CIA's campaign to intervene in Cuba by supporting so-called "independent librarians." Codrescu blasted ALA and repeated Kent's distortions of ALA policy. Most SRRT members know this story only too well. Suffice it to say that President Gorman was amazingly calm and resourceful in defending ALA and even made jokes to try to defuse the situation. I was immensely impressed.

Some of you know that I was nominated to run for the ALA Executive Board. I did so knowing full well that the odds were slim and I indeed lost. The main point was to promote the SRRT agenda, and I happily did that at the candidates forum. Finally, the SRRT Action has interpreted the SRRT bylaws to mean that there are no term limits for the SRRT Councilor. I am therefore running again for another three-year term. I get great satisfaction from representing the round table and trying to move our issues through the organization. Thanks for all your support. As always, I am happy to try to answer questions.

Al Kagan
SRRT Councilor
akagan@uiuc.edu

Note from the Editor:

In this issue you will find some interesting and thought-provoking material, from Fred Stoss's timely piece to the threat to EPA's libraries to the revived book review section (many thanks to book review editor Jane Ingold for making this happen!).

I would like to encourage members to write up reports on interesting programs (even non-SRRT) they attend at Annual. To give one example, the Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) of ACRL is bringing in noted progressive Adolph Reed to talk about the aftermath of Katrina. (full disclosure, I'm also a member of the LPSS Program Planning Committee)

See you in New Orleans!

Erik

Resolution in Support of Academic Freedom and Against the So-called "Academic Bill of Rights"

Whereas the ALA has a general interest in the health of the all the nation's institutions which support freedom of thought and learning;

Whereas the ALA represents many members who work in universities and colleges as providers of information and knowledge and promoters of the overall goals of American higher learning and research;

Whereas the ALA embraces the First Amendment and, in that context, the "Freedom to Read Statement," the "Library Bill of Rights," the ALA "Code of Ethics," and the "Statement of Core Values;"

Whereas all of the above documents are clearly consonant with and supportive in principle of the 1940 American Association of University Professors (AAUP) "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure," a policy specifically cited by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL);

Whereas academic libraries generally support the above documents;

Whereas the so-called "Academic Bill of Rights" would impose extra-academic standards on institutions of higher education, directly interfering in course content, the classroom, the research process, and hiring and tenure decisions;

Whereas the so-called "Academic Bill of Rights" is being promoted on campuses, in state legislatures and at the Federal level;

Therefore be it resolved that the American Library Association opposes the promotion of the misleadingly-named "Academic Bill of Rights."

Supporting documentation

[Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8551](http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8551)

AAUP national website, click on "Academic Bill of Rights." <http://www.aaup.org>

California Conference of the American Association of University Professors. "Response to the Academic Bill of Rights." <http://www.aaup-ca.org/CAAUP%20response%20SB5.html>

Center for Campus Free Speech. "The Academic Bill of Restrictions." Contains links to sample letters to the editor, op eds, frequently asked questions, talking points, etc. <http://www.campuspeech.org/speech.asp?id2=12942>

Moved: Mark C Rosenzweig, Councilor at Large
Seconded: Al Kagan, SRRT Councilor

Member Updates

Laura Crossett has a new job as a Branch Manager of the Meeteetse Branch Library, part of the Park County Library System, in northwestern Wyoming. The library serves both the town (population 351) and the local K-12 school.

Fred Stoss (U. Buffalo, SUNY) has joined the ranks of about two dozen Upstate New Yorkers as members of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission Speakers' Bureau (see: <http://www.srbc.net/speakers.htm>). The Speakers' Bureau is an extension of the Commission's outreach program and is intended to help spread the word about the nation's sixteenth largest river and is the largest river lying entirely in the United States that flows into the Atlantic Ocean. The Susquehanna River and its tributaries drain 27,510 square miles is spread over parts of the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. For more information contact Fred at fstoss@buffalo.edu.

Publications

Kagan, Al. "IFLA and Social Responsibility: A Core Value of Librarianship." In *Libraries, National Security, Freedom of Information Laws and Social Responsibilities: IFLA/FAIFE World Report*. Ed. Susanne Seidelin and Stuart Hamilton. 33-43. Copenhagen: IFLA/FAIFE, 2005.

The Winter 2005 issue of *Reference & User Services Quarterly* featured a piece by John Gehner for the "Community Building" column: "Poverty, Poor People, and Our Priorities."

John is also conducting an online email interview with UK library/social-exclusion specialists John Pateman (<http://www.libr.org/isc/>) and John Vincent (<http://www.seapn.org.uk/>), which should be completed this spring and

edited for potential publication before summer. The purpose of the piece will be to illustrate how our British counterparts are addressing poverty and related social problems. In an excerpt from the interview, John Pateman suggests trends that perhaps mirror those in the United States:

My view is that any work being carried out by [UK] libraries to tackle social exclusion, with very few exceptions, is piecemeal and short term--project work, often externally funded, rather than mainstream library work. Framework for the Future [the British government's strategic plan for public libraries] has three strands: reader development, e-citizenship and social exclusion. Of these, a lot of time, effort and investment has gone into reader development programs, training, conferences and infrastructure. Organisations such as The Reading Agency and Opening the Book are now making a living out of this work--external to public libraries.

A lot of investment has also gone into e-citizenship via the People's Network--providing free access to the internet via public libraries (although a growing number of services are starting to charge for People's Network access). In comparison to reader development and e-citizenship, social exclusion is the poor relation--no agencies have been set up to take this work forward, there are few conferences or events and very little in the professional press. That is why we set up the Network: to fill a gap that [other agencies] were not prepared to fill, partly because they do not see that there is a problem.

Task Force News

International Responsibilities Task Force

At the ALA Midwinter meeting, the IRTF finalized program plans for our Annual Conference in New Orleans. Our program, which we will co-sponsor with PLG, will be entitled "All the News You Never Get: Breaking the International News Blockade." The program will be held on Sunday, June 25, 2006 from 10:30-noon. We are still finalizing plans for speakers, but the short list of speakers suggested include: Lewis Lapham, editor-in-chief of Harper's; W. Leon Smith, editor-in-chief of The Lone Star Iconoclast; David Brock, a renowned conservative journalist who eventually changed his position and began writing materials that exposed the conservative media; Amy Goodman, host of Pacifica's Democracy Now and Tom Engelhardt, the editor who runs the Nation's Institute Tomdispatch.com. The speakers will be confirmed by the end of February.

We also discussed how the task forces will have to supplement their budgets if they want to continue the level of programming that has been done at recent annual conferences. Now that we no longer have the income from the Coretta Scott King Award breakfast, the task force was charged with finding ways to raise money. Possible fundraisers include selling buttons, or having some type of food event. We also discussed the idea of selling postcards that featured libraries from all over the world. The entire task force agreed that the latter idea would be an excellent fundraiser.

Le Juan Pringle

Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force

The Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) is currently working in conjunction with the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) and the OLOS Subcommittee on Library Service to the Poor and Homeless to plan programming for the ALA Annual Conference in 2007.

This programming is tentatively titled "Open Doors: Library Service to Excluded Groups." An informal discussion was held at the 2006 Midwinter Meeting with over 20 people attending. (For more info on this discussion, contact OLOS director Satia Orange: sorange@ala.org.) A follow-up event is scheduled for New Orleans-- check the OLOS schedule for "Open Doors."

HHPTF and OLOS are also sharing ideas to create, among other things, a practical "poverty toolkit." This resource would assist and inspire librarians in service to low-income people and feature case studies, model policies, and other materials.

As always, we welcome contributions and participation from anyone who is interested in poverty issues—whether or not you are a SRRT member. (Though perhaps you'd like to join!) The HHPTF can be more effective with your help. What are your ideas?

Finally, if you would like to contribute commentary and info for the blog at www.hhptf.org, please contact me. Can you commit to writing regular posts for a particular week or month? Submissions can be as formal or informal as you like. Library students are encouraged to respond.

I look forward to hearing from you!

John Gehner, Coordinator
1907 Bellamy Drive
Champaign, IL 61821
jgehner@hhptf.org

Task Force News

Alternatives in Publishing Task Force

Here is an update on the Free Speech Buffet. This is the first year that we have asked for advance registration, and the first year that we have charged a fee. As I anticipated, the publicity resulting from our listing on the Registration Form has more than compensated for the minimal cost. Over 85 librarians have already registered for the event. Walk-ins will also be welcome to buy their ticket at the door. Appetizers will be catered and tasty, and there will be a cash bar.

I am going to do another wave of publisher promotion; the independent publishing community in New Orleans was not large in the best of times, and the hurricane made it impossible for several publishers to make it; several of them closed down or moved on. So far we have about 12 publishers that have agreed to attend.

I have also been recruiting publishers from the Chicago area (In These Times, for example.) If you know of a publisher who might want to exhibit but who can't send a representative, we will exhibit their books for them and take orders, in selected cases, depending on our volunteer capability.

Here is the location information:

15th Annual Free Speech Buffet
 American Library Association Conference
 OMNI Royal New Orleans Hotel
 Esplanade Room
 621 St. Louis St., New Orleans, LA 70130
 Monday, June 26, 2006
 6pm to 9pm

Here is the final description of program.

The Ethnic Press, Libraries, and Community: How We Can Strengthen the Ties

ALA-SRRT (Co-sponsored by EMIERT and IFRT.)

Track: Issues & Updates

Location and Time:

Sunday, June 25, 1:30pm-3:30pm
 Morial Convention Center Room 397

Representatives of the Ethnic Press and Libraries discuss the role of the ethnic press in community building, and how libraries can help strengthen and reinforce that relationship to promote Intellectual Freedom and further the common good.

Speakers: Nancy Kranich, Past President, American Library Association; George E. Curry, Editor-In-Chief, NNPA News Service and Black PressUSA.com; Juana Ponce de Leon, Director, Grass Roots Media Project, IPA; Renette Hall, Editor, Louisiana Weekly.

For more information, contact Carol Gulyas, Chair, AIP, 312-344-7072
cgulyas@colum.edu

Task Force News

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force

The 2006 Sunrise Observance honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. returned to the city of its origin in January 1999. Its sponsorship which began with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table and World Book, Inc. has been co-sponsored by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) since 2000. According to AMERICAN LIBRARIES (March 2006), ALA President Michael Gorman called this year's celebration the "high point of the Midwinter Meeting." The theme was "Celebrating a Legacy of Freedom and Diversity in Our Libraries."

Over 300 attendees listened as the featured speaker, Angela Shelf Medearis emotionally expressed her appreciation to librarians for their demands "that publishers have books for all children." Medearis is a children's author whose credits include being noted as "TEXAS' most popular and successful author of children's literature" by TEXAS MONTHLY magazine (Sep 1997) with her concentration on black themes and characters. She spoke of her commitment to honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by observing the King Holiday as a day of service in her community. In an award-winning career of writing books for children having difficulty reading, she has published over 80 books along with four cookbooks. Also, Medearis is the founder of Book Boosters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to tutoring elementary school children to improve reading and self esteem. The organization operates in 23 Independent School District after-school programs in Austin, TX. To the delight of all, copies of her "JUST FOR YOU! SINGING FOR DR. KING (Scholastic) were presented to members of the audience.

ALA Office for Diversity Director, Tracie Hall presented "Words of Enlightenment" that were received to a church-like call and response from many in the audience. Hall referred to Dr. King's 'I Have a Dream Speech' in her challenge to library workers that they should "not run away from the mountains --- in our lives, in our communities, and in our libraries. Dr. King's life is a testimony to what can happen when we stand and we face that mountain."

Other speakers included: Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director, Paul Kobasa, Editor in Chief, World Book, Inc., and Andrew P. Jackson, President, Black Caucus-ALA (Co-Sponsor). Robin Osborne, introduced the speaker and Words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were presented by the presidents or representatives of the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Roundtable (GLBRT), Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian Pacific American Library Association (APALA), Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latin and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA).

Music was offered by The Jenkins Family (San Antonio) with audience participation for the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" in the opening and "We Shall Overcome" at the closing.

We extend our gratitude to all participants with special acknowledgements to: the World Book, Inc. for co-sponsorship and for providing refreshments, Scholastic Library Publishing and Trade for sponsoring the featured speaker, the Black Caucus of ALA for Co-sponsorship, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) Co-sponsorship, and Sattia Orange, Director and the ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) for continuous support.

Submitted by
Virginia B. Moore, Chair
ALA SRRT Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday Task Force

Task Force News

Information Policy in the Public Interest Task Force

We drafted an initial statement of principles, which we are still working on, and initiated a long-term project toward the ultimate goal IPPI met at midwinter and got a good start on our core activities of guiding ALA to adopt an information policy and to become a leader in this area. ALA doesn't have an information policy and has never made information policy recommendations to government (despite interest among some ALA leaders, like Eric Moon, over the years). But it does have a lot of library policy statements and statements of principle, on issues like Access and Intellectual Freedom, that point in the direction of an information policy. A project that we're just starting is to do an inventory of ALA's information policy-related statements so that we can analyze them and tease out their common threads, contradictions, strengths and weaknesses. This should be an interesting document that will suggest some different possibilities for action within ALA.

That's a limited set of activities for the moment, but it should make a good foundation for other activities we can do at a later point, like conference programs and other things not thought of yet.

Submitted by Rory Litwin, Chair

Task Force on the Environment

The Task Force on the Environment brings to the ALA Annual a unique and extremely timely program on the afternoon of Friday, June 23rd. In the aftermath of the tragedy of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the need for emergency preparedness took on new definitions and demonstrations for greater collaborations at all levels. The TFOE program, "Preparedness Matters--Planning for a Disaster," is a 4-hour workshop for librarians needing to know how they can

take on roles as participants in community-based disaster preparedness.

Most librarians think of disaster or emergency preparedness in terms related to recovery services for damaged paper-based collections and infrastructure. Librarians, however, can play a much larger role in assisting the communities in which they live and work, as active emergency and disaster information centers. Through coordinated efforts among librarians, Federal and State emergency management agencies, and local resources, librarians can assist members of the community to learn how to get involved in programs about local emergency plans, identifying hazards affecting their communities, and how to assist in developing and maintaining emergency communication plans and disaster-response tool kits to assist with evacuation plans, emergency public shelters, animals in disaster, assistance for people with disabilities, and more. The featured presenter is P. Gayle Alston, MLS, Regional Training Manager, FEMA Region 4, Atlanta, GA. Gayle will bring her previous experiences from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to provide an in-depth look at librarian roles in disaster preparedness.

This workshop will be moderated by Frederick W. Stoss, MS, MLS, and TFOE co-Chair University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY. Gayle will also conduct a shorter presentation on Sunday afternoon. Contact Fred Stoss for more detailed information at fstoss@buffalo.edu.

Submitted by Fred Stoss, Co-chair TFOE

FEATURE ARTICLE

The EPA Library Network In Jeopardy

On February 10, 2006, the nonprofit organization, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER, a national alliance of local state and federal resource professionals), noted that under President Bush's proposed FY '07 budget, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Libraries would lose \$2 million of its \$2.5 million budget. The PEER press release noted that this 80 percent loss would cause the EPA to "shut down its network of libraries that serve its own scientists as well as the public."¹

The Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970 as an independent agency as a result of a large-scale reorganization of the U.S. Federal Government by President Richard M. Nixon. The EPA's National Library Network was created in 1971 and now is a coordinated network of information resource centers facilitating access to its collections of books, reports, journals, and other data and information resources. The EPA Library Network and information resource centers assist in maintaining special information clearinghouses, information docket, information hotlines, and publication distribution. The EPA Office of Environmental Information oversees the agency's National Library Network, which is one of the oldest and largest environmental libraries in the country. The network provides services and resources from 28 units in 10 regional offices, 12 EPA laboratories, four separate libraries within the EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and two research centers.

The EPA Library Network provides comprehensive access to environmental data and information and offers a range of services to EPA staff including interlibrary loans, research assistance, reference and referral services, subscriptions to publications, and online searching of commercial databases. The EPA Library Network also provides similar services to the public at-large.

A multitude of resources comprise the largest of the EPA Libraries Collections in the Headquarters Library:

- 16,000+ books and technical reports produced by government agencies other than the EPA
- numerous subscriptions to scientific and technical journals, newsletters, and newspapers
- 5,500 hard copy EPA documents
- 380,000 technical documents on microfiche, including those produced by EPA and its predecessor agencies
- A microforms collection that includes back files of abstracts and indexes, and periodicals²
- The materials in the library cover environmental regulations, policy, planning, and administration. The collections of the entire EPA Library Network are as equally impressive:
- 3,600,000 information objects on microfilm
- 60,000 PDF files indexed, provides
- 430 mostly commercial information resources (3)

The EPA's Library's Online Library System (OLS) consists of databases that can be used to locate books, reports, and audiovisual materials on a variety of topics. The material on OLS is updated every two weeks, and may be searched in many ways, such as by title, author, and keyword, and is provided to users within and external to the Agency. Here are some of the inte-

FEATURE ARTICLE

grated databases:

- National Catalog (which includes citations from the National Technical Information Service)
- National Service Center for Environmental Publications (which provides print copies of popular EPA documents free of charge)
- Environmental Financing Information Network
- National Enforcement Training Institute Database
- Several EPA Regional Offices (I, V, IX) special collections databases

Libraries in the EPA Library Network are generally open for public use and support walk-in, telephone, and email reference and referral requests by researchers in the applied, life, physical, and social sciences; educators and teachers, students, environmental policymakers, nonprofit groups, and other who have a need for environmental information. These needs range from students looking for science fair projects to community officials and organizations seeking to build environmentally sound and sustainable communities. The EPA Libraries also participate in inter-library loan programs to enhance the Library Network's information resources sharing services and programs. These services, programs, and outreach activities are performed by professional librarians (holding MLS, MLIS, or equivalent graduate degrees in library science) and paraprofessionals acting in strategic administrative, management, and support capacities.

According to a 2004 EPA Report (EPA 260-R-04-001) prepared by Stratus Consulting, Inc., 3 "On an annual basis, provision of this functional category accounts for slightly under \$1.7 million, or nearly one-third of the composite library services budget." Stratus consulting analyzed data for librarian performance over the EPA Library Network, noting that EPA librarians "fielded and successfully addressed:" 56,175 reference questions from EPA Staff (roughly 60 percent) and the public and conducted 90,116 database searches.

These EPA librarian efforts saved 214,566 hours of EPA Staff time at a cost saving to the agency of more than \$7.5 million and a savings of more than \$2.87 million for the public at-large. In addition to these basic reference and referral services, the EPA Librarians processed and delivered 99,197 documents and information resources to all patrons (65,825 to EPA Staff) in 2003. The value of this distribution service was estimated at slightly more than \$3 million. The Stratus Consulting report concluded that, "The Environmental Protection Agency's libraries are clearly a source of substantial value to the Agency, its stakeholders, and the public. Even employing the most conservative of assumptions, benefit-to-cost ratios for core library services indicate that libraries "give back" far more than they take in terms of Agency resources. EPA libraries are nonetheless a significant capital and operational investment, costing the Agency roughly \$6.2 million annually to operate and maintain (4)

The Stratus Consulting report also provided an estimation of a comprehensive cost and benefits analysis for a full-suite of librarian-based reference and referral services (walk-in, phone, email, virtual), document delivery, database searching, distance learning and training services of \$22,153.550 per year, which is an aggregate benefit to cost ration of 5.7:1. 3

Calls to Action

The American Library Association⁵ (ALA) and Special Libraries Association⁴ (SLA) issued indi-

FEATURE ARTICLE

vidual statements on the EPA Library closing on Friday, February 17. In the ALA news release, ALA Washington Office Associate Director Patrice McDermott told American Libraries, "(W)hile the 80% cut in library funds is 'massive,' it's only part of a proposed \$300-million cut to the EPA's overall budget, and the question of whether the library's budget might be restored could go either way." McDermott also added that, "In relative numbers, it's such a small amount," she said, "and Congress could potentially restore the library funds. But many of the library community's natural partners in the drive to reinstate funding may be overwhelmed by their own fights," she warned.

The statement issued by the Special Libraries Association was more strongly worded. "SLA is gravely concerned with the proposal in the Bush Administration's FY2007 Budget to close the network of 27 libraries and information centers within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency," stated Janice R. Lachance, Chief Executive Officer of SLA "With this proposal, EPA's leadership is making it more difficult for the agency's policymakers and the public to leverage the extensive knowledge found in high quality, accurate information to make important decisions on our nation's environment, potentially compromising the public's health, she noted. Lachance also stated, "Short-sighted budget savings like this will give way town increased costs for EPA that aren't apparent right now." (5)

EPA Librarians Tried to Tell Us Last Year

A critical aspect of this current situation has not been fully addressed nor acknowledged by ALA or SLA, but was partly addressed in November of last year by the EPA Librarians themselves.

The EPA Library Network Workgroup in late 2005 addressed the need for a response to draft FY '07 budget proposal from the Office of Management and Budget, then projected as a \$500,000 reduction in the EPA Headquarters Library and Library Network "coordination project." (6)

This report also indicates that the EPA Office of Environmental Information also proposed in the fall of 2005 to the Office of Management and Budget a \$1.5 million reduction across the agency's ten Regional Libraries. The Workgroup identified four core service elements of the Regional Libraries:

- Support for EPA Scientists and Technical Staff
- Support for EPA Enforcement Staff
- Collection Cataloguing and Maintenance
- Support for members of the general public

The report also cited examples of other Regional Libraries' activities:

- Maintaining public reading rooms (e.g., FOIA reading rooms, Superfund dockets)
- Generating mailing lists of facilities that are regulated by EPA programs (for enforcement of public outreach)
- Serving as a "public information center" directing incoming phone calls to appropriate EPA personnel, maintaining a directory of subject experts within the Region
- Coordinating publication of the EPA Region's technical reports

FEATURE ARTICLE

Without a doubt the single most significant loss in these proposed budget cuts would be the loss of its Online Library System. OLS provides direct access to the holdings of the entire EPA Library Network. The contents of the online catalog include technical reports, government documents, and other resources pre-dating the EPA, as well as tens of thousands of bibliographic records to resources produced and published since the founding of the EPA in 1970.

With the EPA Office of Environmental Information (OEI) proposing its \$1.5 million "cost savings," to which was added an additional \$500K cut in the proposed budget, it remains unclear at what level in OEI was the "cost savings" made, to what extent were the EPA Library Managers and contract librarians consulted, and whether or not options for transferring all of the EPA's print collections to digital formats were made.

The EPA library managers acknowledged the need for making changes in its collections and delivery of services much earlier than this. Richard Huffine, then Federal Manager for the EPA National Library Network, briefly outlined these options in a 2003 presentation. These changes include moving information access from the EPA Libraries to users' desktops, such as the EPA Desktop Library, an intranet service providing EPA staff access to current news sources, journal articles, technical reports, and other reference materials from commercial and other free sources. The EPA library managers were also making plans for "approaches for virtual reference, improved access to electronic publications and enhanced functions of libraries." (7)

ALA's Call to Action

Librarians, educators, researchers, policymakers, government officials and staff can voice their concerns in opposition to this proposed budget cut, that would eliminate an extremely cost-effective, professionally-competent, and vital natural resource—The Environmental Protection Agency's National Library Network. The best means to accomplish this is for librarians to contact the professional organizations to which they belong, such as the American Library Association (www.ala.org) and use their staff that routinely interacts with government agencies and other institutions and organizations (such as done by the ALA Washington Office, which has compiled an issues alert to include the names and contact information for key Congressional committees, and issued a call for members to contact their Representatives in Congress.

ALA issued an official alert on this issue on the 9th of March (2006). (8) This release provides a listing of members of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Committees; selected "Talking Points;" and a list of "other things" you can do to individually address this issue.

The Washington Office has been working with other components of ALA in formulating the association's handling of this issue. It is sadly noted that members of SRRT and its Task Force on the Environment are not involved in any of ALA's ongoing efforts on this issue. Over the years the ALA Task Force on the Environment has fostered close relationships with the EPA Libraries, Library Managers, and contract librarians. TFOE Chairs, co-Chairs, and program planners have involved EPA contract librarians as speakers to TFOE Programs, hosted open houses of EPA Libraries when ALA has been in cities with regional or headquarter libraries. TFOE has also presented various resolutions to SRRT and to ALA Council in support of the EPA Libraries and the establishment of the EPA Office of Environmental Information, under which the EPA Libraries

FEATURE ARTICLE

are currently administered. Several TFOE Members have also enjoyed opportunities to serve with EPA contract librarians and their EPA managers on a number of Federal coordinating committees related to acid rain, global climate change, and environmental health issues. There is one SRRT Member who was one of the librarians initially responsible for building the EPA Library Network in 1971-1972. As of this writing those involved in the ALA-EPA dialogues have stated publicly the need to correct the "misinformation" that has been spread, and have not identified the sources nor content of this "misinformation."

The ALA Committee on Legislation (COL), members of the Office of Government Relations (OGR) of the Washington Office, together with COL's Government Information Subcommittee (GIS) and others, are acting on behalf of the Association to "[take] appropriate steps to defend these libraries and develop strategies for following through as this issue moves through the appropriations process." (9) COL has been involved directly with these issues; through the OGR staff; and other ALA groups are being contacted, including FAFLRT and GODORT. COL Chair, Larry Romans, state in this 31 Mar 2006 16:51:16 -0600 email, "it is too early to talk about a new taskforce, although I know that COL, GIS, and OGR staff would be glad to collaborate with other interested ALA units and members to make all of our efforts as effective as possible." TFOE is waiting to help, but will be making its own recommendations, which are essentially the same ones ALA is currently making.

It has been reported that at least one of the EPA Regional Libraries has already begun the process of "mothballing" its print collection and making plans for closing down its library's operation. Your actions are needed urgently.

References

- (1) Chas Offutt. 2006. "Bush Axing Libraries While Pushing for More Research: EPA Set to Close Library Network and Electronic Catalog. News Release, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, 10 February 2006. http://www.peer.org/news/news_id.php?row_id=643. Searched 17 February 2006
- (2) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2005. EPA Headquarters Library: Services for the Public. <http://www.epa.gov/natlibra/hqirc/services.htm> Searched 4/10/06.
- (3) Stratus Consulting. 2004. Business Case for Information Services: EPA's Regional Libraries and Centers, EPA 260-R-04-001, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 21 p. <http://www.epa.gov/natlibra/epa260r04001.pdf> Searched 4/10/06.
- (4) American Library Association. News Release: "EPA Library Funds Cut 80% under Bush Budget," 17 February 2006. <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=alonline&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=116849> Search 4/10/06.
- (5) Special Libraries Association. News Release: "SLA Denounces Proposal to Close EPA Libraries," 17 February 2006. <http://www.sla.org/content/SLA/pressroom/pressrelease/2006pre/2006pre2605.cfm>. Searched 4/10/06.
- (6) EPA Library Network Workgroup. EPA Library Network: Challenges for

FEATURE ARTICLE

FY 2007 and Beyond. Findings and Recommendations Document. November 22, 2005. http://www.peer.org/docs/epa/06_9_2_library_network.pdf. Searched 4/10/06

(7) Richard L. Huffine. EPA Update: Current Activities of EPA Librarians, CGMI Europe Presentation. October 23, 2003. www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fdlp/pubs/proceedings/03pro_huffine.ppt searched 4/10/06.

(8) American Library Association Washington Office. "Proposed Cuts to EPA Libraries," Newslines. Volume 15, Number 035, 9 March 2006. <http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/washnews/2006ndx/035mar09.htm>. Searched 4/10/06.

(9) Larry Romans larry.romans@vanderbilt.edu. 31 Mar 2006 16:51:16 -0600, To: GOVDOC-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU, member-forum@ala.org, TLA-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU, tngovdoc-l@LATTE.MEMPHIS.EDU. Subject: [MEMBER-FORUM:992] EPA library closings and ALA activities.

Additional Resources:

"Budget cuts imperil EPA library system," by Ted Agres. The Scientist. Published 10th March 2006 04:37 PM GMT. <http://www.thescientist.com/news/display/23221/>.

"Will Budget Constraints Sound a Death Knell for EPA Libraries?" by Barbie E. Keiser http://infotoday.mondosearch.com/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&EXTRA_ARG=&CFGNAME=MssFind.cfg&host_id=42&page_id=175&query=epa&hiword=epa%20

Frederick W. Stoss. Resolution in Support of EPA Libraries, Social Responsibilities Round Table, American Library Association, passed 6 June 1999. In: SRRT Newsletter, No. 133, December 1999 p. 4,7. <http://www.libr.org/SRRT/news/srrt133.pdf>

"Bush budget ax could cut hours of EPA library." Todd Hartman. Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) Feb 14, 2006 p10A.

"Bush budget squeezes EPA library." Todd Hartman. Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) Feb 14, 2006 p18A.

About the Author:

Fred Stoss is the Associate Librarian of Biological and Environmental Sciences and at The University of Buffalo and is the current co-chair of SRRT Task Force on the Environment.

BACK OF THE BOOK SECTION

Book Review of Derr, Mary Krane, MacNair, Rachel, and Naranjo-Huebl, Linda. *Pro-Life Feminism: Yesterday and Today*. Expanded 2nd ed. Feminism and Nonviolence Studies Association, 2005.

The authors of *ProLife Feminism* have a viewpoint that they are trying to portray in their writing. From the beginning of the book they are upfront that they are prolife feminists. The book analyzes prolife arguments by first providing brief biographies of feminists from our foremothers to present day feminists, then providing excerpts of a primary source, either a speech, or a piece of prose. This format continues throughout the book. This book includes arguments from notable feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In comparing Part One of *ProLife Feminism* (1790-1960) to Part Two (1960s to the Present), the writers say, "early feminist writings on the issue of abortion differ from ours in that none of our foremothers seemed to have imagined that abortion would one day be legal and promoted as a 'woman's right'."

A recurring point throughout the book is that abortions are sought by both the married and the unmarried, and that husbands often play a supporting role in a woman's choice for an abortion. This is supported by a quote from Sarah F. Norton, "first that professional child-murders are supported by the married as well as the single; and second, that the husbands are equally implicated and guilty with their wives." Another recurring theme argued by feminists is that women should have a say over their bodies as a way to prevent "undesired motherhood." Early feminists believed that voluntary motherhood and birth control would serve to make society a better place, beyond the benefit of preventing abortion. Dr. Alice Bunker Stockham is quoted as saying, "the remedy is in the prevention of pregnancy, not in the producing of abortion".

In the second half of the book there seems to be a change in tone where access to birth control is at times equated with abortion. The book attacks the use of contraceptives as being primarily the responsibility of the woman, and says that, "hormonal contraceptives operate on the principle of interrupting or sabotaging the natural process of the female body". While this line of thinking may be consistent with some religions, I found it very contradictory to the ideals of voluntary motherhood and access to information about the female body that our foremothers promoted.

The first half of this book provides a good historical background as to the dangers of early abortion practices, and ways that abortion was harmful to women both physically and socially. The second half of the book focuses more on abortion as a social ill and its harm to society. I would suggest that this book may be a good resource for libraries that would like to add to a women's studies collection, or libraries that are looking to provide multiple viewpoints on the topics relating to women's reproductive health

by Shannon Clarkin

Shannon Clarkin is a graduate student in the Library and Information Studies department at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She can be contacted at smrc38@mizzou.edu.

BACK OF THE BOOK SECTION

Book Review: Gunn, Angus M. *Evolution and Creationism in the Public Schools*. McFarland and Company, Inc. 2004. (www.mcfarland.com, 800.253.2187)

Angus Gunn, Professor Emeritus of the University of British Columbia, attempts to provide a brief overview of the history of the conflict between supporters of evolution and supporters of creationism, as well as an overview of the scientific, legal, and theological debates involved. Early in the book he reminds us that there are a variety of creationist views, such as young earth creationists who believe the earth is only 10,000 years old; old earth creationists who believe that the days in Genesis might have spanned millions or billions of years; the followers of intelligent design who argue that the complexity of life argues for a designer, as well as other approaches. Gunn also reminds us that through most of history scientists were, at least publicly, believers in a supernatural source of life.

Gunn reviews the development of the geological sciences and the gradual understanding of fossils. In most cases Biblical creationists have turned to reliance on the Great Flood as the mechanism for explaining fossils and geology. Biblical creationists have used everything from the story of the flood in the Gilgamesh legend to the evidence of a possible massive flood in the area of the Black Sea due to glacial melting to bolster their claims.

An especially useful section of the book focuses on the major figures in the area of intelligent design and their approaches to ID. In a few pages he provides a good historical overview of the movement.

He revisits the history of the legal and legislative struggles over evolution, beginning with the Scopes trial and going up to some recent court decisions regarding "intelligent design" and provides a state-by-state rating of the teaching of science in the United States. He also reviews some proposals for a sound biological science curriculum.

Gunn appears to be one of numerous supporters of evolution that want to separate "religious" and "scientific" opinions. "One mistake that scientists sometimes make," he suggests, "is going beyond the data, making statements about the origin of life for example." (p. 21) It's unclear why he thinks this is going beyond the data. While there is no consensus on how life started there is consensus that it does not *require* special creation. His approach mirrors the argument of some scientists, most notably Stephen J. Gould, that science and religion represent two separate realms and should not be asked to answer the questions that are the province of the other. But if the scientific method is accurate there seems to be no reason to exclude it from examining any claims of empirical truth.

The major problem I have with the book is its disjointed and idiosyncratic structure. Issues and people, both historical and current, are often jumbled together with little or no apparent reference to one another. It's difficult in less than 200 pages to give a substantive description of the figures, theories, and issues involved, let alone the entire history of the controversy. He simply tries to do too much in too short a book.

by Steve Labash

Steve Labash is the director of Langsdale Library at the University of Baltimore. He can be reached at slabash@ubalt.edu

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>>

SRRT Newsletter (ISSN 0749-1670)

is published quarterly by the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. It is sent to members of SRRT as part of their membership and is available to others by subscription for \$15.00 per year. Subscription is open to both members and non-members of ALA. (We are currently publishing double issues twice/year.)

Newsletter Editor, Erik Sean Estep: 309-438-3484/esestep@ilstu.edu

Book Review Editor, Jane Ingold: jli4@psulias.psu.edu

Views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of ALA/SRRT. The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
50 EAST HURON STREET
CHICAGO, IL 60611

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
Permit No. 3226