

FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

WHEREAS, information is essential for all persons at all age levels and all economic and social levels, and

WHEREAS, publicly supported libraries are "institutions of education for democratic living" (Library Bill of Rights), and exist to provide information to all persons, and

WHEREAS, increased use of automated bibliographic data bases (many of which have been developed with tax funds) has caused some publicly supported libraries to charge for those services, which practice may set precedent for further fee setting, and

WHEREAS, the charging of fees for information deprives service to those who cannot afford the fees, and thus effectively discriminates against them, and

WHEREAS, ALA has urged the free flow of information and has spoken out clearly against all obstacles that stand in the way of an individual's access to ideas and information,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ALA affirm its belief in the concept of access to information, without charge to individuals, in public and other publicly supported libraries, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ALA Council develop and approve the following statement of policy:

It shall be the policy of the American Library Association to assert that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services.

It shall be the policy of the American Library Association to seek to make it possible for library and information service agencies which receive their major support from public funds to provide service to all people without additional fees and to utilize the latest technological developments to insure the best possible access to information; and that

The Association will, through an active program of information, education, and the formulation of future policy and programming, actively promote its position on equal access to information.

Submitted to ALA Membership

Approved by the Membership of the Social Responsibilities
Round Table June 17, 1977

The second meeting of the ALA Council, during the 1977 ALA Midwinter Meeting, convened at 2:20 P.M., Wednesday, February 2, in the Shoreham Americana Regency Ballroom, President Clara Stanton Jones presiding.

The first item of business, continuation of consideration of Alice Ihrig's motion is covered on page 4.

In establishing the Agenda for the Second Meeting, Elizabeth Fast's motion (seconded by Thomas Galvin) to reverse the order of consideration of CD #11 and #12 was DEFEATED. Mrs. Fast felt the study called for by CD #12 would be helpful to the content of #11, but Zoia Horn who submitted both resolutions objected because she felt #11 is a matter of principle that comes before the gathering of information which is procedural and will give information for future policy.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT, submitted by William Chait, is attached as Exhibit 6.

ORGANIZATION DUES REVISION PROPOSAL (CD #6.1) - Exhibit 7. Thomas Childers, Chair, Committee on Program Evaluation and Support, submitted the proposal including a slide presentation of background statistics, indicating an overview of ALA's financial status, and pointing to steps to increase income now in operation. In speaking to Robert McClarren's motion (seconded by Richard Darling) to adopt the proposed Organization Dues revision, Norman E. Tanis called attention to what Mr. Childers agreed was an oversight omission of "appropriate Headquarters Services" as a requisite of organization membership. Mr. Childers and Mr. McClarren accepted Mr. Tanis' friendly amendment to add after "organization" under requisites in Exhibit B of Exhibit 7, "and appropriate Headquarters Services as well as a 10%..." Genevieve Casey's motion to postpone action against the time the divisions can look at the implications for ALA divisions, was DEFEATED; William Axford (ACRL) and Dorothy Broderick (YASD) pointed out that the new proposal brings the divisions \$15 from each organization member as against the present \$5 portion. President Jones pointed out that if approved, the action will require a Bylaw amendment, that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee is prepared to submit the appropriate language, and that the Executive Board recommends approval of the proposed organization dues revision. Upon motion by Mr. McClarren, seconded by Mr. Darling, it was

VOTED, That Council approves the proposed organization dues schedule as amended, for implementation January, 1968.

RESOLUTION ON FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION (CD #11) - Exhibit 8(a) Zoia Horn amended her original Resolution and moved its adoption. Connie Dunlap in speaking against the motion stated, Data banks are extremely expensive and most libraries will not be able to implement such service if they cannot charge for them. To charge for access to data banks does not necessarily have to deny access to the information. Most of the information contained in the data banks is also available in printed indexes, and anyone willing to spend the time still has access to the information. Others should not be denied." Mr. Axford added

that "libraries are still not charging for those things that have been 'traditionally' free." President Jones announced that the Executive Board met with Mrs. Horn on her resolutions and by a 5-4 vote recommends to Council that this be postponed until more information is acquired. Mrs. Horn pointed out that her resolution was not concerned solely with data base information. Grace Slocum urged defeat of the resolution, hoping that Council would ask for the development of a clear, well thoughtout statement on freedom of access to information in libraries that would encompass and recognize the various questions raised in the discussion. Rather than vote down a principle the Association stands for, Elizabeth Fast with Mr. Galvin's second moved that Council refer the motion to an ad hoc committee of council for rewording for report back to Council as soon as possible; this motion followed defeat of Thomas Galvin's motion to table.

A short recess was called by Stephen Salmon. When Council reconvened, President Moon took the chair.

Mr. Shields with an unidentified seconder moved to amend the motion to refer to the Council as a committee of the whole for ten minutes instead of to an ad hoc committee; the motion was DEFEATED. Mrs. Fast's motion to refer was also DEFEATED. Dorothy Broderick and a seconder called for a Roll Call Vote which was granted by the Chair. The original motion, "That ALA reaffirm the concept of access to information without charge to individuals, in public and other tax-supported libraries; that ALA go on public record against the charging of fees to individuals by tax-supported libraries for providing information and reference services which have traditionally been free," was DEFEATED by the Roll Call (see Exhibit 2) 96/35 with four abstentions.

Barbara Ford, Coordinator of the Social Responsibilities Round Table, was recognized to issue a special invitation to Council to SRRT's program, Fee vs. Paid Services, to be held in Detroit, June 19, 4:30 P.M.

RESOLUTION ON FEE CHARGES FOR INFORMATION AND REFERENCE (CD #12) - Exhibit 8(b). Zoia Horn presented the Resolution, amending the original CD #12 to ask that the President of ALA explore ways to discover the variety of fees being charged ... (rather than an ad hoc committee), and that a progress report be made to Council at the 1977 Annual Conference. President-Elect Moon pointed out that the Board recommended this amendment, and that it was felt that the President could likely act more quickly than a committee and at the same time look into where to find the money and resources to get the objective of the Resolution under way. On Mrs. Horn's motion, with an unidentified second, it was

VOTED, That Council approves the Resolution on Fee Charges for Information and Reference as amended.

RESOLUTION ON COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES (CD #13). Richard Waters pointed out that the thrust of the Resolution is to open up opportunities for more members to become active in committee work, and to give Councilors more time to devote to the complex issues that they must deal with as the governing body of the Association. Without debate it was on Mr. Waters' motion with an unidentified second

RESOLUTION: FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

WHEREAS

INFORMATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL PERSONS AT ALL AGE LEVELS AND ALL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS, AND

WHEREAS

PUBLIC LIBRARIES, SUPPORTED BY TAX FUNDS ARE "INSTITUTIONS OF EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC LIVING", (LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS), AND EXIST TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ALL PERSONS. THEY HAVE A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO OTHER ACCESS TO INFORMATION i.e. THE POOR, THE YOUNG, AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZED, AND

WHEREAS THE INCREASED USE OF EXPENSIVE, EFFICIENT AUTOMATED BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA BASES, (MANY OF WHICH HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED WITH TAX FUNDS), HAS CAUSED SOME TAX-SUPPORTED LIBRARIES TO CHARGE FOR THOSE SERVICES AND MAY SET PRECEDENTS OF FEE SETTING, AND

WHEREAS

THE CHARGING OF FEES FOR INFORMATION FURTHER DEPRIVES THOSE WHO CANNOT AFFORD THE FEES, AND THUS EFFECTIVELY DISCRIMINATES AGAINST THEM, AND

WHEREAS

A.L.A. HAS URGED THE FREE-FLOW OF INFORMATION AND HAS SPOKEN OUT CLEARLY AGAINST ALL OBSTACLES THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S ACCESS TO IDEAS AND INFORMATION,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT A.L.A. REAFFIRM THE CONCEPT OF ACCESS WITHOUT CHARGE, TO INFORMATION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND TAX-SUPPORTED LIBRARIES, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

THAT A.L.A. GO ON PUBLIC RECORD AGAINST THE CHARGING OF FEES BY TAX-SUPPORTED LIBRARIES FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION AND REFERENCE SERVICES WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN FREE.

ZOIA HORN
COUNCILOR AT LARGE

REVIEWED FOR CONFORMANCE WITH
GUIDELINES
by Council Resolutions Committee

July 19, 1976

9:10 PM

Maryann Duggan

Charles Bunge suggested that councilors and chapters in those states might also communicate with the legislatures. While aware of the fiscal implications pointed out by Treasurer Chait, Richard Boss stated, "...Our image as a profession which has had a large number of women in it who have not exercised the positions of responsibility and leadership until just recently that they should makes me think this ought to be one of the very first Associations to take a strong position." Returning to the original motion to adopt the Resolution on ERA and ALA Meeting Sites, the Resolution was ADOPTED.

RESOLUTION ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE. Richard Darling, seconded by Jean-Anne South, moved adoption of the resolution that "...be it resolved that all ALA Annual program, membership and Council meetings after 1977 be scheduled so as to avoid systematic conflict with the religious convictions of Sabbath-observing members as defined in this resolution." With Miss South's second, he immediately moved that the Resolution be referred to the Executive Board and that it be considered when future conference formats are planned. Gerald Shields pointed out that an individual's commitment to his or her religious beliefs is a personal one... which should not become a device for division amongst a group as diverse as ALA. The motion to defer was DEFEATED, whereupon the original motion to adopt the Resolution was put to the vote and was also DEFEATED.

RESOLUTION ON EQUAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION - Exhibits 12 and 12(a), Gerald Shields, in moving Council adoption of the Resolution on Equal Access to Information (Exhibit 12(a)), stated that "this is a statement which is intended to guide the Association as it develops necessary policies and position statements of ethics as the whole concept of the use of technology in the distribution of information becomes more and more apparent...in the long-range approach to the problems that technology brings to us in terms of providing the kind of services that we have said we are aspiring to in our profession." The majority of those Councilors speaking to the motion supported the principles involved; Robert Runyon, however referred to the statements made by President Jones (Exhibit 6, page 9-14) and because of the study of use of fee charges generated at the Midwinter Meeting, suggested the resolution to be premature. Attention was called to the Resolution on Free Access to Information directed to the Membership and yet to be discussed and that the Resolution under discussion attempts to implement a policy yet to be acted on by Membership which would give it more force. Whereupon, on motion by Irene Hoadley, seconded by Alphonse F. Trezza, action was postponed to the final Council Meeting awaiting the Membership's directions.

At the Third Council Meeting, after the Membership had adopted Membership Document 7 (Exhibit 12) Ruth Tighe moved, Thomas Galvin seconded, and Council

VOTED, That Council substitute for Council Document
48 (Exhibit 12(a)), Membership Document 7 (Exhibit 12)
which was voted by Membership this morning.

With an editorial change suggested by Richard Darling, accepted by Council, to strike the word "Council" from the last Resolved paragraph inasmuch as it would be a Council direction upon adoption, it was

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