

Date: 3/20/10

TO: GLBTRT Steering Committee

Proposed Name: Over the Rainbow (OTR) Project

Proposed Structure: We propose that GLBTRT accept the OTR Project as a GLBTRT ad hoc committee with the goal of becoming a GLBTRT standing committee.

Background: The chairs of GLBTRT and SRRT (Dale McNeill, Nancy Silverrod, and LaJuan Pringle), Miguel Figueroa (ALA Staff Liaison), and Larry Romans (ALA Executive Board Liaison) held a conference call on February 19, 2010, to discuss OTR's place in the American Library Association. The outcome of that meeting was an agreement that Miguel, Larry and David Vess (GLBTRT SC member) would help the OTR chair, Arla Jones, to develop a proposal to be submitted to the GLBTRT Steering Committee in the form of a motion as outlined by ALA's parliamentary authority. This resulting proposal and the attached proposed procedures for OTR reflect the input of OTR group listed below, and Miguel, Larry, and David. It has the support of all three.

Proposed Charge: Promote the improved quality and accessibility of GLBTQ literature through the provision for adult readers of an annual annotated bibliography of books for general readership published within the assigned calendar year or between July 1st and December 31st of the previous calendar year. Ad hoc committee members would select titles which exhibit commendable literary quality and significant authentic GLBTQ content and are recommended for adults over age 18. The OTR Project would coordinate with other GLBTRT committees to promote the improved quality and accessibility of GLBTQ literature.

Proposed Mission: OTR would further the mission of the GLBTRT to serve the information needs of the GLBTQ professional library community, and the GLBTQ information and access needs of individuals at large as well as to promote the improved quality, quantity, and accessibility of library materials and service of particular interest or usefulness to all GLBTQ adults.

As the number of GLBTQ-themed books increases every year, OTR would provide GLBTQ people and the general public with guidance in selecting commendable books that reflect the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered experience and communities. Many GLBTQ-related books remain hidden because they are not identified by subject headings and GLBTQ content is often excluded from publisher descriptions. An annotated bibliography of commendable GLBTQ books developed by professionals would help librarians and the general public to identify quality books worthy of an audience.

Proposed General Description:

Bibliography: Each annual bibliography would cover books published within the assigned calendar year or between July 1 and December 31 of the previous calendar year. OTR jurors would select books which exhibit commendable literary quality and significant, authentic GLBTQ content for adults age 18 and over. Jurors would be expected to actively seek and nominate books and to read nominated books.

The bibliography would not be meant to be all inclusive but instead be intended as an annual core list for readers and librarians searching for recommendations of a cross-section of the year's GLBTQ titles. Although the bibliography would attempt to present a variety of reading tastes and levels, no effort would be made to balance this bibliography according to subject, area of interest, or genre.

Size and Composition of OTR: OTR would consist of six to ten members, called jurors, from the GLBTRT membership each serving a two-year term (renewable for a second two-year term) beginning at the conclusion of the ALA Midwinter Meeting. OTR would make every effort to maintain gender parity.

OTR Chair: In accordance with GLBTRT by-laws, the Chair would recruit and appoint jurors for the OTR--with the approval of the continuing jurors. Jurors would propose the OTR Vice-Chair for the next year with the advice and consent of the GLBTRT Co-Chairs and Steering Committee. The Vice-Chair's term would be one year followed by a one-year term of chair. These terms would begin at the conclusion of each ALA Mid-Winter Conference.

Eligibility of Books: To be considered for the bibliography, a book would need to be published within the assigned calendar year or between July 1 and December 31 of the previous calendar year.

Nominating and Voting for Books: Jurors would be expected to actively seek and nominate titles and read nominated books. They would be required read a book in its entirety before nominating it. Nominations and discussions would be carried out electronically. At least one juror would be required to read and, if appropriate, nominate a book suggested by someone not on OTR, Decisions would be reached by consensus as described in the proposed policies.

Rationale: GLBTRT has done significant work to highlight GLBTQ literature, including the work of the Book Award Committee and the including book reviews in the GLBTRT newsletter. While book awards and reviews are important, they serve a different purpose from an annotated bibliography. The GLBTRT Book Award Committee seeks out the "best" of the growing body of published works in any given year. In seeking out the "best," the BAC can highlight only a select few award and honor titles for any given year. Similarly, book reviews in the GLBTRT newsletter have a specific purpose—to highlight the benefits and drawbacks of a specific title. Book reviews are limited by the titles submitted for review, an increasing challenge given the growing publications from

small and independent presses, and the limitations of a single perspective conveyed in a review.

Building on the success of the ALA Rainbow Project, which helps young readers (birth through age 18) locate books that reflect gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/questioning experiences, OTR would help adults locate books that reflect gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/questioning experiences. Unlike a single award, the proposed annotated bibliography would present a broader, fuller body of quality literature worthy of an audience, celebrating the many worthy titles which positively depict the GLBTQ experience. OTR would complement existing GLBTRT awards and bibliographies and would work with the Book Awards Committee, the Rainbow Project, the newsletter, and creators of subject bibliographies.

Chair: Arla Jones

Other Volunteers: James Carmichael, Jane Cothron, Cecil Hixon, and Nel Ward