

SSIRT

Support Staff Interests Round Table of the American Library Association

SSIRT Recognition

DOLORES PAYNE, out-going SSIRT President, was presented with a plaque commemorating her one year tenure.

ANNAMARIE KEHNAST, out-going Board member, received a Certificate of Appreciation for her contributions to SSIRT - which include one year as president and the past two years as membership chair.

National Recognition

SSIRT congratulates two of its members on their winning of National Awards. They are:

PAULETTE FELD ... Outstanding Support Staff Award for the Year 2000 presented by *Library Mosaics* and the Council on Library/Media Technicians (COLT). Charlie Fox, Editorial Director for *Library Mosaics*, says that Feld's

tireless efforts in addressing issues that most deeply concern library workers across the country make her a driving force within the profession and a true winner. Feld works in Technical Services at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh.

BETH PERKINS ... *Library Journal's* ParaProfessional of the year 2000. According to John N. Berry, III, editor-in-chief of the *Journal*, Perkins was named *Library Journal's* first paraprofessional of the year because of her record of outstanding job performance, solid managing, and effective mentoring. Perkins is head of circulation at Sampson Library, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA, and was nominated by Library Director LeRoy Strohl.

remains Support Staff Interests Round Table (SSIRT).

SSIRT Name Change

The issue of a name change for SSIRT was not discussed at the business meeting in Chicago. This matter may come up for discussion at a later date. If so, the information will be reported in the SSIRT Newsletter. For now, the name

President's Message

... by Dorothy Morgan



Aim at the sun, you may not reach it, but your arrow will fly higher than if aimed at an object on a level with yourself.

This quote by Joel Hawes has been, and will always be, part of my philosophy when it comes to myself and my library. My commitment as your President is to find solutions to problems and concerns facing support staff.

As in-coming President of SSIRT, I am keenly aware of the importance and complexities of the mission. I plan to continue advocating for support staff concerns - something I have done for the 15 years I have worked at the Liverpool Public Library - first as a page and now as Business Manager.

My commitment to these concerns is demonstrated at the national, regional, and state level. Recently I served on the SSIRT Strategic Planning Process Steering Committee

and chaired the SSIRT Task Force on Career Ladders ... was a Regional Director for COLT ... and was Ambassador for the NY State Library Assistants Association where I helped establish a Certification program.

This issue of the newsletter reviews the Task Force Reports presented at the ALA conference last month. I would encourage everyone to read the article, then visit the SSIRT home page to read specific details and recommended strategies from each Task Force. SSIRT needs your feedback on these recommendations. You may contact any member of the SSIRT Board; addresses are shown on page 4 of this newsletter.

Together we can work on library staff needs - we can aim for the sun - we can achieve results. With a unified approach, we can ensure a brighter future for all support staff.

Task Forces Reports

It was in 1996 that the SSIRT Executive Board first began discussing long range plans for the Round Table. The Board recognized that strategic planning is a process that involves a proactive approach to problem solving. They acknowledged that any planning must include the involvement of a large cross section of support staff who can come together for a common cause - to identify problems and implement solutions. As a result of the discussions, SSIRT appointed Ed Gillen, who at the time

was an employee of the State Library of New York, to chair the Strategic Planning Process Steering Committee. The Committee was given the charge of developing a survey to determine the top concerns of library support staff and distributing the survey to the largest possible number of support staff.

A variety of methods of distribution of the survey were used, including the electronic sources of the Library Support Staff Resource Center and the LibSup listserv; copies were mailed to all state organizations; and the survey was printed in *Library Mosaics* and in the April/June 1997 issue of the NYSLAA newsletter; and was discussed on the April 11, 1997 *Soaring to Excellence* teleconference.

There were 1909 responses to this national survey and the top three issues identified by support staff were (1) Career Ladders; (2) Compensation; and (3) Access to Continuing Education.

At the 1998 ALA Midwinter Conference, the SSIRT Board took the next step in the Strategic Planning Process by appointing three Task Force Committees, one to study each specific issue, and by appointing a Board liaison to each Task Force. Each Task Force Committee was asked to analyze the issues, develop implementable solutions, and report back its recommendations to SSIRT for its review and adoption.

Written interim reports were given at the 1999 SSIRT Membership Meeting in New Orleans; written progress reports were available at the SSIRT Business Meeting in 2000 in San Antonio; and a final report was discussed at the SSIRT Membership

Meeting last month in Chicago.

The final reports detail how each Task Force Committee addressed its work, the process it followed in carrying out its charge; and the recommendations it developed. Because of the length of the reports, it is not possible to print them in this newsletter, but each of the reports can be viewed on the SSIRT home page at <http://www.ala.org/ssirt/>

Anyone not having access to the Internet may receive a written copy of the reports by requesting them from SSIRT President Dorothy Morgan at Liverpool Public Library, 310 Tulip Street, Liverpool, NY 13088-4961.

The submittal of the reports represents four years of work. Much time and effort have gone into this process and much has been learned. The Task Force Committee members worked hard; they studied the facts and reached conclusions based on those facts. They now suggest that implementation by SSIRT of the recommended strategies contained in their reports will provide guidance for America's library support staff into the 21st Century. They are confident that their recommendations are a cornerstone to build upon, and that the recommendations will yield results by creating a sound framework for dealing with the complex issues faced by support staff.

For its part, SSIRT resolves not to let the report become a collector of dust but rather an example of what good leadership, hard work, and support staff involvement can produce. As part of that support staff involvement, SSIRT is asking that

you visit the SSIRT home page (or request a hard copy); read the reports; and offer feedback. The feedback can be to any member of the SSIRT Board in the form of e-mail; snail mail; phone; fax; or letters to the editor of the SSIRT newsletter.

What is the next step in this Strategic Planning Process? The SSIRT Executive Board members are currently reviewing the reports and recommendations and listing common threads that are prevalent in each report. They are preparing a report for the meeting of the ALA Executive Board in October. The report will include a history of the SSIRT Strategic Planning Process and the recommendations of the Task Force Committees. No action will be requested or expected from ALA at this time. The matter will continue to be discussed at SSIRT meetings during Midwinter in January 2001 in Washington, DC. Because of the importance and complexities of these discussions, the SSIRT Newsletter will have a report in the winter edition.

Members of the Task Force Committees diligently went about their tasks and developed workable long-range strategies to address the issues assigned. SSIRT would like to recognize these people and to thank them most sincerely for their many hours of work. They are:

Task Force on Career Ladders: **Dorothy Morgan**, Chair, (Liverpool NY Pub Lib); **Danice Faulkner-Edwards** (Pub Lib of Cincinnati & Hamilton Co, OH); **Carol Johnson**

(College of St Catherine, St Paul, MN); **Arleen Untamo** (Somerset Co/Bridgewater Library, Bridgewater, NJ); **Linda Porter** (Burlington Co Lib, Westhampton, NJ); **Pat Clingman** (Pub Lib of Dayton, Montgomery Co, OH) SSIRT liaison

Task Force on Compensation: **Dr. Brad Eden**, Chair, (Univ of Nevada, Las Vegas); **Paulette Feld** (Univ of Wisconsin, Oshkosh); **Gene Kinnaly** (Lib of Congress, Washington, DC); **Kathleen Murphy** (Rowan Univ Lib, Glassboro, NJ); **Martha Parsons** (Washington State Univ Energy Lib, Olympia, WA); **Deborah Smith** (Univ of Arizona, Tucson); **Jim Hill** (Univ of Colorado at Denver), SSIRT liaison

Task Force on Access to Continuing Education Training Opportunities: **Holly Blosser**, Chair, (Cascade Park Community Lib, Vancouver, WA); **Donna Beales** (Lowell General Hosp, Lowell, MA); **Sandy Brooks** (Eastern CT Libraries, Willimantic, CT); **Ginny Rabago** (City Univ, Renton, WA); **David Tulanian** (Los Angeles Pub Lib, CA); **AnnaMarie Kehnast**, (Gloucester Co College Lib, Sewell, NJ), SSIRT liaison

And a most special thank you to **Ed Gillen** (New York Department of Education) for serving as Chair of the overall Strategic Planning Process Steering Committee and for constantly monitoring and refining the process.

