



SRRT

Social Responsibilities
Round Table

EST. 1969

March/April 2025
Issue 228

Newsletter

We Thank You

For Your Outrageous Insubordination,
Which is, of course, another way of saying Passionate Commitment,
On Overdrive,
In the Service of the Highest Ideals of providing for People,
All The People,
As Much of the Time as Humanly Possible,
The Kind of Access and Service Everyone Needs and Deserves
And for Teaching us in the Best Possible Way,
By Doing It Yourself
Right in Front of Us
In Full View
With Full Explanations of Why and How
And for Being the Sweetest Most Attentive Friend at the Same Time
And for Keeping On Working
On and On
For Years and Years
When Many Others Retreated to Comfortable Backwaters & Quiet Cubicles
And Gave up Being Passionate and Committed
For Fearlessness and Idealism and Focus in the Cause
We Thank You

S.Nilsen

Protecting Library Workers



ADVOCACY & TASK FORCES

All SRRT members are encouraged to join Task Forces that interest them.

If you're interested in being involved, please feel free to contact the Task Force's chair.

- [Elder Justice Task Force \(EDJF\)](#)
Coordinators: [Joseph Winberry](#) and [Kristina Shiroma](#)

Seeks to partner with adults 65 and older, libraries, and communities to identify, understand, and address the needs of this growing and diverse population.

- [Feminist Task Force \(FTF\)](#)
Coordinator: [Katelyn Browne](#)

Provides feminist perspectives and initiates action on issues related to libraries, librarianship, information services, and ALA. Subscribe to the [Feminist discussion list](#).

- [Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force \(HHPTE\)](#)
Coordinators: [Lisa Gieskes](#) and [Julie Ann Winkelstein](#)

Fosters greater awareness of the dimensions, causes, and ways to end hunger, homelessness, and poverty.

- [International Responsibilities Task Force \(IRTF\)](#)
Coordinators: [Mark Hudson](#) and [Mark Rosenzweig](#)

Advocates socially responsible positions on issues of international library concern.

- [Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force \(MLKTF\)](#)
Chair: [LaJuan Pringle](#)

Supports and advances the observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday as an American celebration.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

March/April 2025 ■ Issue 228

FEATURES

- 5** [Everyday Transformative Conversations](#)
Alejandro Marquez, Science and Engineering Librarian, University of Denver
- 7** [Reading List: Protecting Library Workers](#)
Sherre Harrington
- 8** [Sandy Berman Announced as Winner of the 2025 Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality](#)
Laura Koltutsky, Chair, Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality Committee
- 10** [Some Highlights of Sandy Berman's Library Activism](#)
Alfred Kagan, African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign
- 11** [John Oluwaseye Adebayo and Libby Anderson receive SRRT's 2025 Conference Travel Grants](#)
April Sheppard, Chair, SRRT Conference Travel Grant Selection Committee
- 12** [Postscript from 2024: The End of History, Again?](#)
Mark Rosenzweig, Co-founder of Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) and the journal Progressive Librarian, co-coordinator of SRRT-International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF)
- 15** [Voices from the Past](#)

On the cover:
We Thank You poem
written by Solveig Nilsen
for Sandy Berman.
Published in [Librarians at Liberty](#).

COLUMNS

- 4** [From the SRRT Action Council Coordinator](#)
Olivia Blake
- 13** [Book Review: Land in Libraries: Toward a Materialist Conception of Education](#)
Carol A. Leibiger, Information Literacy Coordinator, University Libraries, University of South Dakota

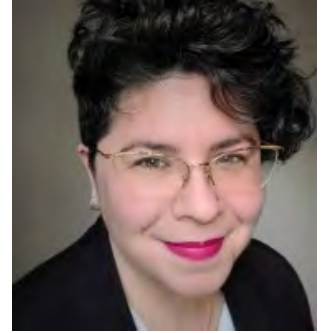
UPDATES

- 14** [Since announcing the formation of the Elder Justice Task Force, we've been busy!](#)
Katelyn Browne, Coordinator, Feminist Task Force



SRRT Action Council Coordinator

Olivia Blake



Olivia Blake

Self-Care and Solidarity: Fuel to Sustain Social Justice Work

Last newsletter, I talked about how we are stronger when we come together—when we cooperate, listen, and learn. But to sustain our efforts, we need to do more than just show up for each other. We need to show up for ourselves too. These days, library workers find themselves juggling multiple roles: educators, information navigators, community builders, and advocates for social justice. These all require energy, empathy, and emotional resilience. But there's only so much we can give without depleting ourselves!

Self-care isn't just about bubble baths or binge-watching a favorite TV show (though those can be nice!). It's about understanding and honoring our boundaries, recognizing when we need rest, and knowing when to step back from demands that may feel overwhelming. It's about taking the time to reflect on our emotional well-being, seeking support when necessary, and asking for help when the weight of the work becomes too much to carry alone. And while self-care is deeply personal, it is also something we can foster within our library communities. Just as we talk about the importance of creating inclusive, supportive spaces for patrons, we must ensure that those spaces extend to the staff who make these services possible.

To be effective in the fight for justice, we must prioritize our health, whether physical or mental, and we ignore it at our peril. We risk burnout, fatigue, and the erosion of the very empathy that drives our work. But, when we care for ourselves, we are better equipped to engage in the work of dismantling systems of oppression: we are more present for our communities, more compassionate in our interactions, and more productive in our efforts.

It might feel like a luxury or a guilty pleasure to pause and focus on our own well-being, especially when there's so much work to be done. But, as I mentioned last time, the stakes have never been higher. If we are going to fight for a more inclusive, more equitable world, then we're in it for the long haul, and our resolve is going to have to be strong. Part of that strength comes from recognizing that our own well-being is a crucial part of that broader fight. We can't fight if we're burnt out! And so, if we're going to make headway in this fight, we must care for ourselves, and each other, along the way.

So, this month, I encourage all of us to reflect on how we are caring for ourselves as we care for our communities. What is one thing you can do today to show yourself the same empathy you extend to others? Maybe that means carving out time for rest, finding a moment to check in with a colleague, stepping away from doomscrolling, or simply acknowledging when we need a break. Or maybe self-care looks like wearing a favorite scent, going for a walk outside, or visiting friends. Whatever it means for you, I promise you that these small acts of self-care are essential to our collective strength.

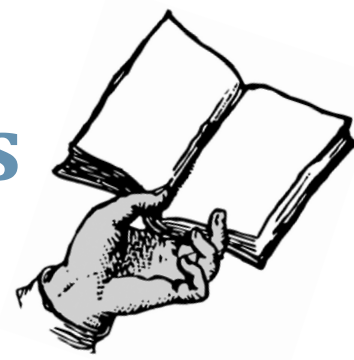
No one is in this alone. The solidarity we build with one another, the collaborations we foster, and the spaces of support we create for ourselves are all part of the same vision for a fairer world. So, let's keep showing up for one another, and let's

continue on page 7

Protecting Library Workers

Everyday Transformative Conversations

Alejandro Marquez, Science and Engineering Librarian, University of Denver



Everyday transformative conversations refer to the small yet significant actions people take, either individually or collaboratively, to create change in their daily lives. These actions can address current issues or anticipate future challenges. While activism and advocacy can include large protests or political movements, it can also include personal behavior adjustments and community efforts to foster change in libraries, workplaces, or social circles. These actions play a crucial role in keeping libraries relevant, efficient, and aligned with their mission to serve the public.

Library employees, especially those without formal authority, often challenge unjust policies, advocate for inclusive services, or push back against workplace norms in subtle ways. For instance, a front-line staff member might quietly steer a patron towards resources that counter censorship, advocate for more inclusive policies, or create moments of psychological safety for colleagues facing workplace inequalities. These acts, though not always overt, contribute to systemic change by shifting norms, empowering marginalized voices, and nurturing a culture of resistance within the institution.

Institutions often protect existing power structures, making it challenging for complaints about discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment to be heard and addressed.

Sara Ahmed, in her book "Complaint!", explores how filing a complaint can itself be an act of resistance. Institutions often protect existing power structures, making it challenging for complaints about discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment to be heard and addressed. Despite the obstacles, complaints can expose hidden injustices and serve as a catalyst for change. However, Ahmed also highlights the difficulties individuals face in this process, including potential retaliation and dismissal of their concerns. This discourages many from speaking up and perpetuating a culture of silence even when problems are evident.

These challenges resonate with library workers confronting internal issues like discrimination or toxic work environments. While libraries project inclusivity, internal problems may go unaddressed, and those who raise concerns may struggle to be taken seriously or face pressure to drop their complaints. Nevertheless, lodging complaints remains a vital means of challenging unfair systems. Even when immediate change doesn't occur, complaints raise awareness, foster solidarity among staff, and create pressure for long-term improvements.

Open Communication

When employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns, ideas, and experiences without fear of retaliation, they are more likely to participate in conversations that lead to positive change. This can be achieved through structured discussion groups, anonymous feedback channels, or designated times for staff to voice their thoughts in meetings.

Multiple Pathways For Participation

Not all employees are comfortable speaking up in large meetings, but they may still have valuable insights to contribute. Offering various ways to engage, such as online surveys, suggestion boxes, or small group discussions, ensures that a wider range of voices are included in shaping library policies and initiatives. When employees see that their input is valued and leads to tangible changes, they are more likely to stay engaged and motivated.

Addressing Toxic Positivity

While maintaining a positive work environment is important, it should not come at the cost of dismissing real concerns. Leaders and employees alike should be encouraged to engage in honest conversations about workplace challenges without being labeled as negative or difficult. A workplace culture that welcomes constructive criticism and problem-solving fosters a more resilient and adaptable organization.



Supporting Employee Well-Being

Prioritizing staff well-being is crucial in environments where burnout and disregard for emotional health are normalized. Small acts like checking in on colleagues, advocating for fair policies, or creating spaces for genuine connection challenge neglectful cultures and affirm the value of individuals beyond their roles.

Libraries should invest in mental health resources for employees, such as access to counseling, stress-relief programs, or wellness initiatives, to help staff manage the emotional and physical toll of their work. Additionally, leaders should actively check in on employees and normalize discussions about workload, stress, and emotional well-being. When employees feel supported, they are more likely to be engaged, creative, and resilient in their roles.

Networks of Care

Creating networks of care within the workplace can strengthen solidarity and help employees resist burnout. Simple actions like mentoring, sharing knowledge, or offering emotional support can create a more compassionate and collaborative work environment. When library workers support one another, they can collectively push back against unrealistic expectations, advocate for fair policies, and sustain their passion for their work over the long term.

Conversations

Creating spaces for difficult conversations through structured dialogue groups can provide employees with opportunities to discuss workplace issues in a supportive setting. Facilitated discussions on topics such as race, power, and workplace equity can help staff build understanding, strengthen relationships, and identify collective solutions to systemic challenges. These conversations can be especially powerful when they lead to action steps that leadership commits to implementing.

Staff Advisory Councils

Libraries can also establish staff-led advisory councils that provide input on policies, workplace culture, and decision-making. These councils give employees a structured way to voice concerns, suggest improvements, and participate in shaping the library's future. By ensuring that these groups

have real influence rather than being symbolic, library leadership can demonstrate a commitment to listening and responding to staff needs.

Participatory Budgeting

Encouraging participatory budgeting can empower staff to have a direct say in how library funds are allocated. Rather than decisions being made exclusively by leadership, participatory budgeting allows employees to propose and vote on funding priorities, whether for professional development opportunities, wellness initiatives, or workplace improvements. This approach increases transparency, fosters collaboration, and ensures that financial resources are used in ways that directly benefit staff and patrons.

Conclusion

Ultimately, creating lasting change in libraries—and society at large—requires action at multiple levels: individual, departmental, organizational, and societal. Each level contributes to a broader cultural shift that values inclusivity, equity, and authenticity. By embracing these principles and encouraging everyday transformative conversations, libraries can evolve into more dynamic and responsive institutions, better equipped to serve their communities and support their staff.

Ultimately, creating lasting change in libraries—and society at large—requires action at multiple levels: individual, departmental, organizational, and societal.

Each level contributes to a broader cultural shift that values inclusivity, equity, and authenticity.

Reading List: Protecting Library Workers

Sherre Harrington

Well-Being in the Library Workplace: A Handbook for Managers. Edited by Bobbi L Newman. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2025. A collection of articles focused on strategies that “normalize well-being in library workplaces and their connected organizations’ cultures.”

“Creating a Culture of Self-Care: The Role of the Library as an Organization.” Jocelyn Kennedy. In *Legal Ease: Self-Care for Library Staff*. AALL Digital White Paper, 2018, p.36-39. www.aallnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Legal-Ease-White-Paper-FINAL.pdf Organizations must ensure that employees have the skills, tools, and time to engage in self-care. In addition, an organization is responsible for establishing and maintaining a culture that assists employees who are at risk of experiencing burnout.

“Staff Support—Leading and Valuing All Library Employees.” Katie Prentice. In *Managing Health Sciences Libraries in a Time of Change*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2024, p.35-42. Ideas and resources to develop and enhance the concept of staff support.

“‘Viewed as Equals’: The Impacts of Library Organizational Cultures and Management on Library Staff Morale.” Ann Glusker, Celia Emmelhainz, Natalia Estrada and Bonita Dyess. *Journal of Library Administration* 62 (2): 153–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2022.2026119> efforts to address equity in compensation, provide professional growth opportunities, and create more collegial work environments are essential to improving staff morale.

“It’s Not Us, It’s Them: Characteristics of Anti-Racist Supervisors and Managers in the Library Profession.” Linda Jolivet. *WOC+Lib*, 13 October 2021. <https://www.wocandlib.org/features/2021/10/12/its-not-us-its-them-characteristics-of-anti-racist-supervisors-and-managers-in-the-library-profession> Resource list and recommendations for supervisors and managers who strive to be anti-racist.

“Engaging Ourselves in Library Work: A Narrative Inquiry on Employee Engagement and Performance of LGBTQ+ Library Employees.” Kevin Samson and Marian Ramos-Ecleria. IFLA World Library and Information Congress, 2023. <https://repository.ifla.org/items/a440af67-497e-4bd6-a9c3-db1b63605789> Creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that fosters engagement and performance among LGBTQ+ library employees.

How to Create a Trans-Inclusive Workplace. Stephen G. Krueger. Niche Academy, 2020. <https://www.nicheacademy.com/blog/how-to-create-a-trans-inclusive-workplace>

How can libraries become trans-inclusive workplaces? What can managers do to support trans employees? How can we help trans coworkers feel comfortable at work? Tutorial on best practices for trans inclusion for library employees.

“Employment and Neurodiverse Librarians.” Anderson, Amelia. *Informed Librarian Online*, 2018. STEMPS Faculty Publications. 82. https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/stemps_fac_pubs/82 Explores autism as a form of neurodiversity in LIS, pointing out the need for more appropriate supports for workforce development for librarians on the autism spectrum.



continued from page 4

keep striving to protect ourselves and each other, so we can continue this important work! To that end, I want you to know that the SRRT Action Council is taking steps to make SRRT more of a space of support, inclusion, solidarity, and collaboration. I’d like to invite you to write to me directly (orhysb+ALA@gmail.com) with your thoughts on nurturing SRRT in this way. Growth takes time, and there’s no predetermined road map (I wish!). But in the months ahead, we’ll try to keep seeking your input on how SRRT can best meet your needs, and reporting out on how we’re trying to make that happen.

Our society faces a mighty struggle, but even in times of struggle, we can still dream big. Remember, though: it’s the small actions we take, over and over—like protecting our own health and well-being—that will sustain us in our activism and advocacy toward those big dreams.

Sandy Berman Announced as Winner of the 2025 Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality

Laura Koltutsky, Chair, Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality Committee

It was an honor to tell Sanford (Sandy) Berman that he was the 2025 recipient of the Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality. He expressed pleasure in the news and was characteristically humble about winning the award. Like most of the people involved in his nomination submissions, I too have felt his influence in both my personal and professional life. I would like to thank the Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality committee members for their work.

Comments from the committee included the following:

- This is my first year on the committee, but it seems to me that the life and contributions of Sandy Berman epitomize the spirit of this award. Sandy influenced the profession so profoundly, and through the changes in perspective he fostered, the world outside librarianship.
- It is hard to argue with Sandy's qualifications and his stunning alignment with everything we seek to uplift and honor through this award and as a round table. Speaking even more for myself, Sandy is one of the reasons I made my way to library science/school and hung in there and still feels like a kindred spirit and ancestor of sorts in the work I do, not just in and around libraries but boots on the ground in communities and political arenas.
- I agree wholeheartedly with those who support Sandy Berman for this award. He has done so much for so long to advance socially responsible librarianship in many ways. He is by far the most deserving of recognition by us and in the memory of Herb Biblo, and Herb's dedication to those values.

There were several individuals who nominated or who supported the nomination of Sandy Berman this year. Here is a selection of writings from the nomination materials:

- It would be impossible for me to capture all of the contributions Sandy has done for socially responsible and inclusive librarianship. After all, how many librarians are

are the subjects of biographies, like Chris Dodge's and Jan DeSirey's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sandy Berman But Were Afraid to Ask?* They captured his humanism, his activism, his intelligence, as well as his sense of humor that probably helped him keep going and believing in the potential of radical librarians – even in the middle of our heated debates.

- A baby-boomer himself, Sandy's insistence that alternative media belong in libraries and his trail-blazing activism around Library of Congress subject-headings will long continue to inspire upcoming generations of librarians and shape library practices. As a young librarian in Germany, he helped edit an underground GI newsletter titled *Yin-Yang*. One of his earliest articles in the library press called on libraries to become relevant to all members of the communities served. The series of *Alternative Library Literature*, co-edited with Jim Danky and published biannually between 1982 and 2000, brought together voices (and demands) most often buried by mainstream library publications.



Sandy Berman, Photo: Eric Mueller

- Sandy was an anti-racist before many of us knew the term. He worked to not just catalog with this view of equality and social justice in mind, but he was and is still a tireless advocate. He'd send out overstuffed packets of mail to people with his cataloging suggestions along with photocopies showing these more equitable terms in use in mainstream media mentions. His typewritten letters to the Library of Congress were friendly but also had a slight tone of exasperation asking "Why haven't you done this already?" He would keep track of which subject headings he had suggested and when alongside a list of when the Library of Congress actually updated their terminology. He has always been ahead of his time.
- Sandy practiced the same kind of social justice and equity ethics as a librarian from the late 1960s. He famously worked with his team of librarians at Hennepin County to establish their own catalog and cataloging system. (To be honest I grew up using that catalog to access my local library, but didn't appreciate that until much later). Sandy's official career ended basically because he tangled with library administration, which tired of his activism and always standing up for equity and inclusion. Regardless, Sandy always took the ethical high road, even when ALA did not defend his intellectual freedom rights. The local alternative newspaper City Pages took up his cause and championed Sandy's amazing legacy.

For further information about Sandy Berman and his achievements, here are some sources of information.

This website is managed by Madeline Douglass who acted as a contact for the committee.

<https://www.sanfordberman.org/>

Everything you always wanted to know about Sandy Berman but were afraid to ask by Chris Dodge and Jan DeSirey
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/Everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-Sandy-Berman-but-were-afraid-to-ask/oclc/32168381>

Sandy Berman: The Making of a Radical Librarian - Minneapolis Interview Project
<https://turtleroad.org/2022/03/08/sandy-berman/>

On a final note, it was brought to my attention that Sandy had submitted a letter dated March 22, 2025 to the Library of Congress protesting the recent changes to the Gulf of Mexico and Denali. It seems a fitting ending to this report.
<https://fgc.network/@CyberpunkLibrarian@hackers.town/posts/AseO0m4ZH6uBqxubY>

From the text of his letter:

Dear Colleagues,

BRAVO! Your recent conversion of DENALI, MOUNT (ALASKA) and MEXICO, GULF OF to MCKINLEY, MOUNT (ALASKA) and AMERICA, GULF OF, respectively, as both primary and subheadings was breathtakingly thorough and detailed. You are masters of your craft.

Alas, you are also willful handmaidens of chauvinism, ethnocentrism and fascism. Also: Trumpism.

Many weeks ago I expressed the hope that LC would resist temptation to implement this palpably capricious, arbitrary, and baseless name-charging. That admonition appears to have gone unheeded.

Our President has no authority to wantonly replace the name for international waters that abut more countries than our own. Beyond that, the Gulf of Mexico has been so known since about the 16th Century. Its renaming, totally rejected by neighboring Mexico, smacks of arrogant linguistic imperialism.

It seems the whole state of Alaska prefers the Athabascan place-name, Denali, to McKinley, a U.S. President associated with American expansion who never set foot in Alaska. The widely-unwanted name-change is an affront to Alaska's indigenous population, as well as its state legislature and two Republican senators.

Although LC has now fully demonstrated its lock-step deference to bigoted, unjustified authority, I hope American librarians will muster moral and intellectual strength to ignore its dismal example.

Sorrowfully,

Sanford Berman
 Margaret Marn Citation Recipient
 Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award Recipient
 ALA Equality Award Recipient
 Herb Biblo Outstanding Leadership Award for Social Justice & Equality Recipient



Some Highlights of Sandy Berman’s Library Activism

Alfred Kagan, African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign

Sandy and I worked together in SRRT for many years. This little article is mainly drawn from references to Sandy’s work in my book on progressive library organizations¹ and from my personal memories.² Of course, Sandy is generally known best for his work on eliminating discrimination and humanizing Library of Congress Subject Headings, but he was an activist in many other realms, including to name a few, civil rights in the US and human rights around the world, library services to poor people, and free speech in the workplace. He was a leader in promoting progressive library literature not found in the mainstream library journals. With Jim Danky, he published a serial titled *Alternative Library Literature* every two years from 1982 to 2001 featuring the best progressive library literature of those time periods.

Sandy first published his most widely read work, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* in 1971.³ In that year, working with Sandy, the SRRT Task Force on Gay Liberation convinced the Library of Congress to eliminate the subject headings “Abnormal Sexual Relations and “Sexual Crimes” and replace them with terms reflecting the shared humanity of gay people. Sandy is a lifelong advocate for promoting healthy and joyous sexual experiences. In 1996, he convinced the Library of Congress (LC) to change its “manforms” headings with “humans.” But these are just some highlights of his successes. Sandy regularly submitted lists of suggested changes to LC over the years. He was often ignored during the early years, but he was eventually vindicated and invited to give a talk at LC in 1992.

Readers may know about the scandal around the 1977 ALA film titled *The Speaker*. The film was made secretly by Judith Krug, the director of the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom with coordination from the ALA Executive Director Robert Wedgeworth. The plot was based around fictionalized real events. A high school invited a racist speaker (based on William Shockley) to speak on his research showing that Black people are genetically inferior to white people. The local community was enraged and pressured the school board to withdraw the invitation. The film’s moral was that the racist

speaker should be allowed to speak on the grounds of free speech. Sandy was a leader in denouncing the film. He circulated a statement that was signed by 65 prominent librarians, which began with the words, “We are ashamed and disgusted....” This story has a bad ending. The first vote at the ALA Membership Meeting to remove ALA’s name from the film passed, but the ALA Executive Director who chaired the meeting declared a counting error, and the original vote was overturned after two more votes.

Sandy spoke out against apartheid in South Africa and forcefully advocated an ALA boycott, which largely succeeded. He also got involved in SRRT’s initiatives in protesting Israel’s human rights violations in Palestine in the early 1990s. He stated that the issue “provoked amazement, discomfort, anger, and explicit charges of antisemitism.” When SRRT was accused on focusing too much on Israel, Sandy and I developed a resolution on censorship in Egypt, but it didn’t go anywhere.

Almost single-handedly Sandy made ALA address the rights of poor people. At the time there were many SRRT state affiliates. Sandy was very active in the Minnesota Social Responsibilities Round Table, which at his urging developed a resolution on a poor peoples’ policy. He brought that to the ALA Membership Meeting and won passage. But the ALA bureaucracy took almost no action, and finally SRRT established its Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) in 1998. Naturally, Sandy developed a list of subject headings related to his poor peoples initiative. In 2000, the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS, an ALA division) recommended half of Sandy’s list to the Library of Congress. In 2012, HHPTF developed a toolkit titled *Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness through Library Engagement*.

Sandy was forced to resign/retire in 1999 over a controversy around his workplace speech by new management at the Hennepin County Library, where he worked as head cataloger for many years. It is a sad story that readers can

continue on page 14



John Oluwaseye Adebayo and Libby Anderson receive SRRT's 2025 Conference Travel Grants

April Sheppard, Chair, SRRT Conference Travel Grant Selection Committee

I'm happy to announce that the SRRT Conference Travel Grant Selection Committee has named John Oluwaseye Adebayo and Libby Anderson as the winners of the 2025 SRRT Conference Travel Grants to attend the upcoming [2025 ALA Annual Conference](#) in Philadelphia, PA. The \$1,000 grant, sponsored by the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), helps cover limited fees related to airfare, lodging, and conference registration. SRRT funds up to two applicants per year. Applicants must be SRRT members to qualify.

John Oluwaseye Adebayo is a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, WI, United States. His broad research endeavor is at the intersection of Information Policy, Technology Acceptance, Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ethics, and Digital Platforms Governance. He currently investigates how the understanding of the effectiveness of privacy policies influences privacy boundary formation and self-regulation to shape privacy behaviors on social media platforms with AI features among young adults. Before enrolling for his doctoral studies in the United States, he worked as a Librarian at the Central Bank of Nigeria Centre for Economics and Finance, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Chrisland University Abeokuta, Nigeria; Michael and Cecilia Ibru University, Agbarha-Otor, Delta State, Nigeria; and the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Aside from obtaining a Nigeria Certificate in Education from Oyo State College of Education, he holds a Bachelor's and Master of Library and Information Studies from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. As a researcher, he has published scholarly articles in learned journals covering topics in Information Ethics, Technology Adoption, Knowledge Management, Information Behavior and Literacy. He has received a few academic and professional fellowship awards, including the prestigious 2019 IFLA/OCLC Early Career Development Fellowship. He has attended conferences, seminars, and trainings in Africa, the United States, Europe, and South America.

Libby Anderson is in her first year as an Adult Services Reference Librarian at Rowan Public Library in Salisbury,

North Carolina. Before transitioning to librarianship, she spent several years in the financial services industry as an investment advisor, including six years as a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional. In 2022, she decided to follow a long-held calling, pursuing a Master of Library Science degree at East Carolina University, where she will graduate in May 2025. Driven by a passion for social justice, Libby believes in the transformative power of libraries to address societal inequities by providing free access to information and resources. She is particularly interested in how libraries can collaborate with other community organizations to support marginalized populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness or addiction. Libby holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Religion from Winthrop University and a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. A dedicated vegan and animal rights activist, she also finds joy in live music, poetry, and films, and holds onto the belief that, despite today's challenges, a more just and compassionate world is still within reach.

Libby Anderson



John Oluwaseye Adebayo

Postscript from 2024: The End of History, Again?

Mark Rosenzweig, Co-founder of Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) and the journal *Progressive Librarian*, co-coordinator of SRRT-International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF)

[Two decades ago I wrote a polemical piece in *Progressive Librarian* entitled Libraries At The End of History? Here is a postscript from today]

Even the prophets of the "end of history" had to revise their forecasts, or at least quietly move on to more profitable pursuits. If we once thought that, with the Cold War's conclusion, the supposed triumph of liberal democracy and consumer capitalism would usher in a post-historical era of managed stability, we have had ample reason to reconsider. We were told history had ended, but history did not get the memo.

For those of us who doubted all along that the concomitant "end of ideology" would be anything other than the ideological hegemony of the market, the present moment is not so much a revelation as a confirmation. History has returned with a vengeance—not in the form of the triumphant march of some alternative utopia, but in the unraveling of the very structures we were assured were inevitable and eternal. The regime of consumerist, corporate-mediated "democracy" has produced neither universal prosperity nor the durable consensus of post-history, but instead deepening inequality, social fragmentation, and, in the United States, an increasingly open flirtation with authoritarian rule.

With the second Trump presidency already well underway, the fantasies of stability, of a self-correcting democracy, of an invincible neoliberal order, have come crashing down. The bipartisan insistence that American institutions could withstand any stress test has been exposed as the complacent delusion of those who believed rules mattered more than power. The conservative movement, long adept at playing the long game, has demonstrated a ruthless commitment to consolidating control, while a feckless liberal class continues to place its faith in norms that no longer exist. Democracy, it turns out, was never an inevitability—it was an agreement, one that is being broken in real time.

Those who once scoffed at the idea that liberal democracy could ever be anything but the final resting place of history now find themselves face-to-face with a challenge they had deemed unthinkable: the emergence of a political movement openly contemptuous of democracy itself, led by

a would-be autocrat who disdains even the pretense of constitutional order. We are witnessing not just a crisis of democracy, but a full-blown crisis of the neoliberal order that was supposed to define the post-historical world.

Libraries, once again, find themselves at a crossroads. For decades, they have been urged to abandon their historical role as civic and cultural institutions in favor of becoming mere nodes in the "information economy"—transactional, depoliticized, subordinate to market logic. In this, they have largely succeeded. But now, at the very moment when democracy is in its most dire peril, libraries and librarians must decide whether they will be passive archivists of a disappearing republic or active participants in its defense.

The corporate-controlled information order—consolidated in a handful of monopolistic tech giants—has not produced an informed citizenry but a profoundly fragmented and manipulated public, primed for demagoguery. The devaluation of the public sphere, the privatization of knowledge, the commodification of truth itself—these trends have not led to the "end of history" but to its violent resumption in the form of political and epistemic crises.

If democracy in America is to survive, it will not be because institutions function as they were supposed to, nor because elites suddenly rediscover a sense of responsibility. It will be because ordinary people—librarians among them—refuse to accept the erasure of history, the destruction of public knowledge, and the creeping authoritarianism that relies on mass disinformation and collective apathy.

Librarianship, if it is to mean anything beyond service provision, must confront this moment with the urgency it demands. The struggle over "first principles" has not ended—it has only intensified. The coming years will force upon us a choice: to be caretakers of democracy or caretakers of its grave.

History has returned. The only question is whether we will meet it on its own terms.

Book Review: *Land in Libraries: Toward a Materialist Conception of Education*

Carol A. Leibiger, Information Literacy Coordinator, University Libraries, University of South Dakota, located in the ancestral lands of the Oceti Sakowin and Omaha Indigenous people

Zvyaginstevea, Lydia, and Mary Greenshields, eds. *Land in Libraries: Toward a Materialist Conception of Education*. Library Juice Press: 2023. ISBN-13: 978-1634001397. \$28.00. <https://litwinbooks.com/books/land-in-libraries/>

Land in Libraries *Toward a Materialist Conception of Education*

Lydia Zvyagintseva and Mary Greenshields



*Land in Libraries: Toward a Materialist
Conception of Education.*
Cover taken from the
[Litwin Books & Library Juice Press.](https://litwinbooks.com/books/land-in-libraries/)

L*and in Libraries* is a compilation of research studies, edited by Canadian academic librarians Lydia Zvyagintseva and Mary Greenshields, which seeks to contribute to current work on libraries, decolonization, and climate change. It focuses on land as a ‘foundational category underpinning social relations, ... the function and reproduction of capitalism, and as a place where we work and learn together’ (2). The book’s seven chapters center the relationship between libraries and the land they occupy, accentuating the need to integrate land and land-based knowledge and relationships into library structures, policies, and practices.

The first chapter, “Civilizing, Separating, and Organizing: The Geographic Influence on Nineteenth Century Western Libraries” by American archivist Andrew Weymouth, examines the history of libraries in the U.S. West and their role as civilizing and colonizing “transformative spaces” (15). Weymouth discusses a variety of libraries, for example, those aligned with rural granges, women’s clubs, immigrant and ethnic associations, and Indian schools, all of which were intended to impart “literacy, culture, and social progress and ... advancement to all” (29). In the case of Indigenous boarding school libraries Weymouth notes that they “weaponize[d] the geography of the western United States,” separating those children from their people and lands (24).

In “Towards a Spirit of Place in Library Architecture,” the book’s second chapter, Canadian architect Gregory Whistance-Smith explores the relationship between library building design and landscapes. Applying design theories, the author notes how people experience built spaces both perceptually and through their imaginations. Successful land-oriented building design links the perceptual and imaginative dimensions meaningfully to a location, rooting people in place. Whistance-Smith demonstrates this link between building and place in his analysis of two new branches of the Edmonton Public Library.

The book’s next four chapters are the most inspiring, urging the decolonization of libraries by linking them to the land and its inhabitants. In “Making Place, Placing Makers: Connecting History, Memory, and Land by Indigenizing New Hampshire Public Library Local History Collections,” American public librarian Laura Marie Judge and social justice and education worker Jedidiah Crook present a mixed-methods study of public libraries’ local history holdings in New Hampshire/Abenaki lands. Consultations with Abenaki cultural experts supplement their survey of these library holdings, identifying ways to counteract Indigenous erasure in local collections.

In “Rooting Research: A Critical Examination of Incorporating Land-Based Education in Universities’ Research Commons,” recent MLS graduates and ALA Spectrum Scholars Courtney S. Nomiya and Truc Ho examine twenty ARL public university libraries’ web sites, publications, and social media for commitment to land-based education in their research commons. None of the research commons examined include land education, history of place, or Indigenous land ontologies or epistemologies in their policies or practices (97-98). While the research commons espouse EDI practices, they fail to decolonialize the library and thus the academy.

continue on page 15



Since announcing the formation of the Elder Justice Task Force, we've been busy!

Zoe Mann, Adult Services Librarian, Arlington Public Libraries

One new resource is the EJTF Library Student and Early Career Professionals Grant. Starting in 2025, this annual grant will be \$100 for three lucky winners – either students currently enrolled in a Master of Library and Information Science degree, or early career professionals. Early career professionals could refer to those who have served as a paraprofessional within libraries for a maximum of 3 years such as a library assistant, or someone who has earned a Master of Library and Information Science degree within 3 years.



This award went live on April 1, and will remain open through May 15. Winners will be selected and notified by June 30. Are you interested? [Apply here!](#)

continued from page 10

find elsewhere.⁴ Naturally Sandy fought back as best he could and garnered massive support from all over the country, but Charles Brown, the new director, would not back down. As a result, Sandy wrote a SRRT resolution on the right of workplace speech which was finally passed by the ALA Council in 2005. In 2004, Sandy received ALA's highest honor, honorary membership.

1 Alfred Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015).

2 For more on Sandy, see Chris Dodge and Jan DeSirey, eds., *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sandy Berman but Were Afraid to Ask* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995).

3 Sanford Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1971). Reprinted in 1993.

4 See *Library Juice* 2:17 - Supplement, April 28, 1999, https://sanfordberman.org/hcl/LJ_2.17.s.htm

VOICES FROM THE PAST

We offer excerpts from past newsletters in every issue. The following short, but powerful, quote from Joan K. Marshall, Coordinator of the SRRT TFW Committee on Sexist Subject Headings is from the [August 1974 newsletter, issue 32](#). The SRRT Newsletter archive can be found at <https://www.ala.org/srrt/newsletter-archive>.

“The pursuit of equality by any group within society poses social and moral questions only to those that would, and are in a position to, deny equality, not to those denied it.”

continued from page 13

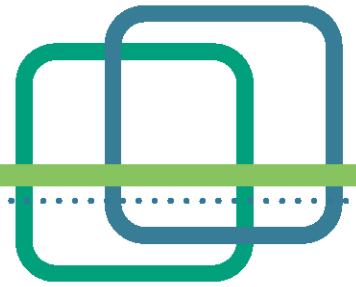
In “Bringing the Land into the Library: Land Acknowledgements in an Academic Library” Canadian Métis librarian Ashley Edwards, white settler Dr. Julia Lane, white settler scholar of publishing and Indigenous women’s literature Dr. Alix Shield, and Indian-Canadian educator Dal Shohal note the importance of land acknowledgements in recognizing and centering Indigenous presence on the land, expressing gratitude for Indigenous stewardship, and taking steps toward reconciliation. Having engaged in research, participated in a land acknowledgements writing workshop, and learned from Indigenous knowledge keepers, the authors propose a culturally humble process of reflection and learning that can produce meaningful land acknowledgements.

Danielle Marie Bitz, an Indigenous Engagement Librarian of mixed Métis and settler descent, interlaces personal narrative with analysis in “Downstream.” The author entwines a travel narrative of a canoe trip down the South Saskatchewan River with discussions of Métis history and resistance, embodied research (here, learning through paddling), and the need for Western learning institutions to recognize and integrate knowledge produced by land-based relationships. Bitz urges librarians to engage in critical librarianship to interrogate academic power structures that exclude marginalized peoples and promote colonial methods of knowledge extraction, investigate the histories of occupied lands, and work with land-based scholars and practitioners to develop inclusive learning and research paradigms.

The final chapter, “Refusing Growth: Cloud Technology, Climate Change, and the Future of Libraries and Archives” by American information worker and writer Ariel Hahn, notes the materiality of cloud technologies and their contribution to climate change. Notions of progress in libraries encourage the use of cloud-based technologies, which also support abusive practices of Big Tech and Big Oil. Hahn recommends that librarians respond with critical refusal, “opt[ing] out of systems that reproduce or facilitate harm and oppressions” (173), and degrowth, noting that it is imperative to “drastically reduce the levels of production and consumption [that are] the main causes of all environmental problems ... and of many social inequalities” (176).

As co-editor Lydia Zvyagintseva notes in her introduction, libraries and other memory institutions “appear ahistorical, atheoretical, and landless in their understanding of themselves, their work, and their impact on people” (1). However, libraries exist in specific times and places and within distinct cultural contexts; libraries reflect those contexts in their structures, policies, and practices. As *Land in Libraries’* chapters assert, North American libraries have contributed—and continue to contribute—to colonialist practices. As knowledge keepers, librarians are uniquely qualified to challenge their libraries’ participation in colonialism, decolonize their structures and policies, and Indigenize their collections. To do this, librarians must intentionally seek to learn about the land upon which they work in order to integrate land-based knowledge, practices, and relationships into their structures and services. Recognition of land-based relationships can help to shape libraries and library practices in ways that recognize, acknowledge, respect, and integrate Indigenous knowledge, and so improve learning institutions and the political, economic, and social impacts that they have on the land they inhabit and the people who share it with them. This timely book makes significant contributions to achieving that realization. It is highly recommended to all librarians who wish to engage in the necessary and important work of decolonization and Indigenization of libraries through reciprocal relationships with the land, inhabitants of the land, and land-based knowledge.

Call for Submissions



The SRRT Newsletter is always looking for good articles, essays, and letters to the editor. The next submission deadline is **May 30, 2025**. Our theme will be **Censorship: Who Decides?**. We invite reflections, case studies, and creative works that examine power, policy, and the politics behind censorship decisions in library spaces. Join the conversation and help us spotlight voices challenging silence and advocating for intellectual freedom.

The *SRRT Newsletter* invites submissions from library and information workers, students, educators, and all others who recognize the critical importance of libraries in addressing community and social issues. Submissions should be 500 to 1,000 words and should include the article title, author's name and title, and school or place of work (optional). Graphics are encouraged. If using images that are already on the Internet, the URL of the image and a caption or description may be added to the text of the submission.

Please email original submissions to SRRT Newsletter to banhatenotbooks@gmail.com and srrt.newsletter.content@gmail.com, indicating "SRRT Newsletter" within the subject line of your email. A confirmation of receipt will be sent in a timely manner.

Submissions to SRRT Newsletter Reviews

Submissions for book or media reviews should be sent to Laura Koltutsky, SRRT Newsletter Reviews Editor, at lurakoltutsky@gmail.com, indicating "Reviews" in the subject line of your email.

Submissions should be sent electronically in MS-Word format or a Word compatible format. Reviewers should keep their reviews to 300-500 words; any length much shorter or longer should be discussed with the reviews editor prior to submission. Reviewers should avoid conflicts of interest. Full disclosure should be made to the reviews editor when appropriate.

Submissions to SRRT Newsletter Letters to the Editors

The Newsletter invites readers to submit letters to the editors relating to social responsibilities and libraries. The letters should be respectful and thoughtful, either respond to specific content in the newsletter or include suggestions for topics of interest to SRRT members to be addressed in future issues. We will only publish letters of more than 200 words in exceptional circumstances.

Letters may be edited for length, grammar, and accuracy. You will be notified if your letter will be published.

Submit your letters to Laura Koltutsky at lurakoltutsky@gmail.com. Please indicate "SRRT Newsletter Letter to Editors" in the subject line of your email. You may submit your letter as an attachment in one of these formats: .doc, docx; or in the body of your email message.

Letters must include your full name, address, a telephone number and email address if you have one. This is for us only -- we don't share this information.

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Publication Information

The SRRT newsletter is published quarterly by the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. ISSN: 0749-1670.

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The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.