



*Gorman Editorial*



## **Coordinator's Report: *For an Integrated SRRT***

Fred Stoss, the previous coordinator of SRRT, used to tell me that it's difficult for us to assert a progressive perspective on issues in librarianship as a whole because the energy in SRRT is in the Task Forces, which are concerned with advancing disparate agendas belonging to separate issue areas (which many outside SRRT and some within SRRT see as unrelated). He was right - that is a difficulty. He was also right to celebrate the energy of the Task Forces and all that they do - programs, publications, effective networks, and advancing resolutions to Action Council. But I believe that our present self-definition as an umbrella group for a collection of different political interests is not the most effective way for us work and not the best way to conceive of the relationship between the Task Forces and SRRT as a whole, though it may have been very effective in the past.

Why do I think it's become an ineffective way to conceive of ourselves? I see two reasons. The first is simply that if SRRT members identify primarily with their Task Forces and not with SRRT as a whole, the focus shifts from an attempt to address the root causes of injustice via the core principles of librarianship to various attempts to address emergent problems in issue areas without cohesion. The result is that we have good efforts relating to specific issues (which of course should continue) but little sense of what SRRT as a whole ought to do within ALA to represent the collective interest; that is, little sense of what holds SRRT together in the first place. This issue can be called the issue of integration within SRRT.

The second reason follows from the first. As long as our energy and identity is primarily issues based, the environment in which we operate and try to be effective will receive us as a representative of special interests. The result is that we and our issues end up being treated as marginal to librarianship and marginal to ALA's "proper" activities.

So what can SRRT be if not issues based, and where does it leave the Task Forces? I believe the answer is to couple our identification with specific issue areas with our own analyses of social problems and connect these analyses to our ideas about librarianship. Let me give you an example. Let's say that your interest in SRRT is primarily in the Feminist Task Force. At the present time it might look to outsiders like this means that "women's issues" are your only issues, when in fact your Feminism offers you a way to analyze other problems, so that you can see, for example, environmental problems as a result of Patriarchy. Someone in the Task Force on the Environment might not see it in precisely the same way, but they are very likely to sympathize with your analysis and gain a larger sense of SRRT's cohesion by communicating with you about it. Similarly, someone in the Alternatives In Publication Task Force might have found herself there because of her view of the way our market-based media system marginalizes ideas which are critical or simply outside of that system. Her way of looking at things may explain, for her, an aspect of the perpetuation of racism in our society that Coretta Scott King Task Force members would be interested to hear. This is the first step - using an analysis of root problems from each of our own perspectives to find our connection with the other Task Forces (and then to share our ideas).

The next step is to move from the margin to the center. Once we've moved from a focus on specific issues to root problems (which doesn't mean backing off from specific issues, necessarily, just using analysis to form a theoretical cohesion among the Task Forces beginning from a diversity of places) we can connect our analyses of social problems to the core of librarianship. This is not a pipe dream. It would be in most professions and institutions, but not in librarianship. Our profession, as conservative as it can seem, has established a set of fundamental values that are distinctly progressive - they could have been devised by us (and a look at history would show that they've been introduced and secured by our counterparts in the past). There is a real consensus about those values among librarians across the political spectrum - a fact that works to our great advantage.

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I would call this the task of moving from the margin to the center Integration within ALA. (To what extent we should become personally involved in other parts of ALA as SRRT members and spend less time operating within the SRRT core is not what I'm talking about and is a question for each of us to answer for him or herself.) How might a SRRT member connect their political philosophy to their vision of librarianship and its core values? I'll share with you the way I started doing it; there are probably a million ways.

I was thinking about rewriting SRRT's Statement of Purpose along the lines that I'm talking about now (a project I've since decided could too easily get us into hot water). The current Statement of Purpose of SRRT reads as follows:

*to provide a forum for the discussion of the responsibilities which librarians and libraries have in relation to the important problems of social change which face institutions and librarians today;*

*to provide for the exchange of information about library activities among all ALA units with the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems;*

*to act as a stimulus to ALA and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs; to present programs, arrange exhibits and carry out other appropriate activities.*

I'm not entirely satisfied with the way our Statement of Purpose talks about "problems of social change" and "current social problems" without asserting a connection between our general progressive project and the values of librarianship as defined by ALA's core ethical documents (the Library Bill of Rights, the Policy Manual and the Code of Ethics) as well as the values implied in the profession's actual practice. I probably would have liked the Statement very well when it was first written, but the context has changed, and the need to assert our location at the center rather than at the margin of ALA and librarianship has emerged. (How has the context changed? Think of how many Americans now view abortion as a "current social problem" and how many view the advancement of property rights today's "problem of social change." The current Statement of Purpose lacks a statement of our values as well as lacking a connection to the core of librarianship.)

So, in thinking about the nature of librarianship in relation to my political values I hit upon three principles that connect them. Librarianship has three central attributes (that I can think of) that make it an inherently progressive calling. It is a communitarian practice, in that it is based on a community sharing its resources for the good of all; it is a civil libertarian practice, in that it holds sacred the value of intellectual freedom, as well-expressed in the Library Bill of Rights; and it is a sustainable practice, in that the ethic of sharing and reusing resources presents an alternative to consumer society and the logic of the market.

Another person working on the same project might key in on the progressive nature of preserving the cultural memory or of empowering people to locate and use intellectual tools for autonomy and liberation. There are many ways that we can draw this connection between our social and political concerns and the core values of librarianship. There doesn't have to be an official SRRT doctrine defining this connection.

## **MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY TASK FORCE IDEA EXCHANGE IN TORONTO**

Due to lower attendance for this year's ALA Annual in Toronto, the audience was smaller than usual for the 3rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multicultural Idea Exchange. Despite its size the audience was generously enthusiastic and each of the speakers was zealously greeted for the highlights of their 2003 King Holiday programs.

The keynoter was Mary E. (Molly) Raphael, Director, District of Columbia Public Library with its Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Main Branch. She provided the impressive details of the special King Holiday programs since the Federal Holiday began and its 2003 "Reading King" program which honors the life and legacy of Dr. King. Raphael outlined the partnership project between the D.C. Public Library and the Newseum for the observance of the King Memorial Library's 30th Anniversary in September 2002. For this, a visual artist had designed a hands-on workshop for children and their families. The two resulting murals were unveiled at the King Memorial Library on January 15, 2003 to celebrate Dr. King's birthday. All of the District of Columbia branch libraries also sponsored programs and events to celebrate the King Holiday.

To follow, there were highlights from an academic library by Charles E. Kratz, Dean of the Library and Director of Information Resources Customer Service in the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. He described some outstanding features of the events that included the Martin Luther King Scholarship Dinner











## **Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) Liaison Report**

Obviously the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) Supreme Court case was the main topic of discussion at Annual. FTRF Trustees and Unit Representatives discussed how the Supreme Court might rule and were generally optimistic. FTRF general counsel, Theresa Chmara, predicted that the Supreme Court Justices might try to leave an opening for a later challenge.

Selected cases discussed at Annual included:

ACLU v. Department of Justice in relation to the FOIA request relating to Patriot Act statistics. The Department of Justice has since released some of these statistics stating that there have been no searches of library records under the Patriot Act since its inception.

The Yahoo! v. La Ligue Contre Le Racisme et L'antisemitisme (LICRA) is a case where Yahoo!'s auction site was sued for selling Nazi memorabilia by an anti-racism group from France. French law prohibits the selling of such material and a French court ruled that Yahoo! was capable of blocking sales of such items to French citizens. Yahoo! filed to have the French courts order unconstitutional and unenforceable in the United States. This case has implications for the enforcement of international treaties such as the EU Convention on Cybercrime where First Amendment principles are challenged in an international context.

The Freedom to Read Foundation has submitted an amicus brief on November 4, 2003 in the case of New Times v. Isaaks. The case involves a Dallas alternative newspaper, the Observer publishing a satirical news story that included two cases of children being arrested for "terroristic" writings. The article included fictitious quotes from then governor George Bush, county district attorney Bruce Isaaks, and juvenile court judge Darlene Whitten. Isaaks and Whitten have sued the New Times, claiming that their reputations were damaged by the story. This case has implications for satire losing its protected speech designation. The case has made its way up to the Texas Supreme Court and arguments begin December 3, 2003.

Theresa Chmara, FTRF general counsel from Jenner and Block was named the 2003 Freedom to Read Foundation Roll of Honor Award recipient at ALA Annual in Toronto. The FTRF Roll of Honor was established to recognize individuals who have contributed substantially to the FTRF through adherence to its principles and/or substantial monetary support.

Laura Koltutsky (laura\_koltutsky@hotmail.com)

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## **EQUITY OF ACCESS INFORMATION NEEDED**

I am developing some information for Larra Clark, ALA Press Officer, to support her efforts in highlighting EQUITY OF ACCESS in libraries in local communities. This is the theme of ALA President Carla Hayden's initiative. We need to demonstrate how libraries are addressing equity of access issues, in every community, in every city and town, in every state and region, across the country.

There are two ways you can contribute to this effort: go to <http://www.ala.org/olos> and complete the "What's Happening @ Your Library" form OR send your story directly to me at [sorange@ala.org](mailto:sorange@ala.org). Write "Equity of Access" in the subject line so I can find it immediately.

Send me information on:

- 1) The impact of service delivery in your library with: immigrants, poor and homeless people, rural and small communities, people of color, communities where English is the second language, adult learners, funding cuts, privacy issues, etc., successful community partnerships.
- 2) Tell how libraries (you) are creating resources and programs and services that definitely make a difference.
- 3) Tell us the success stories, how your libraries are winning in service delivery to these populations.
- 4) Tell us the challenging stories, where libraries are still in the fight to gather resources, and maybe re-locate support for services.

# MEMBERS NEWS

## IFLA Report to SRRT, August 2003

The annual IFLA Meeting took place in Berlin, August 1-9, 2003. It was attended by 4650 participants from 133 countries. IFLA's recent reorganization has resulted in a more democratic and representative structure, and IFLA's first Third World president was inaugurated at the end of the meeting, Kay Raseroka from the University of Botswana. The new Governing Board has much broader geographic representation than previous bodies: 8 from Western Europe, 4 from North America, 3 from Africa, and 1 each from Australia, Eastern Europe, Russia, China, and Latin America.

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services, human resource development, electronic information, library cooperation, and the profession, library associations and IFLA structure. The Discussion Group then suggested sending specific recommendations to appropriate IFLA sections and other bodies. The IFLA Professional Committee added a few more bodies at its December 2002 meeting and letters were sent to 17 sections and 5 other IFLA bodies. As a result, many of these bodies already the recommendations on their Berlin agendas regarding the formulation of their new two-year action plans. According to the 2002 resolution, the members of the Discussion Group were to help with implementation of the recommendations. I was able to advocate for the recommendations at the meetings of 15 sections, the Regional Activities Division, and at the FAIFE meeting. The response was heartening, and I expect that many of the forthcoming action plans will incorporate these recommendations.

Berlin was an excellent IFLA venue, a stimulating non-stop city with a rich and disturbing history. Changes in the IFLA structure and culture along with much hard work made this a most fruitful meeting.

Al Kagan  
SRRT Councilor  
[Akagan@uiuc.edu](mailto:Akagan@uiuc.edu)

## SRRT MOURNS FOUNDING MEMBERS

***Elizabeth Ellen Winkelmann Morrisett***  
***Founding Member of SRRT***  
***Sept. 3, 1920 - July 19, 2003***

Elizabeth Morrisett received her MLS in 1994 from the University of Michigan. She retired in 1991 from the Alaska State Library after a varied career. ALA Councilor at large, Mark Rosenzweig, shares his thoughts about his longtime friend:

“Our profession and our country are the poorer for the loss of librarian Elizabeth Morrisett, who I was proud to have known and worked with.

I feel she was a friend, and someone who encouraged me -- in large part by her own example, but also by her kind words -- to keep up the struggle when things were looking bleak. The difference in our ages meant little. She was an inspiration to me and to several generations of librarians who saw their work, as she did, as a contribution to a better future.

A founding member of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), she created and chaired several important Task Forces.

Always full of good humor, she was nonetheless absolutely serious about making librarianship --and even ALA-- instruments for what she saw as much needed reform, even -- dare I say it --part of a humanistic revolution. I will miss her.”

Contributions may be made in her name to Doctors Without Borders USA, P.O. Box 1856, Merrifield, VA 22116-8056.

***Joan K. Marshall***  
***Founding Member of SRRT***  
***October 29, 1929 - July 22, 2003***

Joan K. Marshall attended NYU and Columbia University and retired in 1988 from Brooklyn College. She authored the groundbreaking book *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging* (1977) and received the prestigious Ralph Shaw award for Library Literature from the American Library Association two years later.

Ms. Marshall was a long-time ALA Councilor and served as editor of *Serials for Libraries* (1979). She was a trustee of the Freedom to Read Foundation and was active in women's issues.

Donations may be sent to a book fund established in her name at Brooklyn College Library, 2900 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11210.

## Call for Poster Sessions for ALA Orlando

Applications for presenting poster sessions at the 2004 American Library Association Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, are now being accepted. An application form is available on the poster session website at <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/ala>.

The website also provides rules and guidelines for presenting poster sessions, helpful hints in applying, frequently asked questions, and photos of sample poster sessions.

If you don't have Internet access, you can apply via e-mail. Send the following information to [jfagan@lib.siu.edu](mailto:jfagan@lib.siu.edu): Title, author's name, institutional address, e-mail address, and 200 word abstract.

If you have any questions about the submission process, please contact:

Jody Condit Fagan, Chair, ALA Poster Session Review Panel,

Morris Library, Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, IL. 62901-6632, 618-453-3844 (telephone) M o r r i s   L i b r a r y   S o u t h e r n   I l l i n o i s   U n i v e r s i t y   C a r b o n d a l e   I L   6 2 9 0 1 - 6 6 3 2 ,   6 1 8 - 4 5 3 - 3 8 4 4   ( t e l e p h o n e ) g   t   i   o   y   q   u   r   A   P   o   s   t   u   t   t   h   e   t   h   I

## Confessions of a Newsletter Editor

This may be my last issue as editor and I thought it was about time I confessed: I have no idea what I'm doing!

When I first started my present job I was told I should consider joining either the Pennsylvania Library Association or ALA. Once I stumbled upon the Social Responsibilities Round Table, the decision was easy. I decided I'd like to be a part of a group that tries to make a difference in what I view as a chaotic and unfriendly world.

At that time our coordinator was Fred Stoss and I told him I was looking for some way to be involved. He suggested I become the newsletter editor. I confessed to him, as I am to all of you now, that I actually know little about the issues that are covered on SRRTAC-L. He correctly guessed that this would be a good way to learn.

Becoming socially aware has been a long, slow trip for me. I grew up in a small town near Erie, PA. Although my father was always a union officer, he never really mentioned labor issues with me (although I do recall a terrifying childhood summer when he was on strike.) My parents were clearly conservatives but they never discussed politics nor social issues. As I look back, I led quite a sheltered life. I was a teenager when I discovered that Erie had a synagogue and in my thirties when I learned there are actually two.

By far the most telling story from my journey occurred during my library school days (UT-Austin). I shared a bathroom with two other women, Beverly and Kelley. They introduced me to feminism and the Anarchist's Cookbook, took me to my first protest (against Apartheid), and led me to my first vigil (International Womyn's Day 1987). That January, Bev asked me to listen to speech she wrote for Roe v. Wade day. I listened intently and came to a realization by the end. When she finished, I asked a question that stunned her. "Bev, is abortion *legal*?"

Bev and Kelley were my earliest teachers; SRRT members have been my latest. Progressives, hegemony, Haymarket are all new words to me since becoming a member. For the longest time, people would post items to SRRTAC-L without comment and I would wonder, "how do 'we' feel about that?" That's a rare occurrence now so I guess I've come a long way.

For a long time I was ashamed of my ignorance and afraid that if people knew what I don't know, they'd turn me away. I've wanted to write this for a long time, but Jean Andrews' essay on her newly-lit fire for activism encouraged me. I felt suddenly less alone. So, thank you for your wisdom and your kindnesses over these three years. Take care of your wise and kind selves.

Jane Ingold

SRRT Newsletter Editor

**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 to listproc@ala.org: *subscribe SRRTAC-L [your first name] [your last name]*

**SRRTMEM**

SRRTMEM is an unrestricted email list for announcements from American Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table. Announcements come from the

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