

LSSIRT NEWSLETTER

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Many Programs For Support Staff At Conference

Attendance at the ALA conference in Atlanta was down from the Conference in San Francisco last summer. There were 21,130 support staff and librarians attending the Atlanta conference compared to 26,630 in San Francisco. But even though attendance was smaller, there were opportunities for good programming—many especially for support staff. Highlights of some of the programs and meetings of interest to support staff are covered in this Newsletter.

The *Campaign for America's Librarians*, the initiative of incoming ALA President Maurice J. Freedman, was a topic of much discussion throughout

the conference. Freedman repeatedly insisted that the name "librarian" in his cam-



Donna Mandel, Mitch Freedman, Gene Kinnaly

paign is meant to be inclusive of all library workers, not just those holding professional degrees because the issues confronting ALA relating to better salaries and pay equity are issues of concern for all.

Gene Kinnaly, a cataloger at the Library of Congress, and a member of the LSSIRT Board, has been very vocal in stating that library support staff face the same pay scale and equity challenges as librarians. Kinnaly and Freedman were both panel members during the session *Role of ALA in Supporting Library Workers' Salaries*. Kinnaly represents support staff on Freedman's *Presidential Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity for Library Workers*. Read more about the program in this Newsletter.

Permanent Seat for Support Staff on ALA Pay Equity Committee

Meralyn Meadows attended the business meeting of the ALA Pay Equity Committee where she reported that in the early 1990's a decision was made to have a permanent seat on the Committee for a member of

the library support staff community. Because the matter was not approved by the Council on Committees (COO), it was not an official action. The 2002 Committee members voted unanimously to recommend to COO the

creation of the position. COO endorsed the recommendation and it was approved by Council. That action assures that a support staff member will always have a seat on the Pay Equity Committee.

LSSIRT Board Meeting Highlights

By: Jennifer Kutzik, Secretary



Jennifer Kutzik

The LSSIRT meeting was held on Saturday, June 15, at the Hilton Hotel. A brief review of items discussed include:

Diane Fay, Alice Poffinberger, Kathleen Murphy, and Jennifer Kutzik were congratulated on their election to the Board. Gene Kinnaly was appointed to serve a one-year term as Member-at-Large.

Library Mosaics will make available

an ongoing column for articles related to LSSIRT activities. Upcoming column authors are: Poffinberger, Kutzik, and Sandy Brooks.

Membership in LSSIRT has increased to 490 due to the special membership pricing campaign.

The National Directory of Paraprofessional Associations will be loaded on the LSSIRT web site in the near future. Kutzik and Meralyn Meadows will coordinate the project.

Plans for the ALA 3rd Congress on Support Staff Issues were discussed. The Congress will be held May 16-17, 2003 at the College of

DuPage in Glen Elyn, IL.

The new Allied Professional Association was discussed.

Fay reported program planning for Annual Conference in Toronto in June 2003 is underway. Program tracks will again be used and a proposed track of interest to LSSIRT is *Staffing/Staff Development/Career Management*.

Parsons was thanked for her leadership during 2001-2002. Linda Porter and David Tulanian, outgoing Members-at-Large, were also thanked for their Board tenure.

The Role of ALA in Supporting Library Workers' Salaries

By: Kent Slade, Member-at-Large



Kent

Compensation was the focus of the second task force on strategic planning issues of LSSIRT, co-sponsored by the *Special Presidential Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity for Library*

Workers. Mitch Freedman, Gene Kinnaly, Patricia Glass Schuman and Donna Mandel presented their ideas on how the American Library Association should address library workers' salaries.

Freedman, the incoming President of the ALA, stressed that library workers (reminding the attendees that librarians and support staff alike face the same issues regarding fair compensation) need to be as vocal about salaries as they have been about First Amendment issues. He called for a change in the image of the meek library worker to

that of a strong, vocal professional who should be compensated accordingly. He then read the speech of Patricia Glass Schuman, who was unable to attend. She called for all library staff, including support staff, to take the advocacy training offered by ALA.

Kinnaly shared stories of support staff from across the country demonstrating how compensation is still a big issue for support staff, how updated and accurate job descriptions are needed, and how the retention of skilled workers is needed within the support staff community. He also argued that support staff face many of the same issues librarians face regarding compensation and called for advocacy to be inclusive of all library workers, not just librarians.

Mandel shared stories of how unions within libraries have benefited

library workers and the impact that unions can have in improving the compensation of library workers.

"Support staff face many of the same issues librarians face regarding compensation"

Kinnaly's speech may be read online at: <http://www.mjfreedman.org/atlantastaff.pdf>

Mandel's speech may be read online at: <http://www.mjfreedman.org/roleofunions.pdf>

For more information on the Task Force, go to: <http://www.mjfreedman.org/tfhome.html>

ALA Better Salaries and Pay Equity Task Force

By: Gene Kinnaly, Member-at-Large



Gene Kinnaly

I am reporting on four activities of the Task Force that took place at ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta.

1. On Friday afternoon, there was a *Campaign for America's Librarians* advocacy training session for state library chapters that focused on the *Advocating for Better Salaries and Pay Equity Toolkit*, a product developed by the Task Force to help library workers achieve pay equity. Additional advocacy training will be offered at Midwinter in Philadelphia in January 2003 and Annual in Toronto in June 2003, and there will be opportunities for support staff to attend this training, provided that they - like all participants - agree to conduct pay equity training in their states. The *Salaries Toolkit* is available on the ALA web site - see:

http://www.ala.org/pio/advocacy/better_salariestoolkit.pdf

2. The Support Staff Working Group of the Task Force met Friday afternoon with Mary Jo Lynch, Director of ALA's *Office for Research and Statistics*. The only topic on our agenda was a discussion of the inclusion of support staff in the annual ALA salary survey. I'm pleased to report that substantial progress was made and I believe that the working group and Lynch reached an agreement by which support staff salary information will be gathered by ALA, perhaps as soon as next year. The details still need to be worked out, but I'm optimistic that ALA will begin to gather this data on support staff, and as a result we will have a much more accurate picture of support staff salaries across the country.
3. Saturday afternoon a panel discussion entitled *The Role of ALA in Supporting Library-Workers' Salaries* was co-sponsored by LSSIRT and the Better Salaries and Pay Eq-

uity Task Force. The first hour featured four presentations and the second hour was a question-and-answer period. The program was recorded on audiotape and copies of the tape will be offered for sale by ALA - watch *American Libraries* for details.

4. Sunday afternoon the Task Force met, reviewed the advocacy training held on Friday, and made plans for future training sessions and other work by the Task Force. Additional advocacy training sessions as well as additional programs on better salaries and pay equity will be offered.

"I believe that an agreement has been reached by which support staff salary information will be gathered by ALA."

See the TaskForce home page for details:

<http://www.mjfreedman.org/tfhome.html>

ALA/APA UPDATE

By: Meralyn Meadows, Member-at-Large

ALA approved the creation of the Allied Professional Association (APA) in June 2001. Nancy Kranich was appointed to chair the 11 member transition team whose responsibility is the development of an initial operating plan for the ALA/APA. Kranich says "The APA will

be a legally separate organization from ALA." APA will start by addressing two issues. The first is "the certification of professionals beyond the first professional degree and the second is salaries and pay equity." Leslie Burger, a member of the transition team, stated "we see

the ALA as trying to advance the cause of library service and libraries. The ALA/APA will focus on the 'you' issues". Some ALA committees probably will be transferred to the ALA/APA, but right now the Pay Equity Committee is the only one named.

Skill Sets for Managing and Leading

By: Ali Poffinberger, Member-at-Large

The LSSIRT-sponsored sessions at ALA were popular with attendees, but none more so than our sessions focusing on the development of management and leadership skills. Our capable presenters included Maureen Sullivan, of the consulting firm Maureen Sullivan Associates (*Don't Look Back! You're Leading*), and Kathleen Weibel, Director of Staff Development for the Chicago Public Library (*8 1/2 Things for Managers to Think About*).

There were over two hundred attendees in each session, and their positions ranged from support staff to library directors. Clearly, designing LSSIRT sessions to meet the continuing educational needs identified by our round table members is addressing the unmet needs of other ALA member groups as well. I sensed that members of the audience were somewhat desperate for guidance on these two topics.

By the end of the two sessions, it was clear to me that the basic characteristics of a good manager are identical to those of a good leader, and vice versa. However, in this limited space, it is impossible to cover all the points the speakers made. Instead, I will attempt to give you a sense of a few main areas where their presentations overlapped. I hope that you will find the information useful if you were not able to attend the con-

ference. (If you would like more detailed information about the insights made in each session, I'll gladly send you my voluminous notes! Send me an e-mail at ali.poff@duke.edu.)



Paula Greer, Kathleen Weibel, Ali Poffinberger, Dorothy Morgan, Carolyn Tate, Meralyn Meadows, and (seated) Anna Marie Kehmst

Both presenters suggested that you get a sense of the "big picture" for your work. For Weibel, this means knowing "the ultimate purpose of your enterprise." While detailing this goal, she noted (not surprisingly) that it does not matter where you work, or what job you hold in the library, your ultimate purpose involves customer service, whether with external or internal customers. She pointed out that maintaining customer service as your *raison d'être* should not stop you from being an advocate for your department or from pursuing a goal. Just keep it always in mind. By contrast, Sullivan offered an even broader and humorous description of the "big picture." She identified "systems thinking" as a key competency and defined it as "an ability to see both the forest and the trees, and at the same time knowing that what is going on with the pine needles is not as important." (Certainly those of us in

the trenches do not always want to advance this characteristic of our leaders and managers.")

Each speaker also addressed the major creator of stress in our jobs: change. Sullivan noted that you should stimulate and deal with change by helping people obtain the energy to create change. How? She recommended that you learn to see change itself as neutral - it is your reaction to change that is not neutral. Weibel added that you should concentrate on seeing the good in every situation, including those involving change. Sullivan echoed that point, saying that you will be more successful navigating the change if you are optimistic about its end results. Also, Weibel advised that you should turn problems/change to your advantage, rather than engaging in defensive or reactive behavior that attempts to protect the status quo. Criticizing the change or the change maker is ineffective; instead, spend your energy defining how the changes impact your ultimate purpose and communicate that information to others. Sullivan pointed out a final benefit of change; it tends to put you and fellow employees in a "zone of discomfort," where you are likely to LEARN the most.

In their conclusions, Sullivan and Weibel stressed that you give primary attention to listening and to laughter. However, it was actually an attendee who summed up both LSSIRT sessions most effectively by reminding us that, in our work, *it's about people, not libraries.*

LSSIRT Membership Grows

By: Sandy Brooks, Membership Chair

At the ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta, LSSIRT membership was officially reported as 490, up from 210 a year ago, an increase of 133.33%. This is largely due to the Membership Initiative currently going on with the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) and the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA). This means that we are no longer one of ALA's "smallest round tables" - our membership is larger than 7 other round tables (out of a total of 17 round tables). Last year there was only one round table with fewer members than LSSIRT!

ALA will launch a "members only" section of the ALA website in August. Some sections of ALA (such as Young Adult Library Services) Association (YALSA) also

have their own "members only" sections of their website. LSSIRT could offer this service to members in the future, if it is something that



LSSIRT Board: (Seated) Tate, Poffinberger, Morgan, Kutzik, Davis
(Standing) Shade, Meadows, Brooks, Parsons, Fay, Swader

would be valuable. If you have comments on this topic, please e-mail them to me at sbrooks@ecl.org. The ALA Membership Committee

voted at the Conference to add 6 virtual committee members to this group. These will be non-voting members, but they will be in on all electronic discussions regarding ALA membership issues. They will **not** be required to attend conferences to participate, as most ALA committees do. LSSIRT vied successfully for one of these virtual members to be a support staff person who could make sure support staff issues are addressed during ALA membership discussions. Carolyn Tate, President of LSSIRT for 2002-2003, will be appointing a member to this ALA Committee. This is an excellent opportunity for support staff to become more involved with ALA, and to forge into exciting new territory as a "virtual committee member," a concept ALA is still working to implement.

Library Journal's Reception for Cindy Aherns

By: Dorothy Morgan, Past Recipient of LJ Award and Past President of LSSIRT

I was delighted when asked to write an article about the reception hosted by Library Journal for Cindy. As I entered the room I could feel the same nervousness and excitement as I had felt the previous year. I could identify with how Cindy was feeling about the evening's event. This is just how I felt last year, but this time it was for Cindy, this was her night, this was a reception in recognition of Cindy's accomplishments for not only her library but for libraries throughout the country. This award proved Cindy's dedication and commitment to the library profession.

Although the reception was in a different location, the elements were the same with a lovely room, great

food, very familiar people, old and new friends; Brenda Shick, Vice President of the Library Division of Kapco, Francine Fialkoff, Editor of Library Journal, John Berry, Editor-in-Chief of Library Journal, the Board of LSSIRT, colleagues, and many other library workers.

I talked to Cindy that night and told her that I was sure she was still in a whirlwind since being notified about the award in February, and I assured her that it doesn't stop.

Cindy was presented with two beautiful plaques which featured her picture from the cover of Library Journal and a check from Kapco. At the same time she was accepting the

award, she had just been notified that she had received an award from her local Chamber of Commerce. Her acceptance speech echoed her feeling about the award, her library and those she works for.

Congratulations to Cindy Aherns, chosen by Library Journal as the 2002 Paraprofessional of the Year!



Cindy Aherns

A Look Back

By Martha Parsons, LSSIRT President 2001-2002

Time does fly—it's hard to believe that my term as President of LSSIRT is over already! Although I don't feel like I personally accomplished that much, it's wonderful to look back and see that together "we" have accomplished some great things. Here are some LSSIRT highlights for the 2001-2002 year:

I'm proud to report that we continued our conference programming goals by offering a session at the Annual Conference that supported the third task force report on compensation, as well as two other sessions on leadership. Incoming President, Carolyn Tate, was the force behind the ideas for these sessions, as well as finding the speakers, and organizing the events. Thank you, Carolyn!

The ALA membership initiative for support staff kicked off this past year and is going strong. It has given our membership numbers a huge boost, which is great, but we need to hear from you. If you are a new member (or even a long time member), we'd like to hear from you. If there is an issue that is near and dear to your heart and you think LSSIRT

should or could be involved, please let us know, and then volunteer to get involved!

We had a name change...or at least sort of a name change. The "L" for Library was officially added to the acronym (formerly SSIRT), which now reflects the official—**Library Support Staff Interests Round Table**. This change is also serving to avoid confusion with another ALA Round Table.

To me, one of the most exciting happenings this year was the continued planning for the ALA Congress on Support Staff Issues. The plan originated in Dorothy Morgan's term as President of LSSIRT (2000-2001) when she made a formal request to the ALA Executive Board to hold a Congress on support staff issues. The request received an enthusiastic response from the Board and they voted to fund and support the concept and set up a planning committee to come up with a plan.

The current status is that a Steering Committee and budget is in place, and a date and place have been selected. The Congress will be held on May 16-17, 2003, at the

College of DuPage, in Glen Ellyn, IL. The Steering Committee is in the very early stages so there is not much to report at this time. I am very pleased to be serving on this Steering Committee and will try to communicate news on the planning process to the LSSIRT Board and to the membership.

I want to thank each member of the Steering Committee for their support and active participation this past year. It was wonderful to work with a group of individuals who truly care about, and are committed to library support staff issues. ALA may seem like a big, bureaucratic organization (which it is), but it is made up of individuals, most who do care about the well being of all who work in libraries.



Alex Bloss, Martha Parsons, Linda Stusar

Fun Time at Pittypat's Porch Restaurant

By Carolyn Tate, Evening Out Coordinator

Many attended dinner at Pittypat's Porch Restaurant on Saturday, June 15. Fun, fellowship, flavorful food and surprises were enjoyed by all. Pittypat's famous hot peach cobbler topped with a scoop of ice cream was a great way to end the *Evening Out*. Several people were the lucky recipients of

tickets to Stone Mountain Park, Atlanta Cyclorama, and Coca-Cola; while others received books, Avon beauty supplies and two one-year subscriptions to *Library Mosaics*. The highlight of the evening was when one diner was leaving, she proudly stated that she had attended all LSSIRT *Eve-*

ning Out functions and would most assuredly be sitting at the table at the next one.

By the way, the next one will be at ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia. More information will be available soon. Hope to see you there!

A Look Forward

By Carolyn Tate, LSSIRT President 2002-2003

Support staff issues, concerns, current and future trends in the profession have always been compelling topics for me. I am honored to serve as your 2002-2003 LSSIRT President and will strive to represent you and your interests in a manner that will bring support staff to the forefront.

This is a time of change and challenge, opening doors and offering opportunities to support staff. We comprise approximately two thirds of the library work force. Therefore, we need to be well represented with a complete picture of our issues, concerns and how future trends will affect our jobs and provide avenues for advancement and better salaries. Listed below are some of the exciting and challenging opportunities that involve support staff:

- Mitch Freedman, ALA President, formed a Task Force to address the issues of library workers' salaries. Gene Kinnaly represents support staff and also serves as facilitator for the Support Staff Working Group, which is a subgroup of the Task Force.

- An ALA steering committee has been appointed and is preparing for the Third Congress, which will be addressing issues and concerns of support staff. Martha Parsons is representing our Round Table.

- LSSIRT membership has increased with the ALA membership project. It's a great opportunity to become an ALA member for only \$59.00 annual membership fee. This special membership offer will apply for two more years.

Please join me in congratulating Martha Parsons on her leadership and promotion of support staff for the past year.

As LSSIRT President, I need to know the concerns and issues that you, the members, think we need to address. This will help me to perform my leadership role to best represent you this year. What are your ideas and suggestions for increasing our membership and for involving LSSIRT members?

I know that working as a team, we will see our Round Table grow, not only increasing in numbers but offering challenging op-



Carolyn Tate and Martha Parsons

portunities for members. You can contribute by volunteering to serve on one of the following committees

**Continuing Education
Constitution/By Laws;
Fund Raising;
Marketing;
Membership;
Nominating;
Program;
Publications/Communications;
Strategic Plan**

We need you! Challenges and opportunities are many. This is an opportunity for you to serve on a LSSIRT Committee and the challenge is to provide service and information to our membership at regular intervals and in a timely manner.

Submit your Committee choice by August 30, 2002

Please send your name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail, and list your committee choices, to ctate@richmond.edu; phone 804-289-8671; Fax 804-289-8757. This will allow members to actively participate and make valuable contributions to our organization and to support staff across the nation as well as to our colleagues in Canada.

I foresee each LSSIRT member serving as ambassadors to their respective state and local associations, which will help LSSIRT improve lines of communication with the states and state associations.

An organization is only as strong as its membership. The success of the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table depends on the active participation of its members. I look forward to hearing from you on concerns, issues, ideas, and suggestions. Remember: your committee choice is needed by or before August 30, 2002.

I readily face the challenges this year will present but I welcome the opportunity of working with you and serving as your support staff ambassador to ALA.

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