

SRRT Newsletter - Issue 170, March 2010

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ALA Goes Green for ALA Election

Press Release from the ALA Public Information Office

CHICAGO – For the second year in a row, the American Library Association is holding its election exclusively online.

For the ALA, the reasons for dispensing with paper are related in one way or another to the color green: green in an environmental sense as well as green in a monetary sense.

“The decision to hold an exclusively online election is good for the association and the environment, especially when every organization is looking at ways to reduce consumption of energy and adopt greener

approaches,” said ALA President Dr. Camila Alire. “Funds that would have been directed toward the production of paper ballots can now be diverted toward the support of critical member services and advocacy activities on behalf of libraries.”

But the ALA’s decision was motivated as well by the numbers. In deciding to discontinue paper ballots, the ALA recognized the success of the electronic balloting initiative it started six years ago. Since 2004, the number of online voters has grown, and member participation in the election process has increased.

Although the 2010 election is being conducted online, there remains one exception. Members with disabilities and without Internet access may obtain a paper ballot by contacting ALA customer service at 1 (800) 545-2433, ext. 5. Those without Internet access at home or work can easily access the election site by visiting their local public (or in many instances academic or school) library.

For AL Focus videos featuring candidates answering questions at this year’s Midwinter Meeting, visit http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/videos/video_archive/201001 (http://www.americanlibrariesmagazine.org/videos/video_archive/201001).

“Voting is one of the most important things you do as a member,” said ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels. “The President and Treasurer represent all of us as members, whether doing hundreds of media interviews each year or helping to guide the association through financial opportunities and challenges. They are our spokespeople - and that of libraries around the country.”

Fiels made his comments in a video that can be viewed by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/v/22fRnnXzeyc> (<http://www.youtube.com/v/22fRnnXzeyc>).

The polls opened on March 16 and the ALA notified voters by e-mail, providing them with their unique passcodes and information about how to vote online. Polls will close on April 23 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

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A-SRRT Your Voice by Voting in the ALA Election

Voters' Guide for SRRT Action Council and ALA Council Races

If you are an active member of SRRT, then you will notice that you have a SRRT Ballot to fill out when you visit the ALA Election site (<https://www.alavote.org/2010/login.aspx>). We have four vacancies on Action Council this year, so please be sure to cast your vote for four of the following individuals. Those indicated with an asterisk are running for re-election as Action Council members-at-large. For more information about what Action Council does and how it is comprised, consult our bylaws (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt/bylaws#Action>). For a list of current Action Council members, please see our leadership directory (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt/srrt-action-council>).

- **Jane Glasby** — Associate Librarian, Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture, San Francisco Botanical Garden; International Responsibilities Task Force Representative to SRRT Action Council
"Having been to Action Council meetings regularly since my first attendance at ALA conference, and more recently having served as a representative of the International Responsibilities Task Force on AC, I am eager to serve as a full member at large. It is important that SRRT maintain a strong position as the conscience of ALA, true to the tradition of its foundation in the movements against the Vietnam war and for civil rights and women's rights. We should strengthen our voice across the existing bodies

of ALA, offering a progressive/left perspective in all concerns, whilst reminding the Association that its social responsibilities extend to all areas of our lives and professional engagement."

- **Mark Gottschalk** — Library Technician, Adult Services, Neill Public Library, Pullman, WA; 2011 MLIS candidate, San Jose State University

"I have been working in libraries for almost 5 years now, but they have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. As a former student athlete and someone who's first job was at a Boys and Girls Club in Reno, Nevada, I am committed to bringing progressive change not only to the library profession, but also to the communities we all serve. I believe that a key aspect of the profession is being responsible to the communities we serve and being cognizant of their ever changing and always important needs."

"As someone who is relatively new to the profession, I bring energy and a willingness to foster discourse on any topic with the goal of achieving consensus about tough issues. I feel that my open-mindedness and communication skills would be a great asset to the SRRT and would provide me with an amazing opportunity to interact with a similarly driven people throughout the profession. As someone who wants to make a difference both now and in the future please consider me for the SRRT Action Council."

- **Marie Jones** — Assistant Dean of Libraries, East Tennessee State University; Co-Chair, Feminist Task Force

"I take the role of the Social Responsibilities Round Table very seriously. SRRT acts as a kind of conscience for ALA, reminding our members and our organization's leaders that we have responsibilities to society at large. My political and ethical concerns for our profession include issues of feminism, ecological/environmental awareness and activism, and a concern for ensuring that progressive materials are a part of all balanced library collections."

- **Al Kagan** — Africana Studies Bibliographer & Professor, University of Illinois Library; Illinois Librarians for Social Responsibility Forum Representative to SRRT Action Council

"As a long-time member of the SRRT Action Council, I want to continue my activism on the Action Council. I think my historical knowledge of SRRT and the organization and workings of ALA is valuable in promoting our work. My international experience is helpful in advocating SRRT positions and writing SRRT resolutions. At the recent Boston meeting, the ALA Council finished its business in record time. This shows that we are not as active as we should be. We should be presenting more to the ALA Council and making its members debate the issues. This is an educational process and may help promote progressive concerns even if we lose the votes. I advocate a strong and principled SRRT presence in ALA, and opposition to any ALA Executive Board policies designed to restrain our activities, including the One Voice Policy, the prohibition of units endorsing ALA candidates, and prohibition against boycotts."

- **Mike Marlin*** — Library Manager, Braille and Talking Book Library, California State Library; SRRT Coordinator-Elect, assuming office as Coordinator at the close of ALA Annual 2010

"There is so much more work to do to engender fairness, inclusiveness, and social justice within ALA. This means focusing on hardcore library issues such as "neutrality" and bias, library instruction, privatization, corporate influence, government secrecy, collections philosophy, and other integral causes such as labor rights, economical and environmental resource depletion, political complacency,

the effect of war on library access and destruction, and much more. To quote Katharine J. Phoenix and Kathleen de la Pena McCook: "All librarian work should be in service of the freedom of information and development of human capabilities." SRRT continues to balance the intellectual with the humane, and I'm happy to continue to contribute energy to the cause."

- **Maria Mauras-Roberts** — SRRT member-at-large

"Having witnessed both member interests, grievances & sadly racial biases of library board members towards the requests of community patrons, I feel a duty and need to become involved in a greater capacity to offer my views as a minority to better help associations and community members have better access to reading materials."

- **Emily Puckett** — 2010 MSI candidate, University of Michigan

"As an emerging professional in the information field, I strive to bring social awareness and a sense of responsibility to any activity in which I am involved. I came to librarianship with a drive to proactively and effectively improve the quality of life of the people I serve and I believe that all librarians should be activists. Not only are librarians responsible for fostering and protecting intellectual freedom, but we are also responsible for encouraging civic engagement and ensuring that those we serve are provided with ample tools for empowerment and self expression. I am interested in fostering the development of libraries as community centers and institutions that create awareness of civic engagement and in providing opportunities for locally specific deliberative dialogues. Providing an intellectual and physical place for the community to enact its cultures is a responsibility that all libraries should encourage and support with their resources and expertise."

- **Tom Twiss*** — Government Information Librarian, University of Pittsburgh; SRRT liaison to the Government Documents Round Table

"I have been active in SRRT since 2001, and have served two terms on Action Council--once as chair of the International Responsibilities Task Force, and once as an at-large member. While most of my work has focused on international concerns, I'm strongly committed to the larger perspective that emphasizes social responsibility as a core value that should inform all of our activities as librarians. I'm proud of what SRRT has accomplished in promoting this perspective within ALA in the past, and I look forward to helping SRRT continue this work in the future."

- **Julie Winkelstein** — PhD candidate, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN; SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board member

"My major concern as both a librarian and a library science doctoral student is the future of public libraries. My 20 years as a public librarian, in particular my work in jails and literacy, has shaped how I view libraries and the roles they can and do play. I believe public libraries are integral parts of their communities and that the only way they can continue to exist is by working side by side with other community agencies. Public libraries are needed now more than ever, as disparities in health, income, opportunities and power continue to challenge our society, and the social justice aspect of librarianship must be recognized, supported and celebrated. What we do as public librarians is essential as we continue to provide a link between those with less privilege and the resources they need. It is our responsibility to serve the needs of everyone in our communities."

"I'm running for SRRT AC because I would like to play a part in the evolution of this round table. I am currently a provisional member of the SRRT Newsletter editorial board and I'm glad to be contributing

in this small way to SRRT's goals and position in ALA. I am an active and strong believer in the power and importance of public libraries and as AC member I would continue to emphasize the role public libraries play in rectifying some of the disparities and inequalities in our society. I see public libraries as the future of the United States and I am passionate about the need for public librarians to create more community partnerships so we can work side-by-side with other agencies, making ourselves more effective and indispensable, while at the same time highlighting the critical contributions we have made and continue to make."

There are also several SRRT Members who are running for ALA Council. These individuals are:

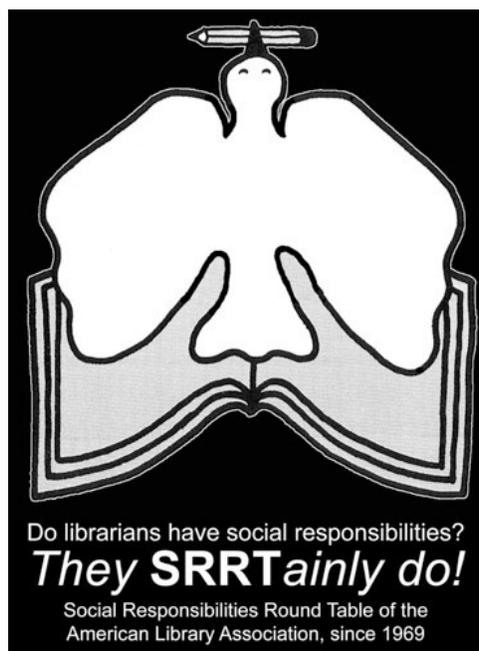
- Loida Garcia-Febo
- Janice Greenberg
- Charles Katz
- Mary Mallory
- Bernard Margolis
- Mike Marlin
- Melora Norman
- Larry Romans
- Tom Wilding

Biographies for all Councilor-at-large candidates are available online in PDF format from the ALA website (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/2010/councilors_at_large_.pdf).

Also, read the minutes from the Action Council II Meeting for an overview of presentations made by ALA presidential candidates Molly Raphael and Sara Kelly Johns.

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SRRT T-Shirts Available for Purchase



Help SRRT raise money by purchasing a t-shirt. Buy one of these t-shirts that come in either black or olive.

If you'd like to purchase a t-shirt, please email LaJuan Pringle with your shirt size and choice of color.

The shirts are \$20. Shipping and handling is included.

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Coordinator's Column

by LaJuan Pringle



As I sit down to write this article, I find myself moved by certain events that are taking place in my own little world in very real time. My library system, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, recently announced they would be closing 12 locations and promptly sending pink slips to approximately 150 of my colleagues. Thanks to the public's rallying cry, our crisis was averted—for now. But I now understood the pain of what libraries in other municipalities are going through. And I could relate to news of cuts in funding for libraries in California and Florida in a way that had escaped me before. As this situation seemed to engulf every moment of my existence, I sat in front of a television and watched the U.S. House of Representatives prepare to pass legislation that would dramatically impact how many Americans receive health care. As I ponder how the bill would work, especially for impoverished and jobless citizens, I have to wonder: what has happened to that

tenet of democracy that is "for the people"? I'm forced to consider the many libraries and schools that have been shuttered in part to real estate schemes (heartily endorsed by big banks) that have tanked and now taken the American economy with it. I also think about how insurance companies have been able to influence legislation that enables them to have the upper hand on health care law with little regard to the poor and working class people who will end up paying for it. And while I'm encouraged that health care legislation has passed, I still have to wonder where justice is.

It's through this prism that I find myself concerned about the state of democracy not only in our country, but through legislative bodies like Congress and organizations whose goals are to defend democracy. I'm especially concerned about SRRT needing to defend its own actions taken in lieu of the Boston Hyatt Hotel boycott that were addressed during the 2010 Midwinter Conference. SRRT has been very amenable to hearing the American Library Association's concerns about why we as a group could not be viewed as officially endorsing the boycott. But I'd also like to think that the Association, that we're all proud to be members of, would understand the value of free speech. It's important to note that following the rule of law doesn't necessarily mean it is right or just. And individual members of SRRT should be allowed to express their concerns—even if they do so in a collective manner. I hope that our beloved Association realizes that they can't defend intellectual freedom and free speech for users of its libraries if its members aren't given those same opportunities to express themselves. SRRT must be able to fight for what we believe is right.

Peace,
LaJuan Pringle

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GreeNotes: News from the Task Force on the Environment

by Fred Stoss, TFOE Chair

Happy 40th Anniversary Earth Day!

This year, on April 22, we will be celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day. The University at Buffalo, SUNY maintains a cyber-exhibit on Earth Day: <http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/exhibits/earthday.html> (<http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/exhibits/earthday.html>). It includes a comprehensive history of Earth Day and the contemporary environmental movement, as well as many helpful links for adults and children wanting to learn more about observing Earth Day. Please share this site with your colleagues and patrons this Earth Day.



Al Gore delivering the 11th annual Arthur Curley Memorial Lecture. Photo courtesy of Nancy Garmer.

Al Gore at ALA Midwinter

Nobel laureate, Oscar winner, and former Vice-President Al Gore addressed the ALA Midwinter Meeting at the Arthur Curley Memorial Lecture on January 16, 2010. *American Libraries* has made a video of the lecture available online in nine parts:

- Part 1 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-1)
- Part 2 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-2)
- Part 3 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-3)
- Part 4 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-4)
- Part 5 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-5)
- Part 6 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-6)
- Part 7 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-7)
- Part 8 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-8)
- Part 9 (http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al_focus/al-gore-ala-midwinter-2010-part-9)

Gore also gave a compelling, exclusive interview to Leonard Kniffel of *American Libraries*. The full interview can be found at <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/newsmaker-al-gore> (<http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/newsmaker-al-gore>).

Bluewashing

bluewashing (noun): The dissemination of misleading information to consumers about the environmental bona fides of certain fish. See <http://www.thefoodsection.com/foodsection/2010/02/bluewashing-1.html> (<http://www.thefoodsection.com/foodsection/2010/02/bluewashing-1.html>)

Add a new word to your environmental lexicon: Bluewash/Bluewashing. Nearly every food market or grocery store into which I walk, I am bombarded by signs proclaiming how green their products are. Stands of paper goods, food, beverages, cleaning products with a banner or sign touting how "green," "environmentally friendly," "Earth friendly," "sustainability minded," or "responsibly sourced," they are. While it is great to see such local and regional stores alerting their customers to thinking and shopping from a greener perspective, I often wonder who is evaluating the shades of "green" being projected.

Which brings me to the word "bluewashing." There are numerous accounts in the popular media and general interest magazine racks about declining populations of fish stocks. Once thought plentiful in the world's oceans, over fishing and commercial fishing techniques are rapidly decimating fish stocks. If you see such signs or banners at the fish market or fish counter, a yellow flag of "BUYER BEWARE," should be waving in your mind. There is a tremendous amount of mislabeling going on as to how "sustainable" are those stocks of seafood from which tonight's fish banquet is selected.

There are not enough answers to the questions about making an educated choice. There are, however, a few resources from which to learn more and to teach the users of your libraries about the realities of eco-friendliness:

Beware of "Bluewash:" Which Fish Should You Buy? (<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20527425.000-beware-of-bluewash-which->)

Bluewashing (<http://schott.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/04/bluewashing/>)

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx>)

Seafood Watch Pocket Guides, also from Monterey Bay Aquarium (http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/cr_seafoodwatch/download.aspx)

Sea Food Selector: Make Smart Choices When Eating Seafood (<http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1521>)

When Going Green (for you) Means Going Hungry (for others)

Up to 100 million people in developing countries could go hungry as a result of European Union biofuel

targets, according to a report. EU countries have a target to generate 10% of transportation fuels from renewable sources, such as jatropha, sugar cane and palm oil crops, by 2020. Two-thirds of these crops are expected to be grown in developing countries. As a result these countries will lose large areas of farmland and food prices will soar, according to a recent report by ActionAid. The report's author, Tim Rice, warns that an increase in biofuel production boosted by generous EU subsidies will accelerate the food crisis in developing countries. The International Monetary Fund estimates that biofuels were responsible for up to 30 per cent of the global food price spike in 2008.

You can also read this bulletin online at: <http://www.panos.org.uk/?lid=22920> (<http://www.panos.org.uk/?lid=22920>)

Bottom Line: Reduce the need for transportation fuels: encourage walking, bicycling, mass transit, better CAFE standards, safer small cars.

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2010 Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration

Report of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force

by Virginia B. Moore, MLKTF Chair

Out of Boston's early morning winter cold and into a room with a beautifully arranged and delectable continental breakfast (sponsored by World Book, Inc. and greatly appreciated), attendees of the King Holiday Celebration were launched into the warm spirit of this traditional event. During her welcome, Virginia Moore, SRRT MLK Holiday Task Force Chair, announced that this was the final such occasion occurring on this holiday in concurrence with the ALA Council directive to have no more Midwinter Meetings on the King Federal Holiday. However, the annual Sunrise Celebration will continue to honor the legacy and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his impact on access and equality in libraries with the sponsorship of the SRRT Martin Luther King Holiday Task Force, The Black Caucus-ALA, The World Book, Inc., and the ALA Office of Literacy and Outreach Services.

In another showcase of diversity, this year's program was a tribute to the Late Dr. E.J. Josey, whose passing on July 3, 2009 was acknowledged and mourned throughout the library and civil rights world of acquaintance. The laudation honored him as founder of the Black Caucus-ALA and for his establishment of the National Library Involvement Committee of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission that is now the ALA SRRT Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force.

As in the past, the welcome was followed by the audience singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing," led by R. Joshua Reynolds, Boston University Class '11 Vocal Performance. ALA President Camila Alire extended greetings for the occasion with note of Dr. E.J. Josey and a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She was followed by ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels; Jennifer Parello, World Book, Inc.; and Loida Garcia Febo, President, National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos & the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA).



Mitch Freedman addresses the Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration. Photo courtesy of Nancy Garmer.

Angela Barnes, Chair of the OLOS Advisory Committee, introduced the morning's featured speaker: Dr. Maurice J. (Mitch) Freedman, Past ALA President (2002-2003) and Publisher of *The Unabashed Librarian* (<http://www.unabashedlibrarian.com/>). Dr. Freedman's speech was one of admiration, praise, and sincerity that reflected the long years of his professional and personal memory and association with Dr. Josey as well as their mutual comradeship and respect. Download a PDF of his speech from ALA (<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/olos/olosprograms/mlkceleb/MLKFreedman2010.pdf>).

Continuing the voices of ALA's diversity, leaders from ALA's Diversity Associations, RoundTables, Committees, and Spectrum Scholarship Recipients shared quotes from both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dr. E. J. Josey. In closing, Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako), Co-Chair of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration from the Black Caucus ALA, quoted Dr. E. J. Josey and shared a poem Dr. Josey included in his 1998 speech at the National Sankofa Council on Educating Black Children: "I Dream a World" by Langston Hughes. R. Joshua Reynolds then led the circled audience in singing, "We Shall Overcome."

With deepest appreciation to all of the program participants and attendees, I would like to offer special acknowledgements to: Satia M. Orange, ALA OLOS Director (Retired) for continuing consultation; Andrew P. Jackson, Co-Chair, ALA Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Sunrise Celebration (2004 -), Past President, The Black Caucus-ALA, as the compiler/writer of the scripts for themed quotations provided for program participants; World Book, Inc. for continuing and increased sponsorship; and Miguel Figueroa, Acting OLOS Director, and OLOS Staff.

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Alternative Media Task Force Plans Event for ALA Annual Conference

by Lyn Miller-Lachmann

The Alternative Media Task Force is planning a "Pilgrimage" to Busboys & Poets Cafe on Friday, June 25, 2010. We have tentatively scheduled the meeting time for 5-7 p.m. at the original Busboys & Poets Cafe, 2021 14th St. NW (14th and V Sts.), Washington, DC 20009. We will tour the Teaching for Change bookstore, which sells progressive books, CDs, and DVDs from a variety of alternative publishers, and share information with local alternative publishers over drinks and dinner. There is no admission charge; food and drink are a la carte. All are invited.

Busboys & Poets is an important community gathering place in the DC area. First established in 2005, Busboys & Poets was created by owner Anas "Andy" Shallal, an Iraqi-American artist, activist, and

restaurateur. After Shallal opened the flagship location at 14th and V Streets, NW, the neighboring residents and the progressive community embraced Busboys, especially activists opposed to the Iraq War. Busboys & Poets is now located in three distinctive neighborhoods in the Washington Metropolitan area and is a community resource for artists, activists, writers, thinkers, and dreamers. You may read more at their web site, www.busboysandpoets.com (<http://www.busboysandpoets.com>).

For more information about the "Pilgrimage" and to let us know you're coming so we can reserve enough tables, please contact Lyn Miller-Lachmann at [mcreview\(at\)aol.com](mailto:mcreview(at)aol.com) or 518-729-3976. If you are an alternative publisher, there will be time to speak to those in attendance about your work.

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Councilor's Report from ALA Midwinter 2010

by Tiffani Conner, SRRT Councilor

Editor's Note: Ms. Conner's in-depth ALA Council Report is available as a supplement to this issue. Please download the 8-page PDF file (</rt/sites/ala.org/rt/files/content/SRRT/Newsletters/srtr170supp.pdf>) for full coverage of what happened at the Midwinter 2010 ALA Council Meetings. The report is also available from the SRRTAC-L archive, January 27, 2010. You must be a subscriber to the SRRTAC-L listserv to access the archive. Visit <http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/srtrac-l> (<http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/srtrac-l>) for more information and to subscribe.

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Resolution in Support of National Health Care

Adopted by SRRT Action Council, January 16, 2010

Whereas, the United States Congress is currently considering legislation reforming national health care;

Whereas, the American Library Association (ALA) Council first endorsed a single-payer universal health insurance bill at the Annual Conference in 1992 (Exhibit 26B);

Whereas, ALA Council recognized the importance of comprehensive health care for all Americans and its impact on libraries and their users, and joined the Universal Health Care Action Network in 2005 (2004-2005 ALA CD #39, ALA Policy Manual 54.20); and

Whereas, ALA recently reaffirmed its support for affordable universal health care, including the option of a single-payer health care program (2008-2009 ALA CD#54); now, therefore be it

Resolved, that:

1. the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of the American Library Association (ALA) strongly urges the United States Congress to include a public option or "Medicare for All" provision in the current legislation; and

2. SRRT urges the ALA Executive Director to charge the ALA Washington Office to vigorously lobby Congress in support of this position.

Moved by Mike Marlin. Seconded by Marie Jones.

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Resolution for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration

Adopted by SRRT Action Council, January 18, 2010

We Resolve to establish a committee that includes the SRRT Coordinator, a SRRT Action Councilor, Chair of the MLK Task Force and a representative from the MLK Task Force to plan the MLK Sunrise Celebration with the Black Caucus.

Moved by Marie Jones. Seconded by Jane Glasby.

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Minutes from Action Council Meeting I

Saturday, January 16, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. in Boston, Massachusetts

Meeting Called to Order at 10:48 a.m.

Introductions — The following SRRT members were present:

LaJuan Pringle, SRRT Coordinator

Mike Marlin, SRRT Coordinator-Elect

Nancy Garmer, SRRT Secretary

Tiffani Connor, SRRT Representative to ALA Council

Lavonda Kay Broadnax, SRRT Action Council Member

Jaime Hammond, SRRT Action Council Member

Alison Lewis, SRRT Action Council Member

Tom Twiss, SRRT Action Council Member

Fred Stoss, Task Force on the Environment Representative

Marie Jones, Feminist Task Force Representative

Jane Glasby, International Responsibilities Task Force Representative

Virginia Moore, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force Representative

Nel Ward, Rainbow Project Task Force Representative

Julie Winklestein, SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board Candidate

Herb Biblo

Mary Biblo

Al Kagan

Katharine Phenix

Teresa Tobin

Boston Hyatt & SRRT's Right to Assemble — Miguel Figueroa, Interim Director of OLOS, spoke to Action

Council about the current SRRT list discussion regarding the employee dispute at the Boston Hyatt and SRRT's right to assemble.



Individuals from the SRRT Membership discuss boycotting the Boston Hyatt. Photo courtesy of Al Kagan.

Miguel spoke to issues addressed on the srrtac-l list and attempted to answer his interpretation of SRRT's primary questions. He said ALA had a contractual agreement with the Hyatt and there was no way to get out of the contracts without incurring great costs. ALA does have a labor clause in its contracts, but the Hyatt is a non-union hotel, so ALA could not invoke that clause. He stated that if member groups did not want to stay there or meet there, they could change venues - GLBRT, REFORMA and SRRT all wrote that in and changed venues. Miguel questioned the active organization of a boycott on the discussion list. ALA's only concern is the legal implications for ALA. The lawyers advised that based on case law, a boycott could be construed as anti-trust and a commercial boycott could be construed as price-fixing. Any action done as an individual is fine, but not as an as an ALA entity which SRRT is.

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that ALA says what SRRT is not allowed to do, but the lawyers do not explain what SRRT should do to accomplish our goals. Action Council members asked for a list of things that can be done. Al Kagan produced the 2001 SRRT Resolution on ALA and the Marriott Boycott which called for SRRT to participate in the Marriott Boycott. ALA Council did not pass that resolution, but SRRT and ALA Council members picketed and there was no talk of restraint of trade. In this case of the Boston Hyatt, however, SRRT was prevented from taking any boycott action at the Action Council meetings by the ALA Executive Board.

Again, the One Voice policy was disputed as nonexistent. A request was made to produce the policy or stop referring to it.

Resolution in Honor of the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund's 40th Anniversary — Jim Kuhn of the Intellectual Freedom Committee asked for SRRT endorsement of the Resolution in Honor of the Leroy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund's 40th Anniversary. Jim submitted the resolution to Action Council members for review electronically prior to Midwinter and did not have paper copies available at the meeting. Al Kagan moved to endorse the resolution with the caveat that the lack of paper copies should not serve as a precedent for considering future resolutions. Marie Jones seconded. Motion passed.

Subsequently, this resolution passed at ALA Council.

Resolution on Health Care — Al Kagan produced a new Resolution in Support of National Health Care. A SRRT resolution was passed by ALA Council last year with text that called for either a single payer or public option. This version of the resolution reiterated the fact that at minimum we need a public option. The intent was for Council to pass the resolution opening the door for the ALA Washington Office to vigorously lobby the government. Both previous versions of the ALA health care resolutions were presented to Council with this version.

Mike Marlin moved to adopt this as a SRRT resolution and then pass on to ALA Council. Marie Jones

seconded. Motion passed.

Subsequently, this resolution did not pass at ALA Council.

Carrie Russell - Discussion on Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE) — Carrie Russell, Office of Information Technology Policy (OITP), asked for the SRRT endorsement of the Resolution to Endorse the Statement of Principles “Librarianship and Traditional Cultural Expressions: Nurturing Understanding and Respect.” The resolution was a culmination of 14 months of discussions to ask ALA to recognize principles that are unique to TCE.

This resolution was written in anticipation of an international question regarding copyright treaty. Libraries are already working with tribal communities to collaborate. This resolution outlines how ALA should respond to be respectful of cultures. Marie Jones moved to endorse the resolution. Al Kagan seconded. Motion passed.

This resolution was withdrawn from the floor at ALA Council Midwinter 2010.

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Breakfast — Ginny Moore provided a status update of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration. There is currently no resolution regarding SRRT's ownership of the MLK breakfast or a structural process in place to collaborate with other organizations. The BCALA established a new committee to work on this.

A call for volunteers brought together a group of SRRT action councilors and members to create a resolution to define the role of the MLK task force and SRRT in the Holiday Celebration.

2010 Elections and SRRT Vacancies — LaJuan reported that four Action Council seats are coming up for election in 2010. LaJuan will send out a call for potential candidates via the SRRTMEM list.

Discussion followed regarding a published list of SRRT members who are running for Council. Diedre Conkling of the Feminist Task Force, has in past years, compiled a list gathered from candidate biographies. SRRT will also publish a list of SRRT members running for Council to the SRRTMEM list and via the newsletter.

SRRT Membership Committee and Chair — Elaine Harger resigned as the SRRT Membership Chair. Jane Glasby volunteered to be on the committee with standing member Nancy Garmer. LaJuan reported that he, as the outgoing coordinator, will take on the responsibility of Membership Chair effective after the 2010 annual conference.

SRRT T-shirts — SRRT has many T-shirts left to sell which is money much-needed. A standing advertisement needs to appear in the SRRT newsletter and all members should actively pursue means to distribute the shirts to generate sales.

Additional Business — Jamie Hammond volunteered to start a new member's orientation for SRRT beginning Midwinter 2011. The orientation will encourage new members to participate and be modeled after New Members meeting and/or socials.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 p.m.

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Minutes from Action Council Meeting II

Monday, January 18, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. in Boston, Massachusetts

Meeting Called to Order at 8:10 a.m.

Introductions — The following SRRT members were present:

LaJuan Pringle, SRRT Coordinator

Mike Marlin, SRRT Coordinator-Elect

Sue Dillinger, SRRT Treasurer, via telephone

Nancy Garmer, SRRT Secretary

Tiffani Connor, SRRT Representative to ALA Council

Myka Kennedy Stephens, SRRT Newsletter Editor, via telephone

Lavonda Kay Broadnax, SRRT Action Council Member

Jaime Hammond, SRRT Action Council Member

Alison Lewis, SRRT Action Council Member

Tom Twiss, SRRT Action Council Member

Fred Stoss, Task Force on the Environment Representative

Marie Jones, Feminist Task Force Representative

Jane Glasby, International Responsibilities Task Force Representative

Virginia Moore, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force Representative

Julie Winklestein, SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board Candidate

Mary Biblo

Joan Goddard

Al Kagan

Teresa Tobin

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Breakfast Follow Up — Action Council reviewed the new MLK Task Force and SRRT resolution presented by Teresa Tobin and Ginny Moore. The resolution called to establish a committee that includes the SRRT Coordinator, a SRRT Action Councilor, Chair of the MLK Task Force and a representative from the MLK task force to plan the MLK Sunrise Celebration with the Black Caucus. Marie Jones resoundingly moved to adopt the resolution and Jane Glasby seconded. Motion passed.

ALA Presidential Candidates — ALA 2010-2011 Presidential Candidates Molly Raphael and Sara Kelly Johns both visited to introduce themselves and their platforms. Both candidates were asked for their opinions about the Hyatt boycott. Sara Kelly Johns said she was on the picket line in San Francisco.

It was suggested that the wording be changed in the ALA contracts to “labor” disputes instead of “union” disputes to cover ALA contractually in the future. Likewise, free wireless should be a point of negotiation with all ALA conference hotels and should be included in the hotel contracts.

Mary Biblo noted that although social responsibility was listed as a core value on the December 2009 draft of ALA's strategic plan, the version she received at the membership meeting on Sunday did not have it listed. This needs to be followed up on.

(As of 3/16/10, the March 2010 draft of the ALA 2015 Strategic Plan (http://www.ftrf.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/2015/2015_strategic_plan_march_2010_version%20.pdf) does include Social responsibility and the public good as one of the Core Organizational Values.)

Budgets — Treasurer Susan Dillinger sent the Midwinter 2010 Budget Report which reported a loss of membership. LaJuan stated that SRRT membership has lost over 300 members from over 2100 members last year to over 1800 members this year. A new or different business model is necessary. Most of the decline was in regular memberships not student memberships.

Sue was phoned in to address budget questions. SRRT budgeted \$10K for membership dues for the fiscal year September 2009 - August 2010. SRRT has a balance of \$2,479.97 as of the first quarter budget report.

Susan stated that the report is cumulative, not just quarterly and the budget will roll over if there are monies left to roll over.

Budget discussion ensued regarding what conference costs SRRT has to pay for. Conference costs need to be clarified to work within our budget. Equipment rental is always very expensive.

Sue suggested not accepting any more budget request for the 2011 conference. MLKTF and IRTF already turned in budgets for 2011 both of which are within projected revenues.

A motion was made to approve the SRRT 2011 budget as submitted by Treasurer Sue Dillinger. Motion passed.

SRRT Newsletter: Proposed Bylaw Changes / SRRT Editorial Policy / Cuba — Action Council phoned in Newsletter Editor Myka Kennedy Stephens to discuss the proposed changes to the by-laws which include the establishment of an editorial board and to discuss the proposed SRRT newsletter editorial policy.

Myka also submitted a summary of the history of SRRT newsletters to Action Council. Myka reported that the intent of establishing an editorial board and defining editorial policy and job responsibilities is to provide a guiding, published policy for incoming and existing members and contributors.

Vigorous discussion ensued regarding the proposed by-law changes and editorial policy, the role of Action Council in the newsletter and the proposal to highlight key topics in each issue of the newsletter beginning with Cuba as the first proposed topic.

Marie Jones moved to accept the current slate of names for the editorial board until the bylaws can be amended and voted on. Al Kagan seconded. Motion passed.

The Editorial Board currently consists of, Gerardo Colmenar, Erik Estep, Alison Lewis, Heather Stone and Julie Winkelstein.

A motion was made to continue the discussion of all by-law changes, revisions and amendments, including regarding electing a coordinator-elect at Action Council II of the Annual Conference, electronically on ALA Connect and vote on the issues prior to Annual if possible. Motion passed.

Action Council also elected to continue discussing business electronically and determine if Action Council can vote electronically between conferences.

Marie Jones stated that she will begin updating the ALA SRRT webpage shortly.

Action Council II adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

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Renewing a Lively and Provocative Newsletter

By Myka Kennedy Stephens, Editor

A newsletter is intended to be a publication featuring news and events of special interest to a particular group of people. Over the last several months, the newly formed editorial team of the SRRT Newsletter has been attempting to take an assortment of unofficial statements and practices and craft them into a cohesive and clearly defined editorial policy, to formalize newsletter operations, to make transparent the inner workings of editorial policy, and to enable smoother transitions of leadership in future. All the while, we faced sharp

criticism and suspicion from some active SRRT members who were deeply concerned over our desire to feature the conversation about Cuban libraries and independent Cuban librarians in this issue. As editor of this newsletter, I would like to share my vision for the *SRRT Newsletter* and how this issue came to be.

When I made application to become the next editor of the *SRRT Newsletter*, I found myself curiously enchanted by one phrase used to describe the newsletter on our old website: “lively and provocative.” As a relatively new member of SRRT, I did not find the newsletter to be particularly lively and hardly provocative; it mostly contained accounts of what had happened at one conference and what would happen at the next conference. I enjoyed learning about the various task forces through their reports and the reviews were often enlightening, but most of the lively and provocative dialogue in SRRT was happening on the listserv. When I was named editor, I began to imagine the ways in which the newsletter could once again become lively and provocative in the face of a digital age in which most would rather voice opinions on a listserv than write a letter to the editor. This phrase has grown to haunt me as I attempt to open the newsletter to more substantive dialogue and debate on current issues in librarianship and social responsibilities.

My first issue of the *SRRT Newsletter* (December 2008) had to be pulled from the presses at the last minute because of late-breaking news related to the accidental automatic subscription of all SRRT members to and subsequent temporary shut-down of the srrtac-l listserv. Living through this experience and seeing it through the eyes of a journalist alerted me to the communications issues we face in SRRT. We have many members who feel quite passionately about specific social justice issues and feel free to share information and opinions with those subscribed to srrtac-l. The result is a listserv that generates a fair amount of email for its subscribers, an average of 90 messages per month from March 2009-February 2010. Today, srrtac-l has only 131 subscribers—just 7% of the total round table membership. There is a vast amount of news-sharing and discussion happening on the listserv that the majority of our membership never hears. As editor, I see this as an opportunity for the newsletter to become more proactive in the reporting of SRRT news and activities.

To expand the scope of news reporting beyond publishing task force reports, minutes, and conference agendas requires an editorial policy to guide the process. A provisional editorial board was formed at the end of October 2009 by volunteers who responded to a post on srrtac-l. We quickly got to work formulating our policy and discussing the direction of the newsletter. Simultaneously, I had already begun to enact my vision of bringing some of the discussion from the listserv to the newsletter by gauging interest in potential contributors to a focus on Cuban libraries. My goal was ambitious: to provide an objective history and overview of Cuban/U.S. relations, a point/counterpoint debate on the issue of independent Cuban librarians, and an article on the social responsibilities of librarianship as illustrated by the Bookmobile to Cuba project.

As I began to approach people whom I thought might be willing to submit something for consideration, I unexpectedly encountered a great deal of resistance. For many who have been on the front lines of the Cuba debates for the last decade, there is a strong consensus that everything has been said and there is no need to say any more about it. This stance has left many newer SRRT members confused when a discussion on Cuba erupts on the listserv. What I hoped this coverage in the newsletter could accomplish would be to create a resource of current and reliable information sources for newer members to consult. Despite consistent reassurances from members of the editorial board and myself, we were seen with a great deal of suspicion, our motives questioned, and our allegiances thrown into doubt by a coalition of members from the International Responsibilities Task Force.

At the deadline for this issue, we had received only two submissions for our treatment of SRRT and Cuba. Steve Marquardt and Elaine Harger submitted essays from opposing sides of the independent Cuban librarians debate. These essays were rejected for publication and do not appear in this issue. While there are multiple reasons why we did not find these submissions suitable for publication, the editorial team determined that ultimately these essays did not jointly offer a positive, straight-forward examination of the multiple sides of

this issue that would clear the confusion of a SRRT member new to the debate. Our examination of Cuba in this issue has thus been reduced to a single editorial.

Reflecting on the arduous process of producing this issue, I can see where mistakes were made and I will readily admit to them. I am passionately committed to the idea that this newsletter is the voice of SRRT membership and that any member has the right to submit material to our editorial board. This is not a guarantee that we will publish everything we receive, but a guarantee that every member has an equal opportunity to be published. In my efforts to bring some of the discussions from the listserv to the newsletter, I neglected to realize that I was making the newsletter a reflection of our editorial voice instead of the voices of the membership. This is just as dangerous and undesirable as a newsletter that exclusively reflects the voice of Action Council, which is too eerily reminiscent of a government-controlled press.

Our editorial policy will be the main topic of discussion at the online Action Council meeting, scheduled to be held via-OPAL on Saturday, April 3. At this time, I am uncertain if this "Op-Ed" section will become a mainstay of the *SRRT Newsletter*. I will, however, assert with confidence that the current editorial team values the opinions and thoughts of all SRRT members. Please share them with us so that together we can once again make our newsletter lively and provocative, sharing with each other and the world how important it is to be a socially responsible librarian.

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Cuban Libraries and the Controversy Over Independent Cuban Librarians: Sifting Through Resources to Form Educated Opinions

By Julie Winkelstein, Editorial Board Member

I'm a new member of SRRT and I'm also a member of this newsletter's editorial board. I joined SRRT because of the mission statement and simply the name itself. How could a progressive, social activist librarian not want to join something called the Social Responsibilities Round Table? To be surrounded by people who are willing to stand up for what they believe in? People who believe passionately in freedom of speech and equal access to all kinds of information? SRRT seemed like the right place to find an outlet for my interests and a place to listen and be heard.

Taking on the topic of the Cuban librarians has given me a fast introduction to the strong feelings that can exist around an issue. After much discussion, the editor and the editorial board decided to put the Cuba issue back on the table. In our discussions and information gathering, it became apparent there are many members of SRRT who are confused by the issue and we decided we'd like to help with that confusion.

I don't have the institutional knowledge of this topic that many do. So what I'm offering is a brief summary of the information that is available and how to find it. As you read, you'll see that indeed this has been a topic of discussion for many years. For instance, the timeline (mentioned below) goes back to 1998, when husband and wife Ramon Colas and Berta Mexidor opened up their own home library in Cuba to begin the Cuban Independent Library movement. Whether or not these are truly libraries, run by real librarians, is one of the questions being addressed in this ongoing debate.

I'll begin with a quote from a SRRT 2004 newsletter (see page 22) (<http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org/rt/files/content/SRRT/Newsletters/srrt146.pdf>). In her introduction to a list of suggested books on Cuba, Ann Sparanese says:

SRRT and the ALA Council had to deal with the issue of Cuba over the last two years, primarily because of the arrests and convictions of individuals on the island calling themselves "independent librarians." Trying to understand the situation in a country 'so near and yet so far' from us requires more than average effort. It can't all be summarized, let alone understood, with the words "Fidel Castro."

In 2003, Felicia Lee wrote an article for The New York Times about the Cuban librarians, after it came up at that year's annual ALA meeting. In her article, she mentions "competing versions of the truth" - a great phrase and perhaps apropos of this topic. She gives what I consider an even-handed look at this contentious topic. Take a look: "A Library in Cuba: What is It?" by Felicia R. Lee (<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/28/arts/a-library-in-cuba-what-is-it.html?pagewanted=2&pagewanted=print>).

Rory Litwin, on Library Juice, has provided a discussion of this topic (http://libr.org/juice/issues/vol3/LJ_3.4.sup.html#2). Included is a letter exchange on the same two points: Whether or not the Cuban Librarians are in fact librarians. In addition, Litwin has a translated piece (from Spanish) on his website called "Cuban and the Myth of the Independent Libraries." (http://libr.org/juice/issues/vol7/LJ_7.14.html#5) It is written by Salim Lamrani and translated by Dana Lubow. This essay gives the same information as many of the other resources but from a different viewpoint.

Next are resources provided by the International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF) (<http://www.pitt.edu/%7Ettwiss/irtf/cuba.html>). This is an extensive list of resources, including a 2003 letter to the Village Voice by librarian Lincoln Cushing, in which he makes the point that what Nat Hentoff "fails to mention is that our own government has sown the seeds of this problem by encouraging U.S. funding of opposition forces in Cuba." This same point about the U.S. government is made several other places in these readings but Cushing's is probably the most succinct. Unfortunately, some of the links are no longer functional, but the information that is there gives a good idea of the strong feelings that surround this issue.

The ALA website houses a clear overview on Cuba and ALA (http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/iro/iroactivities/ALA_print_layout_1_494389_494389.cfm) with a timeline. Peter McDonald, SRRT member-at-large and *Progressive Librarian* editorial board member, wrote "ALA's Stand on Cuba's Independent Libraries," published in the June/July 2008 issue of *American Libraries*.

Representing another perspective on this topic is the Friends of the Cuban Libraries website (<http://www.friendsofcubanlibraries.org/>). Although some of the links on this website are inactive, some do work. Reading through some of these articles can give a good idea of what this group supports.

There are many more resources, links, discussions, articles and comments on this topic, some of them in this newsletter. So, since it's easy to get overwhelmed, I'll stop there. I recommend that everyone who is interested in this topic take the time to read this newsletter and some of the material I've mentioned. It's a complex topic and after reading website after website, article after article, I had the strong urge - which is probably shared by the many who have been talking about this issue for years - to just turn off my computer and go read a good book. And maybe that's what some of you will do - throw up your hands in confusion, dismay or disgust. But for those of you who would like to come to a decision on your own, whether or not that prompts a particular action on your part or puts your confusion to rest, I encourage you to talk about it with fellow librarians and with people who aren't librarians, and come to your own conclusions. And let us know what you think - that's why we're here, putting out a newsletter. So we can put the topics on the table, mull them over, discuss them respectfully - perhaps learning something along the way - and be glad we all have opinions.

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Benoit, Gaetan. *Eugene Morel: Pioneer of Public Libraries in France*. Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2008.

Reviewed by Karen A. Weaver, Electronic Resources Statistician, Duquesne University; Adjunct Faculty, The iSchool at Drexel University

For those readers who enjoy new contributions to library history research, this 2008 re-issue of a 1977 thesis for the Library Association, UK is a valuable gem of information and further readings on the role of the public library in France, and especially children's library development. Recent contributions to *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, for example, and the scholarship of Drs. Mary Niles Maack, Christine Pawley, Wayne Wiegand, Noe Richter, Lara Jennifer Moore, and others reflect the continued interest and need for further research on lesser-known library pioneers such as Eugene Morel (1869-1934) and Gaetan Benoit (d. 1987), on the history of reading and libraries, and on the impact American library development and education has had on the international community in the modern era.

Benoit modestly states that this book attempts merely to trace the life of Eugene Morel and is meant to be a critical account of a French librarian who made a "remarkable contribution" toward the development of public librarianship in France. However, the reader will also gain valuable insights into the development of modern public libraries in France as well as the relationship between the American, British, and French library communities.

The book is divided into seven chapters: Morel's early years; the making of a librarian (1892-1900); "moving spirits" in the French library movement; Morel and library education; Morel and children's libraries; advocacy of public libraries; and Morel and legal deposit in France. In addition, there are ample citations and sources for further reading in the notes, an excellent bibliography, and an index (albeit with a minor error in pagination).

I found this book difficult to read at times, given some translation and editing problems, but there is fascinating reading in the chapters of special interest, such as library education, the French library movement, children's libraries in France and the development of L'Heure Joyeuse, along with Morel's niece Miss Marguerite Gruny, and the work of American librarians in France during these years (Jessie Carson, Alice O'Connor, Sarah Bogle, etc.).

There are also interesting insights into the contributions of English library pioneers such as Edward Edwards (Public Library Act of 1855) and W. C. Berwick-Sayers and his "Paris Pilgrimage" in 1923 who also admired the work of the American ladies in Paris for their public library outreach to children and adult learners. Benoit is correct in stating that Morel has not received the recognition owed him, and has placed Morel in the same professional company and esteem as Melvil Dewey and Edward Edwards.

Morel foresaw the progressive development of the free public library in France—that is, the concept that children's libraries were a social and educational instrument for self-instruction. Morel supported children's free access to browse among books—something that in France's "caste system" at the time was unheard of and highly controversial. He set up some of the first lecture courses for people who would be in charge of children's library work. He also used statistics and evidence to support his advocacy for public libraries and emphasized three aspects, which we still value today: first, needs analysis of the general public; second, organization of library work; and third, assessment of results.

This is a highly recommended volume to readers interested in the history of public libraries, development and education in American, British, and French public libraries, and concepts of public reading and self-instruction, from a French-Anglo perspective. One change I'd recommend is to add a better cover to this book: this reader felt it needs more color to make it more visually attractive.

N.B. Huguette Scarlatos-Brelaz wrote an additional thesis on Eugene Morel in 1979 titled *Un bibliothecaire: Eugene Morel (1869-1934): memoire dactylographie de l'Ecole Nationale Superieure des Bibliotheques (ENSB), Villeurbanne*. Also, a book published in 1994, *Eugene Morel (1869-1934) et la lecture publique: un prophete en son pays*, indicate perhaps renewed interest in Morel's contributions.

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Access to Oxygen: Environmental Justice Hits the Small Screen. Deep Dish TV, 2008.

Reviewed by Tracy Nectoux, Metadata and Quality Control Specialist, Illinois Newspaper Project, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

You gotta be able to face the rejection you're going to get when you get up in people's faces and say, 'Look, the planet is dying and you're responsible for it... The damn planet's dying, and it's your fault, because you ain't doin' nuthin' about it.

(Cordell Reagon, Eco-Cities Conference, 1990)

Access to Oxygen is part two of the Movement Perspectives on Critical Moments series from DIY Media. Like its predecessor, *Expression = Life* (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt-newsletter-issue-171-december-2009#16>), this DVD set contains four short documentaries filmed in the mid-1990s—a time when we were only just beginning to understand the results of a century of environmental abuse and neglect. Accompanying the documentaries are a screening compilation (ed. Mark Read, 2008) giving an overview of the series as well as a panel discussion made up of academics, environmental activists, and filmmakers.

Garbage (prod. Caryn Rogoff) explains the history of trash management in America. It was in the nineties that our decision to bury our trash in landfills finally caught up with us. Recycling was almost unheard of then; it certainly wasn't a household word or a way of life the way it is for many of us now. But by the end of the twentieth century, we'd noticed the environmental devastation caused by replacing our wetlands with landfills. We therefore returned to an earlier practice to combat our trash problem: incineration.

Garbage does a fine job of explaining unfamiliar terms like “toxic ash” and why incinerators are as environmentally harmful a solution as landfills (they offer only two options: toxic ash or pollution). It is stunning—and frustrating—to learn that 40% of garbage is recyclable, but as late as 1990, not a single newspaper in New York City was being printed on recycled paper.

Ada Gay Griffin's *Environmental Racism* highlights the heartbreaking reality that economically depressed neighborhoods or Native lands are the inevitable choice for building polluting industries and for housing our hazardous waste. Griffin interviews some of the victims of environmental racism, who don't conceal their anger and grief:

People show more love and concern for their dogs . . . for a tree that they will then convert into firewood than they do their own fellow human beings.

What's going on? I've been poisoned. I don't know who did it, but whoever did it, did not have a right to do it. Whoever did that, it was a criminal act. And we need to come to the realization that, I don't care how much money they have, how much power they have, whether or not they *are* a congressman or can *buy* them, that they do not have a right to do that.

I don't really think that my community counts . . . simply because we're little people. No one has any compassion in their heart for the people.

While the corporations make billions of dollars, they're killing us slowly.

These are the people who breathe polluted air and drink tainted water so that the rest of America doesn't have to. Their communities have the highest rates of asthma, cancer, and infant mortality. They know why they're suffering. But they also know they're not helpless to do anything about it.

Breathless (prods. Cathy Scott and Susan Levine) and *Toxic Wars* (prod. El Puente) show how grassroots community activism and strength in numbers can combat environmental and institutional racism.

In 1992, New York City announced plans to build eight incinerators in its poorest, most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Citizens from Greenpoint/Williamsburg, Brooklyn, South Bronx, Brooklyn Navy Yard, and West Harlem joined together, organized, and set about educating their neighbors and protesting the city's plans of using their areas "as a toxic sewage dump." Latino, African American, and Hassidic communities fought together for the first common goal that some of them could ever remember. And in June 1994, the granting of the permits necessary to begin construction on the proposed incinerators was delayed.

Breathless and *Toxic Wars* show the power behind community and grassroots organizing, but they caution that we "can't just organize once and say it's over. [We] have to keep organizing each generation."

Much of *Access to Oxygen* is dated. All of the events in these documentaries took place in the 1990s. These films do not present current statistics regarding global warming or discuss Plastic Island. These films document, rather, the *beginnings* of most of America's dawning recognition of the environmental crisis. This was a time when we first began understanding just how much garbage we generate. Americans were beginning to see with our eyes and smell with our noses that we could no longer live as if nothing we did affected anything-or anyone-else. We were beginning to worry, and we were beginning to get angry; fear and anger are always the catalysts to conversation and action. *Access to Oxygen* captures some of the first of these.

Each film in this collection would be a perfect supplementary instruction piece for courses in American History, Environmental Science, or Social Justice, whether high school or college. The panel discussion provides scholarly, current information from experts in the field. *Access to Oxygen* is recommended for both school and academic libraries.

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***Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai.* Marlboro, VT: Marlboro Productions, 2008.**

Reviewed by Nancy Churchill, Librarian, Clarence Public Library

Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking so that humanity stops threatening its life support system. We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds. And in the process, heal our own...

(*Wangari Maathai, Nobel Lecture* (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-lecture.html), *Nobel Prize Award Ceremony, Oslo, Sweden, December 10, 2004*)

Born in a mud-walled hut in the Central Highlands in Kenya in 1940, Wangari Maathai earned a Kennedy scholarship and was educated in the United States. She returned to Kenya in 1965 to find her birthplace environmentally degraded. Deforestation had a stranglehold on the country, malnutrition was rampant, and clean drinking water was increasingly unavailable. A stalwart member of the National Council of Women of Kenya (an umbrella organization for unifying women's groups throughout her country), Maathai's solution was to plant trees. Indigenous species of trees, if grown successfully, could provide nutritious food and a small income, and their roots would keep the soil from being washed away. In 1977, the Green Belt Movement (<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/>) emerged from Maathai's dedication, skillful organizing, and spirited encouragement. By 2004, 28,000,000 trees had been planted because of Maathai's efforts. She became the first environmentalist and the first woman in Africa to win the Nobel Peace Prize (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/index.html) for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy, and peace."

Much has been told and written about Maathai and her tireless efforts, including her triumphs, her disappointments, her grassroots struggles, the physical harm she has endured, and her far-reaching goals. Her life story is as changing and vibrant as the African clothing she always wears. Her work is organic and not easy to contain or simply describe.

Linda Merton and Alan Dater's documentary captures what Maathai's *Unbowed* (<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307275202>) and *Challenge for Africa* (<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307377401>) and other authors' *Paths to Peace* (http://us.penguin.com/nf/Book/BookDisplay/0,,9780525477341,00.html?Paths_to_Peace:_People_Who_Changed_the_World_Jane_Breskin_Zalben), *Speak Truth to Power* (<http://www.umbragegallery.com/blog/index.php?s=speak+truth+to+power>), *Wangari's Trees of Peace* (<http://childrenschoiceaward.wikispaces.com/Wangari's+Trees+of+Peace>), and *Flight of the Hummingbird* (<http://www.dmpibooks.com/book/flight-of-the-hummingbird>), although all laudable, could not. The film reveals precisely how Maathai and her fellow activists foster environmental stewardship, cultural awareness, and thoughtful civic participation. This multi-award-winning production is telling and to the point; its scenes, skillfully arranged and conveniently segmented, are real and gripping. Green Belt Movement workshops and events are shown in which participants become aware that their problems stem from wrong action and fear. They become empowered to improve their lives, understanding that blaming others is useless. "You cannot enslave a mind that knows itself. That values itself. That understands itself," Maathai explains.

Taking Root (<http://www.takingrootfilm.com/>) is *cinema verit* at its best; the story has a strength and beauty all its own. Its first-person accounts in English and Swahili express individuals' pride, suffering, empathy, hope, and commitment. The film with NTSC closed-captioning contains news footage of police brutality and

indigenous Africans tribes in native dress. PBS Independent Lens aired the broadcast version of this film in 2009. Its special edition version, reviewed here, contains many additional features with important historical, organizational, and cultural background information. Dater's cinematography is beautiful and not at all prettified. Samite Mulondo (<http://www.samite.com/about-samite/about-samite.html>), who composed the film's original soundtrack, explains that "writing music for this film was a healing experience in itself." Viewers of this important work cannot help but be changed.

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"Librarians for Human Rights" and "Union Librarian"

Reviewed by Kiyomi Deards, MSLIS candidate, Drexel University

"Librarians for Human Rights" (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/>) is a frequently updated blog maintained by members of the Librarians for Human Rights discussion group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HRLibs/>). The Librarians for Human Rights group was created in 2005 "to recognize the work librarians do to sustain, support, and defend human rights." The guiding light for Librarians for Human Rights' organization and content is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>), adopted December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In honor of the declaration's sixtieth anniversary, the Librarian for Human Rights Award was created; the first winner, Hamilton Public Library, was announced June 9, 2008 (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2008/06/hamilton-public-library-librarians-for.html>).

Hosted by Blogspot.com (<https://www.blogger.com/>), "Librarians for Human Rights" uses a standard gray professional Blogspot.com template with blog posts on the left and a navigation menu to the right. For those curious about specific librarians who have made a difference in the struggle for equity, there is a "work in progress" list of Librarians Who Made A Difference, with links to Web sites and articles about each individual. The navigation menu also has links to archives, associations, legal resources, publications, meetings, search engines, and other Web sites related to the pursuit of "freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

"Librarians for Human Rights" is rich in content: pieces written on such topics as Karazi and women's issues in Afghanistan (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2009/08/karzai-has-revived-talebans-barbarism.html>) contain point-by-point critiques; less well-known resources such as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives in Cambodia (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2009/09/tuol-sleng-genocide-museum-archives-in.html>) are covered in detail; and current events supporting human rights (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2010/02/affirming-fundamental-freedoms2010.html>), awards (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2010/02/beaverton-city-library-wins-human.html>), food (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/2010/02/end-food-deserts.html>) and environmental issues are reported. Any topic regarding the rights of human beings is fair game to be praised or critiqued. Many excellent resources for information on human rights are reviewed and highlighted within the blog itself.

The emphasis of the posts on "Librarians for Human Rights" is on providing a thoughtful analysis of human rights issues; the variety of resources highlighted makes this blog a useful resource for information on human rights issues from around the world and on the librarians who defend them.

RSS feed for Librarians for Human Rights (<http://justicelibraries.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default>)

"Union Librarian" (<http://unionlibrarian.blogspot.com/>) is a weekly blog sponsored by the Progressive Librarians Guild (<http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/>), and edited by Kathleen de la Pena McCook. The

Progressive Librarian's Guild exists to provide "a forum for the open exchange of radical views on library issues." The Union Librarian, as the name suggests, is mainly focused on union news and information concerning libraries and librarians in Canada and the United States; some original posts focus on labor and workers rights in other areas of employment.

Hosted by Blogspot.com, "Union Librarian" uses a standard sea green professional Blogspot.com template with blog posts on the left and a navigation menu to the right. In addition, lists are provided for public and academic library unions by state, and there is a selection of links to associations, awards, government Web sites, resources, and unions. Readers can look forward to new posts each Friday or Saturday.

Recent entries have covered a range of topics: union negotiations, a Center for Economic and Policy Research study (CEPR) (<http://www.cepr.net/>) on unionization rates within the United States (<http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/unions-states-2010-02.pdf>), excerpts and links to news articles, and original posts on union matters and workers' rights. As someone with no personal experience with library union issues, I found the details of completed union negotiations and of ongoing union contract issues to be thought-provoking and informative. This Web site will be useful to those who wish to learn more about library unions and their issues as well as those concerned with labor and working class rights.

RSS feed for Union Librarian (<http://unionlibrarian.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default>)

The "Librarians for Human Rights" and the "Union Librarian" blogs are both easy and instinctive to navigate. One thing I would like to see in the future on both blogs is the use of the Blogspot.com Labels gadget; this gadget allows users to "label" their entries, and creates a labels shortcut section in the navigation menu so that readers can jump immediately to all posts on a given topic. When read in tandem, these blogs can provide a valuable overview of a number of important topics, and whether you agree with all points of the view presented or not, their posts will definitely provide you with topics worthy of consideration.

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