

## SRRT Newsletter - Issue 180, September 2012

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### Letter From the Editor

by Amy Honisett



I hope that everyone who attended ALA had a fun and educational experience. Anaheim was the first ALA conference I have been able to attend and I found the conference stimulating and informative. I returned to work energized and ready to try new ideas.

Read on for the minutes of the SRRT Action Council meetings, as well as the SRRT Councilor's report and news from some Task Forces. In this issue, I'm excited to report that you will also find some news from some of our friends in other groups: the Freedom to Read Foundation, GLBTRT, and OIF. This issue also contains a couple of great commentary pieces.

I would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to Alison Lewis, who has served on the SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board for three years and is now rotating off. Alison has made a huge contribution to this newsletter, and I have found her input and advice absolutely invaluable. I also want to welcome two new members of the Editorial Board, Rebecca Martin and Sara Zettervall. I'm excited to have them on board, and they have both already shown a real enthusiasm for the newsletter.

As always, I hope you enjoy the newsletter. Feel free to contact me at [ahonissett@yahoo.com](mailto:ahonissett@yahoo.com) with any questions, comments, or concerns. We welcome your contributions to the newsletter and are still hoping for short pieces describing your work, how long you've been doing it, how you became involved in SRRT, and what social responsibility means to you. Please also feel free to contribute commentary pieces. We want to hear from you!

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## Coordinator's Column



**by Laura Koltutsky, SRRT Coordinator**

Fred Stoss recently reminded me that I had just started in ALA when he was Coordinator in 2002. It is hard to believe how quickly ten years can go by. For those ten years, I have valued the Social Responsibilities Round Table, in which I found my ideological home within ALA. I recall that when I joined, the "One Voice" policy was front and center within SRRT and within ALA itself. (To learn more about earlier association conversations related to the "One Voice" policy, I recommend you take a look at the SRRT Newsletter from September of 2002 - <http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org.rt/files/content/SRRT/Newsletters/srrt140.pdf> (<http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org.rt/files/content/SRRT/Newsletters/srrt140.pdf>)). Rory Litwin, then SRRT Coordinator, outlined the base conflict in his Coordinator's column:

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The "Speaking With One Voice Policy," as it has been explained to us, would prohibit SRRT from issuing any kind of position statements or resolutions, on the basis that in doing so SRRT is speaking for the Association as a whole. (Litwin, p. 2)

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In fact, today, there is still no ALA Policy that outlines what Round Tables or other bodies can disseminate. This question has never been put in front of ALA Council for a vote, and is – in truth – an internal document, written by a subcommittee of the ALA Executive Board. The "One Voice" policy will always be contentious within an organization that claims to be membership driven.

At the Action Council meeting at ALA Annual, SRRT Action Council asked our ALA Executive Board liaison again to return to the Executive Board with our concerns (see Action Council meeting notes in this newsletter for more details.) It is also disturbing that a membership organization like ALA would make the drastic changes to conference planning with the “Roadmap for Change” document (<http://connect.ala.org/node/180808>) without more input from membership. Here are the primary changes:

- Programs will be a maximum of 90 minutes
- All programs will be at the convention center and/or nearby hotels (core campus)
- There will be 12 content streams, and program planners must select one “content area”
- Programs and meetings will use the official time slots
- Program times/dates will be assigned by Conference Services Staff

These changes may appear on the surface to be minor, but it was acknowledged that the goal is a reduction in programming. Programs will be evaluated through an opaque process, which raised concern not just in SRRT Action Council, but also in the Round Table Coordinating Assembly at Annual 2012. The number of programs will vary at each conference depending on “anticipated attendance” and “core campus” capacity. This will likely result in fewer programs being accepted for each conference and is forcing groups to compete with each other. Of the twelve content streams, not one addresses traditional SRRT concerns. There is nothing addressing intellectual freedom, professional ethics, or social responsibility in any form. There seems to be a focus on products, services, and management issues. There is less flexibility in the when and where of programs, which may affect speaker selection and create conflicts with programs that share audiences. I will use the traditional example of SRRT and IFRT, which frequently have programs in direct competition with each other for attendance. One of the suggestions that arose was that groups could cooperatively plan programs so that this didn’t occur. In reality, this could mean less programming to challenge and provoke audiences.

If ALA is truly a membership organization, we need to ensure that all perspectives and opinions are respected and treated as equally important. The new conference programming structure would seem to indicate that we are becoming less a membership organization that values diverse opinions and more of a professional development body. If ALA staff are making strategic changes without consulting the membership at large, ALA will cease representing members’ interests. I invite the Executive Board of ALA to take a look at the Canadian Library Association, which sadly fell into this trap and which has become ineffectual as a result.

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## ALA Councilor's Report



by Al Kagan, African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration -

## University of Illinois Library

Anaheim, June 2012

SRRT was very active at the ALA Annual Meeting in Anaheim, and we had some success, along with our expected difficulties. For the first time in many years, SRRT succeeded in getting a resolution through the ALA Membership Meeting, which automatically put it on the ALA Council agenda. Our Resolution on Voter Suppression in America (2011-2012 ALA MMD #6; 2011-2012 ALA CD#40) passed in the ALA Council with only a handful of negative votes. Opponents tried to remove the first resolved clause on the usual grounds that it was not library-related, but a number of Councilors spoke to its relevance. The resolution put ALA on record against "...voter ID laws, restriction on voter registration, cuts to early voting, and any other laws resulting in the restriction of lawful access to voting," and it "encourages libraries and librarians to provide information to citizens to mitigate these restrictions should they remain in effect on Election Day."

The ALA Membership Meeting also approved a resolution in support of school libraries, which have been particularly hard-hit during the current recession. A revised version was also overwhelming passed by the ALA Council (2011-2012 ALA CD#41 Revised 6/24/12).

SRRT's Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force sent its Resolution on Homelessness and Libraries (2011-2012 ALA CD#45) to the Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) and Intellectual Freedom Round Table before introducing it in the Council. The intent was to amend the Library Bill of Rights to include housing status. After much committee discussion, the Council referred the resolution to the Intellectual Freedom Committee for a report back at Midwinter 2013. The IFC is establishing a committee of stakeholders (including SRRT) to write the report. This is just a first step in addressing the issue, and SRRT has certainly succeeded in highlighting the need for libraries to better address the growing homeless population in America.

SRRT's slightly revised and updated resolutions on support for WikiLeaks (2011-2012 ALA CD#43) and Bradley Manning (2011-2012 ALA CD#42) were soundly defeated in the Council, although the first got more votes than the second. We tried to get these through the ALA Membership Meeting and ALA Council last year. One could see that the ALA Council's Intellectual Freedom Committee and ALA Council's Committee on Legislation continued to be opposed to these resolutions. Those two committees sponsored a showing at the conference center of *The Guardian's* (UK) film, *WikiLeaks: Secrets and Lies*. SRRT produced a handout reprinting some of what WikiLeaks put on its website about the film. The WikiLeaks website article is titled, "Guardian hacks continue PR war against WikiLeaks" (<http://wikileaks.org/Guardian-s-WikiLeaks-Secrets-and.html> (<http://wikileaks.org/Guardian-s-WikiLeaks-Secrets-and.html>)).

There are two Council Forums at each ALA meeting. These serve as a place for informal discussion on pending matters. SRRT resolutions have been maligned at these forums. We turned things around in Anaheim by putting our concerns about ALA changes front and center. ALA's "Roadmap for Change" document (2011-2012 ALA CD#44) was not seen by all Councilors before the meeting. As a result of our initiative, it was put on the Council Agenda and received the attention it was due. There were all sorts of rumors flying, which were dispelled on the Council floor. The central idea of the roadmap is to make the ALA meetings more efficient by centralizing programs in the Conference Center and digitizing the programs for later distribution and sale. ALA units doing similar programs will be asked if they might combine efforts. Therefore, the number of programs will likely be slightly reduced, depending on the capacity of the conference center in each venue. This might result in 5% fewer programs. Although each division and round table will be allocated a quota for conference center programs, units will still be allowed to have as many programs as they like in less centrally located conference hotels. We should now have this guarantee in the minutes.

ALA paid attendance statistics are going down with the rest of the economy. This means that ALA revenue is going down, and money had to be transferred from the contingency fund to cover the shortfall. This also

means that ALA will be watching its expenditures more carefully, and it may mean a reduction in member services and ALA activities. The “Roadmap for Change” is only one indication of where this is going. The last time ALA met in Anaheim was in 2008, and the total paid registrations for members and exhibitors was about 20,000. That compares to 16,231 for this year’s meeting, and 18,061 for last year’s meeting in New Orleans. In other words: in four years, there was a drop of 19% and over the past year, there was a drop of 10%. With the expansion of free exhibitor passes, the numbers come out even for the past two years, but the trends are not good. Revenue aside, fewer librarians at meetings means less personal interaction, less policy debate, and a possible fraying of professional ethos. Although there is more virtual participation throughout the association, I still argue that the best engagement comes from being there.

There was talk of an initiative by the ALA Membership Committee and ALA Executive Board for a continuous dues increase tied to the inflation rate. SRRT put this matter on the agenda for the second Council Forum. As many of you know, SRRT has advocated for a progressive dues structure tied to income. We were able to introduce this alternative at the Forum and counter various arguments. It appears that we will see an official dues proposal at Midwinter; I think the Council is now better prepared for listening to an alternative.

Let me just mention one of the several memorial resolutions endorsed by the Council, to Ray Bradbury, a writer who “...embodied with eerie prescience our ambivalence about technology and its impact on our lives.”

Finally, the ALA-APA Council (Allied Professional Association Council), voted to reduce its number of meetings from one at each ALA Meeting to one per year at the Midwinter Meeting. We were assured that another meeting could be scheduled at the ALA Annual Meeting if there was urgent business to discuss. The ALA-APA has no membership and its Council is the same group as the ALA Council. No council was envisioned when the organization was first created, but the Council was added as a compromise for those of us who wanted a more democratic and transparent organization. The idea of eliminating the APA Council was raised at the 2012 Midwinter Meeting. The current result was another compromise.

As usual, I will try to answer any questions.

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## **Minutes from Action Council**

**Contributed by Susan Hayes**

### **Action Council I**

Social Responsibilities Round Table Action Council was called to order at 8:30AM on Saturday, June 23, 2012.

Present were: Jane Glasby, Al Kagan, Tom Twiss, Julie Winkelstein, Laura Krier, Gary Colmenar, Mike Marlin, Mark Hudson, Diedre Conkling, Laura Koltutsky, Susan Hayes, Amy Honisett, Ashley Jones, Nikki Winslow, John Berry and Theresa A. Tobin

Discussion of the newsletter editorial policy was moved forward because Amy Honisett, the editor, needed to leave. After some discussion, the Action Council felt they needed to look at the proposed policy and discussion was delayed to Sunday. John Berry suggested that the policy and procedure be separated, as the policy should not be more than one page.

The budget was moved from Sunday’s agenda to Saturday’s agenda so budget items for the membership

meeting and program could be discussed.

Resolutions being prepared for the council were presented and discussed.

The *Resolution in Support of Whistleblower Bradley Manning* was discussed. Possible changes were mentioned and decided against. The resolution was endorsed by unanimous vote for submission to the Council.

The *Resolution on Voter Suppression in America* was read, discussed and endorsed by unanimous vote for submission to the Council.

We started to discuss the *Resolution on Homelessness*, but this was tabled until Sunday.

Linda Williams arrived to update us on the Executive Council's Report. She discussed five important topics:

- 1) Reinventing the Conference: the Action Council expressed concern about the limiting of programs.
- 2) Digital content in libraries: an update would take place on Sunday at the 1:30 meeting
- 3) The resolution on school libraries
- 4) Hardware for backing up wikis and blogs
- 5) Dues: the membership committee would like to tie dues to the consumer price index with gradual increases each year. This caused much discussion and we requested that Linda take our concerns back to the Executive Council.

The Action Council also asked about the "One Voice" policy, which is an ALA Executive Board policy, but has not been endorsed by the ALA Council. Linda had forgotten about this from Midwinter and promised to bring it up to the board.

John Berry spoke about the impressions that he voiced in his comment about SRRT in his column. He spoke of the history of the SRRT and some important issues that were confronted in the past.

We discussed possible issues to be discussed at the membership meeting on Saturday evening.

## **Action Council II**

Social Responsibilities Round Table Action Council was called to order at 1:40PM on Sunday, June 24, 2012.

Present were: Jane Glasby, Al Kagan, Tom Twiss, Julie Winkelstein, Mike Marlin, Laura Koltutsky, Susan Hayes, Amy Honisett and Theresa A Tobin.

The membership meeting was discussed. The need to keep track of who had attended was mentioned. It was suggested that such meetings should be posted to the SRRT membership listserv and flyers created. We decided we needed more publicity, but the cost needs to be reduced.

John Berry's comments from Saturday were discussed and the value of having older members talk about the history of SRRT was presented. The possibility of making this part of meetings was suggested.

The need for virtual meetings was discussed. A motion to very strongly encourage presence at Action Council Meeting was passed, but virtual meeting could be used if necessary.

The *Resolution on Housing Status* and the *Library Bill of Rights* were discussed. There has been some discussion outside of SRRT that housing status is already covered under the *Library Bill of Rights*. This

resolution does not consider housing status to be part of a person's description. Our hopes are that we can partner with other interested groups in coming up with language that is accepted, but we plan to move forward with this either way.

The SRRT Newsletter Editorial Policy was reviewed. The Action Council agreed with John Berry's suggestion that the policy be separated from the procedure. After some discussion, the Action Council will review the revised Policy and the revised Procedure when it is completed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15PM.

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## **Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force News**

**by Lisa Gieskes, HHPTF Coordinator**

The American Library Association's (ALA's) Social Responsibilities Round Table's Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) and the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) are pleased to announce publication of their toolkit, "Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement."

The OLOS Advisory approved the HHPTF toolkit for production during their meeting at the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim. The toolkit is the culmination of efforts between HHPTF, OLOS, Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF), and SRRT ethnic caucuses. Printed copies of the toolkit will be available to libraries starting in October. In addition, a pdf version of the toolkit will be downloadable from the OLOS website (<http://www.ala.org/offices/olos> (<http://www.ala.org/offices/olos>)).

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## **The Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force Report – ALA Annual 2012**

**by LaJuan Pringle, Library Manager - Charlotte Mecklenburg Library**

**and Julie Ann Winkelstein, PhD candidate - University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN**





**Ginny Moore**

Ginny Moore, the longstanding chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force, has retired due to health concerns. The Task Force will miss her rock solid dedication and leadership, as she worked tirelessly to keep Dr. King's dream alive with her vibrant energy and unbridled enthusiasm. The MLK Jr. Task Force will continue to honor the legacy of Dr. King through events like the Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration and by having a presence at the Diversity Fair, but it can't go without saying that the Task Force will be missing a great voice with Ginny's absence.

Look for additional information to come in the upcoming months regarding the video project entitled Librarians and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Words and Our Lives. Videotaping for this important project began at Annual 2012 and it will continue at Midwinter 2013 in Seattle. These video stories offer librarians and library students an opportunity to record a brief reflection on the ways in which Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dedication to equality, peace, nonviolence, justice, hope, freedom, service, civil rights and human rights has played a part in their own commitment to libraries. A link to these short videos will be available on the ALA website.

For those who have the ability to create their own videos, we invite you to contact us for more information. The Task Force is also looking forward to a possible collaboration with the Progressive Librarians Guild at Indiana University – Bloomington on this project. For questions or comments about Librarians and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Words and Our Lives, please email LaJuan Pringle at [lpringle@cmlibrary.org](mailto:lpringle@cmlibrary.org) or Julie Winkelstein at [jwinkels@utk.edu](mailto:jwinkels@utk.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!

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## **News from the Task Force on the Environment**

*"The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." Mark Twain*

Ashley Jones and Hannah Winkler have stepped up as the new co-chairs for ALA's Task Force on the Environment (TFOE). They are working hard to revive this important group and are excited about planning future activities. One possibility is a free virtual forum to be held in January 2013. Stay tuned!

Contact Ashley or Hannah to be added to a list for updates on TFOE's activities. Your ideas are most welcome. Let them know how you'd like to participate in library-related matters of the environment and more broadly, sustainability.

Ashley Jones

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## International Responsibilities Task Force News



by **Mike Marlin, IRTF Chair, Director - California Braille and Talking Book Library**

On June 23, in conjunction with cosponsor Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), IRTF presented “National Security vs. the Right to Know.”

The program featured:

- **William Binney**, who served with the National Security Agency (NSA) for over 30 years, including serving as director of the NSA’s World Geopolitical and Military Analysis Reporting Group

- **Emma Cape**, Campaign Organizer for the Bradley Manning Support Network (<http://www.bradleymanning.org/>)

- **Patrice McDermott**, former ALA Office of Government Relations Director and current director of OpenTheGovernment.org (<http://www.openthegovernment.org/>), a coalition of journalists, consumer groups, and others dedicated to promoting transparency and openness in government

Approximately 60 audience members turned out to hear the panelists discuss vital aspects of domestic surveillance, whistleblower protection, and transparency initiatives that have been implemented in the last few years.

Binney’s description of NSA graphing (the capacity to capture all medical and financial records and communications in the U.S. and match it to individual profiles for all U.S. citizens), is highly relevant for libraries and librarians, as well as all concerned citizens. Graphing was fully implemented under Bush and Obama, but it is still illegal.

The plight of Bradley Manning was thoughtfully articulated by Cape and further resolved for me that all whistleblowers, members of the military as well as civilians, must be protected.

The delivery of fascinating and simultaneously terrifying information made for an excellent and compelling program. The only drawback of the afternoon, I felt, was the shortage of time for both presentations and questions. IRTF may want to look at ways SRRT members can engage extensively, beyond the program time slot, with conference panelists in the future.

Finally, if SRRT members have ideas for International Responsibility programs for Annual 2013, or in general, or would like to join the task force, please contact me any time at [mmarlin13@gmail.com](mailto:mmarlin13@gmail.com).

For more on the illegal NSA surveillance described by Mr. Binney, see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PIPHNIAxY4&feature=youtu.be> (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PIPHNIAxY4&feature=youtu.be>)

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## Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table News

by John Mack Freeman, GLBTRT Newsletter Committee, Chair-Elect



The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,  
and Transgender Round Table  
**GLBTRT**  
of the American Library Association

We at the GLBTRT are excited to start sharing our news with the membership of the SRRT. Thanks to Amy Honisett and Rebecca Martin for asking us to contribute. Here's some of what has been happening with us over the last few months:

The GLBTRT has changed several of its governance policies relating to its chairs. The Steering Committee was dissolved after the 2012 Annual Conference in favor of directly electing five directors-at-large to the GLBTRT Executive Board. Further, the chairmanship has changed from two co-chairs serving two year terms to one chairperson that will serve a one year term. Because of this, the requirement for gender equality among the co-chairs no longer exists.

The GLBTRT buddy program seeks to match first-time Annual conference goers with more experienced conference attendees. Individuals interested in how this program functions (or who are interested in volunteering for next year) should contact Larry Romans at [larry.romans@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:larry.romans@vanderbilt.edu).

For those interested in the 2012 Stonewall Book Awards for exceptional merit relating to the gay/lesbian / bisexual/transgender experience, they can be found here: <http://www.aal.org/glbtrt/award/honored> (<http://www.aal.org/glbtrt/award/honored>).

In recognition of a significant gift to the GLBTRT endowment, the Stonewall Award for Youth Literature

has been renamed to recognize long-time GLBTRT member Larry Romans and his partner of over 40 years, Mike Morgan.

We'd like to take this opportunity to invite any interested person to join the GLBTRT. You can get more information about who we are and what we do here: <http://www.ala.org/glbtrt> (<http://www.ala.org/glbtrt>).

Additionally, the GLBTRT has its own newsletter. You can find the most recent copy of it here: <http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/sites/ala.org.glbtrt/files/content/newsletter/newsletters/2012fall.pdf>. (<http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/sites/ala.org.glbtrt/files/content/newsletter/newsletters/2012fall.pdf>.)

We're also looking forward to swapping news and building further ties with the SRRT in the future. Until next time!

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## **ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom: Supporting Libraries and Defending Access**



**by Angela Maycock, Assistant Director - Office for Intellectual Freedom**

Since 1967, the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) has been the ALA unit dedicated to librarianship's core professional value of intellectual freedom. OIF works with ALA member groups to develop and implement policies concerning free access to libraries and library materials. The review and interpretation of key documents such as the Library Bill of Rights and the ALA Code of Ethics form the basis for such policies and for OIF's work.

OIF provides staff support to a number of important member groups, including the Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Committee on Professional Ethics, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the Freedom to Read Foundation, and the LeRoy C. Merritt Humanitarian Fund. We also collaborate with the intellectual freedom committees of state chapters and ALA divisions to support and coordinate activities.

Some of OIF's major initiatives include Banned Books Week and Choose Privacy Week, two important national advocacy and awareness campaigns. We also develop conference programs, online learning offerings, meetings, trainings, and other events to educate librarians and the general public about intellectual freedom issues. Our Lawyers for Libraries and Law for Librarians programs have been particularly successful and we are currently working on developing these topics into online educational offerings.

OIF also offers vital assistance to librarians and others facing censorship attempts or other controversy in their communities. We are available to advise or consult when library materials are challenged, when questions about internet filtering are raised, or when law enforcement or other parties demand information about library users. Our staff can offer information, expertise, or just an open ear. OIF provides free,

confidential consultation to anyone needing assistance with an intellectual freedom issue.

In future articles for the SRRT Newsletter, we hope to offer more details about OIF's work on specific issues like reader privacy, academic freedom, professional ethics, internet access, challenges to library materials, and much more. We're eager to share information and also to hear from you about how OIF can best support libraries in defending free access to information! SRRT members are among our staunchest allies in advocating for intellectual freedom, and we look forward to continued collaboration with you. To learn more about OIF and our work, visit us online at <http://www.ala.org/oif> (<http://www.ala.org/oif>), email us at [oif@ala.org](mailto:oif@ala.org), or call us at 312-280-4223.

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## **Freedom to Read Foundation: Join us as we grow!**

**by Jonathan Kelley, Program Director - Freedom to Read Foundation**

Headquartered alongside ALA in Chicago, the Freedom to Read Foundation has been working for over four decades in the courts and in local communities to support librarians and First Amendment advocates in defending the freedom to read, speak, and view. While primarily known for our First Amendment legal defense activities (we are the **only** organization specifically dedicated to supporting the freedom to read in libraries), we also do a good deal of work in educating the general public and library school students on intellectual freedom matters. We also provide grants to librarians and local free speech advocates to defend privacy, promote the freedom to read, and support Banned Books Week activities.

Over the past few years, we have been involved in specific efforts to:

- Ensure that LGBTQ youth have access to information in Missouri schools
- Assist a Wisconsin community organization fighting a relentless effort to censor young adult literature
- Support civil liberties by litigating against the USA PATRIOT Act
- Give voice to librarians in the courts, in cases ranging from state-level versions of the "Communications Decency Act" to the Supreme Court case involving the California Violent Video Games law

... and much more.

Today we are making a concerted effort to make the Freedom to Read Foundation bigger and stronger than ever. We are proud to have unveiled a brand-new website at <http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt/feminist-task-force> (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt/feminist-task-force>). I encourage you to visit the site, read more about our history and our current efforts, and consider becoming a member yourself!

Membership begins at \$35.00 per year (\$10 for students). Organizations can join starting at \$100.00. By becoming a member, you can help us be ready the next time a Children's Internet Protection Act comes along, or the next time a library needs additional assistance defending the right of patrons to read.

The Freedom to Read Foundation firmly believes that libraries at their best are the places where people meet ideas – including unpopular or challenging ideas. We are thankful to SRRT members for your longstanding support. If you have any questions or suggestions, or know of cases in which FTRF can be of support, please don't hesitate to contact us!

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## Handing Over the Fish



**by Tracie M. Kreighbaum, MLS, Doctoral Student and National Faculty School of Library and Information Management - Emporia State University**

A wealthy businessman once asked Mother Teresa, “Why don’t you give the rod to fish instead of the fish to eat?” Mother Teresa, whose Missionaries of Charity order serves the poorest of the poor around the world, replied, “The people to whom I give the fish to eat cannot stand...when they are strong enough to hold the rod, I’ll send them to you, and we will complete the work...together...”<sup>1</sup>

Our public libraries are good at teaching how to fish with a rod. At my local library, and at every public library in which I’ve worked over the past several decades, we teach information literacy, which is inherently a push towards self-sufficiency. Computer classes, for instance, are ubiquitous in public libraries, for various purposes and for different skill levels. It is at this starting point that we hope to reach members of our community who wish to be more adept at seeking information. But what if this rod we are offering is too heavy for some to lift? What course of action do we then take? It has been my professional observation that – whether we’re cognizant of it or not – we tend to do little.

A candid conversation with the coordinator of a thriving food bank helped to advance my analysis of our libraries’ services to the information poor, who are often also economically poor. She told me she recommends the local library to her clients for the free Internet access so they can fill out public aid forms, in an attempt to better mitigate their circumstances, which are often fraught. Once there, however, with keyboard—or “rod”—in hand, they can go no further. The next week they are back at the food pantry, circumstances unchanged. “A computer class will not help,” she tells me, “because even after a year of classes, they won’t be able to navigate the forms. Someone has to do it for them.” That someone, at the ready, must be at the library.

Where should we draw the line when helping the public meet their information needs? Must a patron be able to “pull their own weight,” whatever we determine that to be? Should we not do something the patron is unable to do independently? Do we treat those occasions as an exception to the “rule”?

It falls on us to set the rod aside when need be and hand over the fish. Why? Because if we are about nothing else, we are about information for our public, and our public includes the rich, the poor, the educated, and those who are unable to learn at a pace we might think reasonable.

As an “L1” entry-level librarian for a Chicago Public Library branch some years ago, a woman came to me and needed a resume to apply for a job. I remember starting to hand her a book on resume writing, after which I would have shown her to a computer, and left her to “fish.” Instead, I asked her what she was holding in her hand, and she shared with me a fringed piece of lined notebook paper with some information on it, which she called her resume. That day we sat down together at a computer, chose a resume format, filled in as much information as possible, and printed multiple copies. I did all of the typing, and I remember

wondering if I would “get in trouble” for doing this. Whether or not she would now be able to do this on her own was not my objective, nor should it have been. She needed the fish, not the rod. There have been many of these occasions throughout my career, and I am sure you have been faced with many in your own. What have you done in those moments?

We must, in our profession, be able to meet people where they are – even if it is not an ideal or convenient starting place for us – and do it with as much professional courtesy as we would show a scholar whose inquiry requires us to summon all of our professional research abilities. Both examples of patrons are completely equal members of our public, and must be equally served in a way best fitting their need.

**Author’s note:** Tracie Kreighbaum is a fourth-year doctoral student and National Faculty member at Emporia State University’s School of Library and Information Management. She is also the coordinator of the Oregon Library Association’s Social Responsibilities Round Table. Tracie’s research is based on the practice of dialogue and building shared meaning among libraries and their public. Find Tracie’s blog at <http://themarginalizedmatter.blogspot.com/> (<http://themarginalizedmatter.blogspot.com/>). Reach her at [tkreighb@emporia.edu](mailto:tkreighb@emporia.edu).

<sup>1</sup> Mother Teresa (2010). *Where there is love, there is God*. Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C. (Ed.). New York: Doubleday Religion.

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## Higher Education in the 21st Century



**by Toni Samek, Professor - School of Library & Information Studies, University of Alberta**

*“Human history is more and more a race between education and catastrophe.” H.G. Wells*

Canadian William Gibson wrote: “The future is here. It’s just not widely distributed yet.” Indeed, higher education is being significantly transformed by such factors as a shift from education to vocation, distance delivery models, an eroding professoriate, the rise of the contingent worker model, full implications of tuition sovereignty, and new integrity, behavior and civility codes that bump up against academic freedom. Looking forward, those of us teaching in higher education can expect to be working in a distributed faculty model, heavily based in distance education and satellite campuses, and where many of us will teach from home offices and/or with mobile technologies on the road and certainly for more than one institution.

This model pushes the unbundling of academic work, including teaching. Inside critiques of this model (including by LIS educators) are important, as they go to the heart of how teachers, as Henry Giroux argues, will learn to survive and engage in the future and ultimately connect the classroom (and virtual classroom) to public life. In an era of educational technologists and course designers off the tenure track who are preparing modules for facilitators and moderators, we can ask: who actually is a teacher and who has the right to teach

in the 21st century?

While noble efforts to protect tenure are actually building a fence around a dwindling center, our core values are increasingly vulnerable to Internet kill switches that cut access to eClass, to contracting to the cloud, to suspect community profiling and scholars at risk, and to a myriad of other threats to the free flow of people, ideas and information in the global academic enterprise.

LIS educators must permanently value our teachers' abilities to teach freely and our students' abilities to learn freely given such 21st century realities as: limited access to sensitive (e.g. dissent) literature in online course materials; self-censorship; security; diversity vs. conformity; copyright limits in higher education; ethical mobility of students, staff and teachers; suspect communities; and data gathering and surveillance. Ongoing intercultural dialogue about education is a condition for success, including dialogue about our responsibility to global issues related to the academic freedom and professional rights of higher education teaching personnel here and in other nations, such as those engaged in Israel-Palestine scholarship.

LIS educators need to adopt and adapt pedagogies that fairly integrate technology. If their teaching is taken up in contexts beyond the classroom through community groups and organizations, then they must consider how human rights like freedom of assembly and freedom of association come into play in multiple and diverse geopolitical contexts. They have to vigilantly note the difference between the freedom to read and the freedom to read anonymously. And they should advocate a need for accommodating vs. risking impoverished slants to teaching and learning in the face of changing legislation, economics, politics, and philosophical and technological mandates that negatively impact democratic education.

Finally, it is critical that LIS educators be strongly engaged within and without SRRT regarding the fate of MLIS education in the 21st century. Angela Davis said, "radical simply means grasping things at the root." Arguably, the root of a quality MLIS program is educational leadership that individually and collectively honors and promotes our core values in daily practice and in engagements with students, communities of practice, the academy, and society. A successful MLIS graduate will feel confident in the knowledge and skills of their chosen field, but – perhaps most importantly – they will have internalized a deep interrogation of intellectual freedom, social responsibility, and access to education and information for the public good.

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## **In Memoriam: Charles M. Willett**

**by Fred Stoss, Associate Librarian - Oscar A. Silverman Library, University at Buffalo, SUNY**

*"Charles M. Willett of Gainesville passed away February 5, 2012 at E.T. York Hospice Center in Gainesville three weeks after celebrating his 80th birthday with a large and festive family reunion."*

So read the obituary in the Gainesville Sun, daily newspaper in Gainesville, Florida. During his long career as a librarian (MS in Library Science from Simmons College in Boston), Charles was known as an advocate for peace (forged by his experiences in the U.S. Army as a combat rifleman in the Korean War and later serving in Austria) and justice issues and had a deep passion for the alternative press.

For many years, Charles had a cordial – though sometimes strained – relationship with SRRT. We remember Charles for his unflinching and zealous advocacy for the alternative press.

His full obituary is found at:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/gainesville/obituary.aspx?pid=155874764> (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/gainesville/obituary.aspx?pid=155874764>)

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## **SRRT Members in the News**

**by Fred Stoss, Associate Librarian - Oscar A. Silverman Library, University at Buffalo, SUNY**

Fred Stoss, Associate Librarian at the University at Buffalo's Arts & Sciences Libraries, was selected to serve as a mentor for persons being trained as "the next generation" of Climate Change Presenters at the Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training Session in San Francisco, California, led by former Vice President Al Gore and The Climate Reality Project, which Mr. Gore founded. He was assigned as a mentor to a group of international presenters and has responsibilities to assist and encourage newly trained persons with their talks. Fred's Daughter, Kaeti, was among the 950 presenters trained at this three-day session.

Maria Jankowska and Fred Stoss were cited for their efforts in librarianship in the book, *The Entrepreneurial Librarian: Essays on the Infusion of Private-Business Dynamism into Professional Service* (Mary Krautter, Mary Beth Lock & Mary G. Scanlon. Eds., Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, ISBN: 9780786464685, 239 p., \$55.00).

You will find their profiles in the chapter, "Librarians as Sustainability Advocates, Educators and Entrepreneurs," written by Anne Less, Beth Filar Williams and Sarah B. Dorsey.

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**Bales, K. *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520272910> (<http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520272910>)**

**Reviewed by Tiffany Mair, Supervising Librarian, Technology - Monterey County Free Libraries**

How are you benefiting from slavery? How are you supporting slavery directly with your dollars and indirectly with inaction? Are you really free if other people are in bondage? Thoughtful readers will be prompted to contemplate and answer these questions when approaching Kevin Bales' work.

When *Disposable People* was first published over 10 years ago, many people thought slavery could only be found in history books. While legal slavery has been abolished, illegal slavery continues to thrive around the world where chaotic socio-political conditions meet greed and violence. Bales' work has been crucial to raising awareness of the plight of peoples living and dying in slavery. His work is a call to action to readers, social scientists, investigators, government workers, activists, and people of faith. Bales, himself, has been transformed into a new abolitionist through the research, writing, and publication process.

Cultural, social, and political factors play heavily into how slavery manifests around the world. The presence of political unrest, violence, and poverty, along with a lack of education, leaves vulnerable populations particularly at risk. Bales' selected case studies focus on forced prostitution in Thailand, charcoal camps in Brazil, brick kilns in Pakistan, debt bondage in India, and slavery in Mauritania, similar to that seen historically in the American South. Through these case studies, Bales explores themes and circumstances that leave people vulnerable to enslavement. Bales also begins to link globalization to slavery and notes that the complexity of product chains can make it more difficult for consumers to avoid financially supporting or benefiting from slavery.

Bales is clear that much of his data is based on a combination of figures from government reports, NGO sources, and personal research. Given the clandestine nature of slavery, estimates are as good as it gets. Bales' figures have gained support and his estimate of approximately 27,000,000 people living in slavery today is generally accepted as accurate by the new abolitionist movement.

This latest publication of his work includes an updated preface and new statistical estimates when available. In his updated preface, Bales reflects on what he has learned since the publication of the book and on what he would have done differently. He shares how conditions of slavery have changed in each featured country over the past 10 years. Additionally, Bales discusses his conscious decision not to include other forms of slavery – like forced marriage – in his original treatise, given the layers of complexity they would have added to his efforts of simply convincing people that slavery is still a problem. While these omissions are regrettable, Bales does acknowledge that conditions of slavery are always worse for women and girls, who are consistently and persistently subjected to sexual assault and rape by their slaveholders.

Within the context of globalization and population explosion, he asserts that current profit margins on slavery tend to be higher than in the past, the number of people who are vulnerable to enslavement is greater today than in the past, slaves now tend to be treated as disposable due to their lower cost and easy replacement, and that ethnic and racial differences do not factor in as much as rationalizations and justifications for slavery as they were historically.

Frustratingly, slavery still exists despite being illegal. Laws are not being enforced, so freedom remains a fiction. In some cases, governments directly profit from slavery and police officers are tools of violence and intimidation who guarantee the return of escaped slaves to slaveholders. Unfortunately, countries with the political and financial clout to influence business and social practices abroad do not make the abolition of slavery a priority.

Bales does not present an objective view, but staying neutral in the face of torture and indignity surely is not a virtue. He urges readers to look into themselves and join the cause to free the slaves. Readers may feel challenged when reading about the inhumane conditions slaves endure, but can rely on Bales to make the subject matter accessible. He rightly understands that the bleak living conditions of people bound in slavery do not require sensationalism. Still, not everyone will be ready for this book; not every reader will want to face the ethical and moral questions this text presents.

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**Nakamura, L. & Chow-White, P.A. *Race After the Internet*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2012. <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415802369/> (<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415802369/>)**

## **Reviewed by Rebecca Martin, MLIS, Assistant Circulation Supervisor & Faculty Liaison - Boston University Pappas Law Library**

The early days of the Internet ushered in visions of a colorblind and equal opportunity environment. *Race After the Internet* adds to a growing conversation on race and digital technologies that continues to free us of that early Utopian disillusionment. The 14 essay collection, edited by Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White, underscores that racial inequity persists in our shift from analog to digital media. For those of us involved in the creation, dissemination and curation of digital information, this important work proves to us that the digital divide is anything but binary. It proves that our work as librarians, teachers, educators and media technologists must extend past access to include usage, meaning, participation and production of digital media.

The book begins by taking us through a historical journey that makes it impossible to separate race from technology formation. Essays explain the parallel development of technology and social movements and argue that, as with any other material, theory or idea we construct, "Computers are themselves encoders of culture" (p. 36). As Tara McPherson presents the witting and unwitting racialized motives of UNIX developers in the 1960s, Eszter Hargittai, in her article on racially segmented use of technologies today, warns of organizations wrongly assuming universal adoption of technologies. We see the adverse effects of technological determinism across decades. As librarians, we draw parallels from these examples to our choices about which technologies to adopt. The essays push for critical investigation and intentionality in how those choices may reinforce inequities in user participation and understanding.

Even when the collection turns to address access to infrastructure and networks, such as in Christian Sandvig's "Connection at Ewiiapaayp Mountain" and Ernest J. Wilson III and Sasha Costanza-Chock's "New Voices on the Net?" we see it deeply intertwined with usage and dissemination of content. In Sandvig's chapter we learn of the financial and legislative barriers to developing networks on reservations. We also see that digital exclusion for tribal communities centers on fundamental disagreements with the practices by which digital information about tribal communities is organized, preserved and spread. Wilson and Costanza-Chock investigate ownership and employment of people of color in U.S. media industries, finding systemic barriers to entry in both analog and digital realms, despite perceived low-cost barriers to online participation. In both chapters, the exclusion of people of color from creation, dissemination and ownership of information has detrimental effects on the representation of people of color's experiences and on fulfilling the Internet's platform as an inclusive, democratic space.

*Race After the Internet* compiles critical conversations that are often studied separately. Contributors come from film and media studies, critical ethnic studies, communication and information sciences and genomics and include prominent researchers such as Anna Everett and danah boyd. While the reader will not find any easy solutions to the questions presented in this collection, those engaged in discourse on the digital divide would be well served by its consideration.

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## **Call for Submissions**

The SRRT newsletter is always looking for good articles, essays, and letters to the editor. The next submission deadline is November 23, 2012.

Submissions to the SRRT Newsletter may be made by any current SRRT Member or SRRT affiliate. Please

send your submissions electronically in one of the following formats: MS Word, RTF, PDF, or plain text pasted into the body of an e-mail. Submissions should be 500 to 1,000 words. Graphics are encouraged. If using images that are already on the Internet, the URL of the image and a caption or description may be added to the text of the submission.

Please send submissions and inquiries to SRRT Newsletter Editor Amy Honisett at [ahonisett@yahoo.com](mailto:ahonisett@yahoo.com), indicating "SRRT Newsletter" within the subject line of your e-mail. A confirmation of receipt will be sent in a timely manner.

Submissions for book reviews should be submitted to the Reviews Editor, Candise Branum at [cbranum@ocom.edu](mailto:cbranum@ocom.edu). Submissions should be sent electronically in MS-Word format or a Word compatible format. Reviewers should keep their reviews to 300-500 words; any length much shorter or longer should be discussed with the reviews editor prior to submission. Reviewers should avoid conflicts of interest. Full disclosure should be made to the book reviews editor when appropriate.

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