

SRRT Newsletter - Issue 185, December 2013

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Letter from the Editor

by Amy Honisett



Tweets about "#srrtnews" (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23srrtnews>)

SRRT Newsletter readers, I hope you are enjoying the season. I hope you're all staying warm, that you're with your loved ones and that the end of 2013 is a joyous time for you.

In this issue, you'll find news from a few task forces, a touching piece from SRRT Coordinator, Nikki Winslow, and an exciting article about some important work being done to serve young African-American males. You'll also find a great review about a Grace Lee Boggs documentary.

You may also notice some changes to our Resolution Archive (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt-resolutions-index>). Thanks to Al Kagan, who's doing some relevant research, I will be able to add more information in the coming months.

As I was waiting for submission for this issue, I began thinking about how the way we communicate with each other has been changing. The popularity of sites like Twitter and Facebook show us that there is a low barrier to entry for short-form writing, perhaps leveling the playing field while encouraging information sharing and hands-on, participatory thinking about current issues (among other things!)

This issue of the *SRRT Newsletter* is a little thin; we are all so busy, trying to get everything done before the winter holidays. I'd like to try an experiment; I've embedded a Twitter widget here that will show a running

search for #srtrnews (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23srtrnews&src=typd>). I've started it out; won't you join me? In 140 characters or less, share with us stories relevant to SRRT, what SRRT means to you, or how you turn your passion for social justice into action.

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Coordinator's Column

by Nikki Winslow, SRRT Coordinator, Branch Manager - Spring Valley Library



It seemed appropriate to me to write my column about the very timely subject of health care for the public, as we have been going through such a tumultuous time in the past few months (and years) with this issue being at the forefront. This topic is a personal one to me, as I'm sure it is to many of you, largely due to my godfather's extended battle with cancer a few years back. He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in his early 50s, believed to have been caused by exposure to certain chemicals in his workplace after years of working there. Long story short, he was in and out of remission for over four years, passing away almost two years ago now. During the course of his illness, he was prescribed medication he needed to fight the cancer, but it was \$2500 a pill and he and my aunt were not able to afford that on top of all of the other bills they had to pay. Because he wanted to fight the disease and see his grandchildren grow up, they had to take out loans to finance his medication. I don't believe a person should ever have to choose between being able to feed their family or fight an illness and I was hoping the Affordable Health Care Act would help alleviate these kinds of situations.

I have been very dismayed with the issues facing the registration website because I believe this launch has tainted the public's opinion of this legislation, rather than being attributed to a botched website and its obvious issues. I know many feel very strongly for and against this legislation, but I believe it is our right to have access to quality and affordable health care, regardless of social or economic standing. When I have discussed this issue with others, I often get asked about the people who are unemployed and if I think it is fair that taxpayers are paying their share of it so they can be covered. My response is always **yes**, because most of us are a paycheck or two away from being in the exact same situation and I hope someone would be willing to help me out if this were to happen to me. Another example might be that one of my children or grandchildren might experience hardships in the future that would require them to get assistance and it is our social responsibility to ensure they are provided with health care.

I believe the library has been a successful partner thus far in working to spread quality and accurate information about this initiative. In the district in which I work, we have partnered with outside agencies to offer both information sessions about the program and enrollment sessions for the public. In the branch I manage, we had to turn away some of the attendees to our information session due to the limited capacity of the room, and I find this to be a good indicator of how many people are seeking out credible information about how to sign up. One complaint we seem to field the most is how difficult it is for a patron to try to enroll on their own.

We have referred them to the agencies we know can give them help.

The public library is a place where anyone can walk through the door and ask for help, so I'm glad we are working to bridge the information gap for people from all backgrounds with this new legislation. Overall, in our society, to have winners - or those that are most profitable - we must also have losers - or the less fortunate. I wish those who are doing so much better financially would see that they must carry more of the financial burden for social services to keep our culture functioning and healthy. There is nothing wrong with being successful and making a lot of money, but this should be in tandem with a higher percentage of taxes being paid for the betterment of the entire country and society. Of course, this is all my opinion and I am hoping one that is shared by more, rather than fewer, of my peers.

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SRRT Activities at Midwinter

Friday, January 24

Amelia Bloomer Project Committee Meeting I (SRRT-FTF)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 12:00pm - 04:00pm
Sheraton - Logans 2

All Task Force Meeting (SRRT)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

Feminist Task Force Meeting I (SRRT)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force Meeting (SRRT)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

International Responsibilities Task Force Meeting (SRRT)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force Meeting (SRRT)
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

Rainbow Project Book List Committee
Friday, 01/24/2014 - 07:30pm - 09:00pm
Loews Hotel - Commonwealth D

Saturday, January 25

Action Council I Meeting (SRRT)
Saturday, 01/25/2014 - 08:30am - 11:30am
Marriott - Room 412

Amelia Bloomer Project Committee Meeting II (SRRT-FTF)

Saturday, 01/25/2014 - 08:30am - 05:30pm

Sheraton - Logans 2

Rainbow Project Committee Meeting I

Saturday, 01/25/2014 - 02:00pm - 05:00pm

Sheraton - Parlor A

Sunday, January 26**Amelia Bloomer Project Committee Meeting III**

Sunday, 01/26/2014 - 08:30am - 05:30pm

Sheraton - Logans 2

Rainbow Project Committee Meeting II (GLBTRT, SRRT)

Sunday, 01/26/2014 - 09:00am - 05:00pm

Sheraton - Parlor A

Action Council II Meeting (SRRT)

Sunday, 01/26/2014 - 03:00pm - 04:00pm

Pennsylvania Convention Center - 202 A

Feminist Task Force Meeting II (SRRT)

Sunday, 01/26/2014 - 06:00pm - 07:30pm

Pennsylvania Convention Center - 308

Monday, January 27**Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance and Sunrise Celebration**

Monday, 01/27/2014 - 06:30am - 07:30am

Pennsylvania Convention Center - 113 AB

Amelia Bloomer Project Committee Meeting IV (SRRT-FTF)

Monday, 01/27/2014 - 08:30am - 05:30pm

Sheraton - Logans 2

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force News**by LaJuan Pringle, Library Manager - Charlotte Mecklenburg Library**

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force will once again serve as a co-sponsor for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunrise Celebration (<http://www.ala.org/offices/olos/olosprograms/mlkceleb/drmartinluther>) at the

2014 Midwinter Conference in Philadelphia. More information will be coming regarding the time and location of the event. This year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Sheryll Cashin, professor of law at Georgetown University. Professor Cashin has written *The Failures of Integration*, which was selected as an Editor's Choice book in the *New York Times Book Review*, and *The Agitator's Daughter*. Her latest title, *Place, Not Race: A New Vision of Opportunity in America*, will be published in May 2014. This new book discusses the decline of race-based affirmative action and how affirmative action as we know it does little to help disadvantaged people. *Place* also promises to deliver a new framework for true inclusion for the millions of children who live separate and unequal lives. Professor Cashin is an active member of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (<http://www.prrac.org/>) (PRRAC), an emerging national network of state and regional coalitions promoting sustainable growth and social inclusion. We're excited to have her as this year's keynote speaker.

The Call To Action will be delivered this year by none other than our very own Ginny B. Moore. Ginny has led the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force since its inception. She is a long-time activist and member of ALA who recently retired from the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. The Sunrise Celebration is co-sponsored by BCALA and OLOS.

If you are interested in participating in the Martin Luther King Jr. Video Tribute, we encourage you to send your clips to John Amundsen at jamundsen@ala.org. These clips will be featured at this year's Sunrise Celebration. Clips should be limited to three minutes or less.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force is reviving the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multicultural Exchange in 2014 at the ALA Annual Conference in Las Vegas. The exchange will give participating libraries the opportunity to share expressions and ideas of how they celebrate the legacy of Dr. King. If you are interested in assisting with the planning and coordination of this event, please contact LaJuan Pringle at lpringle@cmlibrary.org.

We also invite you to help us in planning our next presentation at the Diversity and Outreach Fair, which will take place during the Annual Conference. The Fair highlights library services to underserved or underrepresented communities, including people with disabilities, poor and homeless populations, people of color, English-language learners, new Americans, new and non-readers, older adults, people living in rural areas, incarcerated people and ex-offenders, mobile library services and bookmobiles and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. We could use assistance in gathering ideas and thoughts about the task force's next presentation.

And, of course, we are always looking for new members to participate on the Task Force. If you're interested in serving as a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force, please contact LaJuan. Attendance at the conference isn't mandatory, as most work can be accomplished online via email or chat. However, being able to attend at least one meeting in person is preferred. Come join us!

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Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force News

submitted by Julie Winkelstein, Postdoctoral Researcher - University of Tennessee,

Knoxville



The SRRT Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) is pleased to announce our new listserv: Extendingourreach@ala.org (<mailto:Extendingourreach@ala.org>). It is our hope this listserv will offer library staff an opportunity to share questions, concerns, suggestions and successes related to serving homeless patrons. The idea for this listserv came from the positive response we've had to the OLOS toolkit: *Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement* (<http://www.ala.org/offices/extending-our-reach-reducing-homelessness-through-library-engagement>), as well as the webinar based on the toolkit (<http://www.ala.org/onlinelearning/extending-our-reach-reducing-homelessness-through-library-engagement>).

Julie Winkelstein, an active member of the HHPTF, recently participated in the international conference, *Library 2.013* (<http://www.library20.com/2013>). A recording of her presentation, *Public Libraries Serving LGBTQ Homeless Youth by Creating Safe Spaces*, can be found at <http://www.library20.com/page/2-013-recordings> (<http://www.library20.com/page/2-013-recordings>). This recording is just one example of the work that can be done and is being done to help public libraries address the social justice issues of poverty and homelessness. Please join our listserv and share your own library stories and questions about reaching out.

More information about HHPTF, as well as numerous resources, can be found at <http://hhptf.org> (<http://hhptf.org>). We also invite readers to attend our next task force meeting at ALA Midwinter 2014, in Philadelphia. We hope to see you there!

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From Talk to Action: Supporting the Literacy Development of African-American Male Youth

by Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Professor - School of Information & Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and

Casey H. Rawson, Doctoral student – School of Information & Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Literacy is not just about decoding text. It is about becoming a superior human being that can act powerfully upon the world. - Ernest Morrell, Ph.D., Columbia University

National statistics indicate a critical need for quality literacy education among African-American males. Results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments show that only 14% of African-American male 4th graders and 11% of African-American male 8th graders perform at or above proficient in reading. Low print literacy contributes to a variety of negative life outcomes for these

young men:

- Barely half graduate from high school,
- African-American male teens and young adults are 8 times more likely to be the victim of homicide than White males of the same age,
- While comprising 14% of the national population, African-American males are



- only 5% of the college population and nearly 40% of the prison population in the United States and
- African-American males currently have double the unemployment rate of White males.

With funding from an 2011 grant awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the School of Information Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the School of Library and Information Science at the North Carolina Central hosted the summit Building a Bridge to Literacy for African-American Male Youth: A Call to Action for the Library Community. The summit brought together stakeholders from across the country to consider the role libraries can play in closing the literacy achievement gap for African-American male youth and in improving their life trajectories. Summit participants were asked to think deeply, challenge ideas, brainstorm, question and plan. Perhaps more importantly, they were given permission to express their outrage and indignation that these inequities exist and to take action.

The summit resulted in a number of recommendations for action. These include:

- Lobbying our communities' governing boards to provide the necessary infrastructure for developing and delivering library services to African-American male youth. This includes documenting the inequities that exist in our communities - such as closed neighborhood branches, limited hours, absence of certified school librarians and lack of up-to-date technology - and presenting data that shows the connection between quality library programs and improved school achievement.
- Committing to working with African-American male youth, to developing relationships with these young men and to advocating for them. This means moving beyond the stereotypes of African-American male youth that the media bombard us with each day and seeing these young men as individuals. It means setting high expectations for them and helping them develop their sense of agency.
- Honoring and promoting African-American male youth voices. We must create authentic and relevant programs that give African-American male youth tools for self-expression and empower them to enact positive change in their lives and in their communities. We can do this by incorporating digital storytelling, spoken word, and poetry into our programs, and by challenging (and supporting) them to

research and propose solutions to problems in their communities.

- Providing library resources that nurture their resolve. We need to include resources that allow them to see themselves reflected in meaningful ways, provide them with access to ideas and situations beyond their own experience, motivate them to read and learn and help them define their place in the world.
- Creating library spaces and programs that welcome them. Currently, many African-American male youth see libraries as hostile and unwelcoming spaces. We must make the library a place where they can move about, talk, collaborate, explore, innovate and socialize. We must create culturally congruent programs—programs that utilize multimedia and multimodal instructional strategies and are highly dynamic, vigorous and captivating.
- Using our voices to tell stories that counter the dominant narrative of young African-American males as without hope or as dangerous. We must tell the stories of the young African-American males in our communities who are succeeding in school, are active in the community and who are going to college to become doctors, lawyers, scientists and entrepreneurs.

We have also developed a website, *Building a Bridge to Literacy: A Call to Action for the Library Community* (<http://bridgetolit.web.unc.edu/>), to support librarians in their work. The website contains a number of resources, including a downloadable copy of the full summit report, professional development resources such as a self-guided online tutorial and an archived webinar, a tool to assess the cultural responsiveness of your library program, collection development resources and much more.

Invariably, when we present on this topic, someone says, “But we can’t just focus on African-American males; it’s not fair; what about the other students?” We are not suggesting that other students’ needs be ignored. However, what we are saying is that we must make addressing the literacy needs of African-American males a priority. The data are clear: inequities exist and these inequities are negatively affecting their lives and their communities. As Dr. Morrell reminded summit participants, “More Black males died in the last decade in the United States from gunshots than all the casualties in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan combined. This is not inevitable. This is a choice.”

We believe now is the time for librarians to move from talk to action—to make the literacy education a priority to improve the quality of life for African-American male youth. We hope you will join us.

Sandra Hughes-Hassell is a professor in the School of Information & Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. smhughes@email.unc.edu; @bridge2lit

Casey Rawson is a doctoral student in the School of Information & Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. crawson@email.unc.edu

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Lee, G., Libresco, C., Wilkin, A., & LeeLee Films. (2013). American revolutionary: The evolution of Grace Lee Boggs. United States: LeeLee Films.

<http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/> (<http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/>)

Reviewed by Fred Stoss, Arts & Sciences Libraries - University at Buffalo

In the first half of the twentieth century, Detroit, Michigan was a city of hardworking, blue-collar, family-oriented people. After surviving the Great Depression and spurred on by growth during and after WWII, Detroit became a city divided by race and political power. The documentary *American Revolutionary* was crafted by Korean-American filmmaker Grace Lee (no relation to Grace Lee Boggs) to tell the story of Grace Lee Boggs and of the plight of Black Americans growing up and into this cauldron in the beginning of the second half of the last century.

This documentary is a biographical examination of the life and times of Grace Lee Boggs, a Chinese-American who became an unlikely and influential philosopher, political activist, civil rights advocate, feminist and social revolutionary. She assisted in shaping the struggles of Black Americans during America's Civil Rights Movement. She has spent nearly her entire life fighting to bring concepts of equality, justice, fairness, and social change to the American landscape. *American Revolutionary* brings home her struggles and passion.

Grace Lee Boggs entered Barnard College at 16. There, she took up philosophy and became a follower of the writings of German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. She found that her post-Ph.D. life was filled with the typical barriers facing women of color in the 1940s. Finding a position in the University of Chicago's Philosophy Library and living amid squalid conditions, she quickly became an activist for tenants' rights. In 1953, Grace Lee married James Boggs and moved to Detroit. Here, she witnessed the great migration of entire communities of Blacks from the poverty of Mississippi and Alabama, drawn by the hope of jobs in the burgeoning automotive industry of Detroit.

American Revolutionary is an 82-minute color documentary released on June 16, 2013. It was a winner of the Los Angeles Film Festival's Audience Award for Best Producer/Director and Best Documentary. The film was a Jury Prize winner at the Woodstock Film Festival for director Grace Lee. Grace Lee won the Maverick Award with producers Caroline Libresco and Austin Wilkin in the category of Best Documentary Feature.

Other featured members appearing in the film are Danny Glover, Bill Ayers, Angela Davis and Julia Putnam. *American Revolutionary* is intertwined with still photographs, audio clips, and news footage. The film brings home the struggles and passion of Grace Lee Boggs, her husband, and their peers, who provided the philosophical underpinnings for this portion of America's Civil Rights Movement throughout her incredible life.

American Revolutionary should be required viewing for high school juniors and seniors and college and university students. It would make a great film for a college or university freshman orientation project/program. I fear that many boys, girls and young adults of color have lost the vision of their parents and grandparents. This film tells the story of decades of struggles and ends with a message of hope, while presenting continuing challenges.

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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 March 7, 2014.

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 original submissions and inquiries to SRRT Newsletter Editor Amy Honisett at 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. 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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The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.

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