

## SRRT Newsletter - Issue 195, June 2016

### Contents

Letter from the Editor

SRRT Coordinator's Column

ALA Annual Conference 2016 Schedule

Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force Essay

International Responsibilities Task Force News

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force News

Ethnic Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) News

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) News

ALA Task Force for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (TF-EDI) News

Book Review: Grassroots Library Advocacy

Interview: ALA ODLOS Staff on Merging the ALA Office For Diversity and the ALA Office For Literacy & Outreach Services

Essay: Socially Responsible Investments Increased to 20% of ALA Endowment

Call for Editorial Board Members

Call for Submissions

Publication Information

### Letter from the Editor

by **Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow**



Greetings SRRT Newsletter readers!

Pretty soon, ALA Annual 2016 will be upon us! Many of our profession will gather together in Orlando, Florida for the event. SRRT activities and programs during the conference are listed in this issue, as well as those of our friends and affiliates. Do take a look and see what SRRT, our friends, and our affiliates have planned.

I look forward to meeting many of our readers at some of these events at ALA Annual 2016!

All the best,

Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow

SRRT Newsletter Editor

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## SRRT Coordinator's Column

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



Who is excited about the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando this year? I know I am! I have to be honest: I love warm weather, so places like Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago in the middle of winter aren't conference places I look forward to. But sign me up for some sun and fun in Florida! I'm also looking forward to some of the meetings and events that SRRT is involved in this year's annual conference.

Do you fly in on Friday? If so, I strongly encourage everyone to show up at the **All Task Force Meeting** on that evening, June 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hyatt Regency Orlando, Room Bayhill 21. You will have the chance to talk to members of the Feminist Task Force, the Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force, the International Responsibilities Task Force, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force and get involved with one of these groups.

We also have two **SRRT Action Council Business meetings** at Annual. Our first is on Saturday morning, June 28 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. in the Orlando County Convention Center, Room S321 and our second is on Sunday afternoon, June 29 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. in the Convention Center, Room W207A. Anyone is welcome to attend. I always learn many new things in my interactions with this dynamic group.

We have also planned a **joint Membership Meeting and Social with the Sustainability Round Table** that will take place on Saturday evening, June 28 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at Marlow's Tavern, located on 9101 International Drive, a mere one mile from the Convention Center. We are really excited about working with SustainRT on this and anticipate a great time!

In addition, we are sponsoring an incredible program on Sunday morning, June 29 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. called **Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation**. Randa Kamal and Diana Sayej-Naser, two prominent Palestinian librarians, will be speaking about the special problems and issues encountered in Palestine libraries, and what they, and others, can do to help improve these issues. A HUGE thank you to Tom Twiss and the International Responsibilities Task Force, as well as John Amundsen, for getting this program organized and scheduled. I know it is going to be impactful.

In conclusion, I am proud of all the work SRRT does throughout the year and know I speak for the Round Table when I say we love to have new people get involved and share their thoughts and ideas with us. As of April 2016, SRRT membership is now up to 1109, a +18.48% increase from the same month last year. I would like to give another big thank you to Al Kagan and the membership committee for their time and commitment to growing SRRT in the past few years. We would love to see our new members get involved, so if there are any questions I can answer, please don't hesitate to email me.

See you in Orlando!!

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## ALA Annual Conference 2015 Schedule



### Friday, June 24, 2016

All Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=142859>)

6/24/16, 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency Orlando  
Room Bayhill 21

Feminist Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=142869>)

6/24/16, 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency Orlando  
Room Bayhill 21

Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force Meeting (SRRT) (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=142890>)

6/24/16, 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Hyatte Regency Orlando  
Room Bayhill 21

International Responsibilities Task Force Meeting (SRRT) (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=142893>)

6/24/16, 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency Orlando  
Room Bayhill 21

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force Meeting (SRRT) (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=142827>)

6/24/16, 7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Hyatt Regency Orlando  
Room Bayhill 21

### Saturday, June 25, 2016

ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Meeting (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=143417>)

6/25/16, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Orange County Convention Center  
Room W307A

Action Council I Meeting (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=143383>)

6/25/16, 8:30-11:00 a.m.

Orange County Convention Center  
Room S3321

Introduction to Women's Issues in ALA Discussion Group (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=143394>)

6/25/16, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Hilton Orlando  
Room Clear Lake

SRRT and SustainRT Joint Membership Meeting and Social (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=143419>)

6/25/16, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Marlow's Tavern  
9101 International Dr., Orlando, FL 32819

### **Sunday, June 26, 2016**

Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=139583>)

6/26/16, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Hyatt Regency Orlando  
Room Barrel Springs II

Action Council Meeting II (<http://www.eventscribe.com/2016/ala-annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=143561>)

6/26/16, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Orange County Convention Center  
Room W207A

Progressive Librarians Guild

6/26/16, 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Orange County Convention Center  
Room W207A

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force Essay**

### **A Young Man on a Bus**

**by Julie Ann Winkelstein, SRRT Editorial Board member, postdoctoral researcher,  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

I'll begin with a story.

Recently, my husband and I were riding a bus in San Francisco, returning from a family visit. A young man seated in front of us asked if this bus would take him to the Greyhound station, because he was headed to Los Angeles. As we continued to talk, it became clear he was what he called a "wanderer," which means he didn't have a secure and predictable place to safely lay his head each night. I've met many of these young wanderers or travelers in the last eight years and I'm always impressed by their courage and resilience.

Since this particular wanderer didn't have a cell phone, I offered to look up bus schedules on my smart phone. On the Greyhound website it immediately became clear the most inexpensive way for him to get to LA was by purchasing his ticket online and in advance. Other options, like Megabus, only allow for online purchases, and advance tickets are usually much cheaper, too. But of course he would need access to the Internet for both of these. When he told us he could wait a couple of days, I recommended going the next day to either a local agency's resource center or the library, as this was Sunday evening and both of these were closed. I wrote down the names of two librarians I trusted and suggested he ask at either place for help accessing an Internet computer and using a printer, since he needed both.

He thanked us, we exchanged names, and then chatted for a few more minutes. I commented that he must have met some good people in his travels and he replied yes, he had. And, he added, some bad people, too. As we got off the bus, he said goodbye to each of us, using our names, and I wished him luck.

It wasn't until we were walking away I realized another barrier for him was the lack of a credit card. Without it, it would be impossible for him to order a ticket online. Although I didn't think to ask him, there's a good chance he didn't have one. I can only hope the drop-in center was able to help him with this or possibly the librarians, by accepting cash from him and then using their own credit cards.

As my husband and I rode BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) back home, we talked about this experience. My husband has been hearing about my work on homelessness and libraries for years. He knows the statistics, the stories, the library policies that act as barriers. But this was the first time he'd heard a story directly from one young person. This was the first time he saw unfolding in front of him the challenges he himself never encounters. He was moved and saddened.

For me, it added one more piece to the story I've been sharing about youth experiencing homelessness. I'd never before thought of prepaid credit cards, although it now seems so obvious. I also thought about how wonderful it would be if there were a system of library staff all over the country, so no matter where these young people end up, we could send them to a safe person who could help them navigate the local community's resources. If I could have had the name of a Los Angeles librarian handy; if I could have said, here, when you get to LA, go to this branch and ask for this person - they'll help you find the resources you need and they'll be kind and welcoming. Imagine how perfect that would have been.

This experience reminded me of the need for us, as librarians, to think through situations like his. To have resources, like bus schedules, transit tickets, prepaid credit cards, and immediate and easy access to the Internet, along with free printing. We need to create a caring network that spans the U.S. We need to discuss the lives of these young people and the families and single adults who are working to overcome one barrier after another. And there are so many barriers.

All over the United States, library staff are struggling to understand and address the needs of their patrons experiencing homelessness. We can continue to write policies, hire social workers and public health nurses, engage in conversations, and give conference presentations - and each of these is extremely valuable and

much appreciated. But most of all what we need is a concerted, funded, informed and sustained effort to support all library staff in addressing this crisis. We need to make it possible to exchange ideas, ask questions, find answers, brainstorm, and educate others and ourselves. We need a central place where caring and concerned library staff can help each other and work together. And we need to position ourselves in our communities so we are an integral part of ongoing conversations related to social inequities like homelessness and poverty.

As an active member of the HHPTF, I'd like to say we could do this all on our own. But we can't. This year, I won't even be attending ALA annual because I no longer have institutional financial support to do so. In addition, addressing homelessness and poverty in ALA shouldn't fall on the shoulders of a few willing and dedicated volunteer task force members. I'd like to see ALA take on a more active role in tackling these issues. As one of my library friends from outside the U.S. pointed out, it's great ALA has policies, like "Library Services to the Poor," and offices, like the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, and SRRT's very own HHPTF, because in her country even those don't exist. And I agree - it's great. But it **◆** not enough.

### **What is the SRRT HHPTF?**

The Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) is dedicated to addressing homelessness and poverty through libraries, so we can contribute to the vitality of our communities by serving everyone well. There is so much libraries can and are doing that relates to these two topics and we hope you'll check out our blog (<http://www.hhptf.org/>) and consider joining us

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **International Responsibilities Task Force News**

**by Tom Twiss, Liaison Librarian, University of Pittsburgh**

The International Responsibilities Task Force is now completing preparations for the program "Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation" that we will be co-sponsoring with the group Librarians and Archivists with Palestine (<http://librarianswithpalestine.org/>) at the ALA conference in Orlando. SRRT members may have seen a Monday time for this program previously listed on the conference schedule. With the great assistance of John Amundsen, staff liaison to SRRT from the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, we were able to get this changed to our preferred time on Sunday morning. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend:

### **Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation**

**Sunday, June 26**

**10:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

**HYATT Regency Orlando, Room Barrel Springs II**

Two prominent Palestinian librarians, Randa Kamal, Director of Libraries at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and President of the Palestinian Library Association, and Diana Sayej-Naser, Director of the Main Library at Birzeit University and General Coordinator of the Palestinian Library and Information Consortium (PALICO), will speak. They will talk about the special problems confronting Palestinian libraries, what Palestinian librarians are doing to address those problems, and what the international library community can do to help.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **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 meet on Friday, June 24, 7:30 p.m., Hyatt Regency Orlando, Room Bayhill 21. Our agenda will include an update on the Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Celebration during the 2017 Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta. We will also lay out the framework for future events at conferences.

The Task Force will once again host a table at the ALA Diversity and Outreach Fair on Saturday, June 25, Orange County Convention Center, Room Exhibit Hall : Special Events Area. The theme of this year's program is "Libraries Transform: Outreach in Response to Civil Unrest." If anyone would like to submit ideas for the table as it relates to the theme, please feel free to email me.

The Task Force will also participate in a panel discussion at the Now Showing @ ALA screening of **3 1/2 Minutes, 10 Bullets**, a film that weaves the story behind the murder of 17-year-old Jordan Davis in Jacksonville, Florida, with an examination of Florida's controversial Stand YourGround law. The law has been questionably applied in Florida, more than once, to justify murder at the expense of young African-American lives. The screening of the film will take place on Sunday, June 26, 1:30 p.m., Orange County Convention Center, Room W207C, with a discussion to take place in adjacent W207A afterwards.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **Ethnic Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) News**

**Submitted by Leslie Campbell Hime**

**EMIERT Chair**

**Richland Public Library**

**Richland, Washington**

### **EMIERT at Annual 2016**

Are you interested in keeping up with trends in ethnic collections, services, and programs? Then the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table is perfect for you. Find us at our ALA events and meetings to learn more about our work and to join the conversation on diversity and inclusion.

### **EMIERT ALA Schedule**

Friday, June 24

Taste of the Town: Exploring historic Eatonville, FL

12:00-4:00 p.m.

(Offsite)

For details visit:

<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2016/05/join-emiert-explore-historic-eatonville-florida-ala-annual-conference> (<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2016/05/join-emiert-explore-historic-eatonville-florida-ala-annual-conference>)

Saturday, June 25

Inter-cultural Programs and Academic Libraries: An Urban Perspective

8:30-10:00 a.m.

Orange County Convention Center, Room W103A

David Cohen Award Presentation to Jaena Alabi/EMIERT General Membership Meeting

10:30-11:30 a.m.

Hyatt Regency Orlando, Room Columbia 34

Achievement in Library Diversity Research Honoree Award Presentation to Dr. Jamie Campbell Naidoo/Let the Circle be Unbroken: Meditations on a Successful Mentoring Circle in 2014

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Orange County Convention Center, Room W102A

Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement Reception

6:00-7:30 p.m.

Rosen Plaza, Room Salon 10

Sunday, June 26

47th Annual Coretta Scott King Book Awards Breakfast

7:00-9:30 a.m.

Orange County Convention Center, Room W304

EMIERT Executive Board Meeting

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Rosen Center, Room Salon 15

EMIERT All Committee Meeting

12:00-1:00 p.m.

Rosen Center, Room Salon 12

Chronicle of a People: Over 250 Years of Florida Jewish History

1:00-2:30 p.m.

Hyatt, Celebration 10

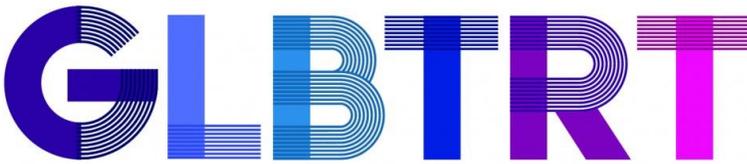
To find out more visit: <http://www.ala.org/emiert/> (<http://www.ala.org/emiert/>)

[Return to Contents](#)

---

**Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) News**

**Submitted by Peter Coyl, GLBTRT Chair**



## A ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Join the GLBTRT at ALA Annual in Orlando for a host of exciting events!

### **Saturday, June 25**

8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

GLBTRT Executive Board Meeting  
HYATT Regency Orlando, Room Bayhill 20

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

GLBTRT Membership Meeting  
HYATT Regency Orlando, Room Bayhill 18

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: The Michael McConnell and Jack Baker Story  
Orange County Convention Center, Room W109B

Join Michael McConnell and Jack Baker, the first legally-married same sex couple in the United States, as they share the story of their fight for equality. Married in 1971, they are the co-authors of the newly-released memoir, *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage* (<http://www.glbtrt.ala.org/reviews/book-review-the-wedding-heard-round-the-world-americas-first-gay-marriage-by-michael-mcconnell-with-jack-baker-as-told-to-gail-langer-karwoski/>) published by the University of Minnesota Press.

McConnell and Baker have been longtime activists for GLBT rights and are the inaugural recipients of the GLBTRT Award for Political Activism, which they will accept at the Stonewall Book Awards program.

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Queer Zines - Where We've Been, Where We Are, and Where We're Going  
Orange County Convention Center, Room W102A

Join Milo Miller, Co-Founder of Queer Zine Archive Project and a panel of Queer Zine specialists (Jenna Freedman of Barnard College, and Violet Fox of College of St. Benedict & St. John's University) to learn about the history of queer zines, the current state of the culture, and where we're going now, including the new Zine Code of Ethics. Get ideas on how to catalog and archive zines in your collection, along with ideas on how to encourage zine culture in and around your library.

### **Sunday, June 26**

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Reflecting Realities: Transgender Fiction for Today's Tweens and Teens  
Orange County Convention Center, Room W102A

Transgender youth are identifying themselves earlier and earlier, and yet they are some of the least represented within youth literature. Parents and youth alike need assistance figuring out how to take steps in their journey, and often they turn to the library for their primary resources. Join Cory Silverberg (author of the 2016 Stonewall Honor Book *Sex is a Funny Word*) and authors Donna Gephart (*Lily and Dunkin*), Brie Spangler (*Beast*), and Meredith Russo (*If I Was Your Girl*) to learn about their newest works and ways to help

transgender youth in your library.

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

GLBTRT Social

Blue Martini Lounge (located in Pointe Orlando Shopping Center; 9101 International Drive #1182, Orlando)

Come mix with the membership of the round table. \$5.00 recommended donation accepted at the door.

### **Monday, June 27**

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Stonewall Book Awards Program

HYATT Regency Orlando, Room Florida Ballroom

Celebrate the winners of the 2016 Stonewall Book Awards. The Stonewall Book Awards are the oldest awards honoring the best in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender writing. Join the GLBT Round Table as it recognizes the winners and honorees in fiction, nonfiction, and children's and young adult categories. The first Newlen-Symons Award for Excellence in Serving the GLBT Community and the GLBTRT Award for Political Activism will also be presented.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **ALA Task Force for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (TF-EDI) News**

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

The Task Force will conclude its work in Orlando. A summary of the Task Force's findings will be published in a report that will be issued shortly before the Annual Conference.

Here's a small summary of the report:

- Marginalized groups, within both the association and the profession, continue to feel undervalued and underrepresented. Furthermore, while ALA has made attempts to address this, many feel as though the Association could do more to engage marginalized groups. The Task Force fully acknowledges this has been an ongoing effort by ALA that has fallen woefully short.
- The Task Force will recommend that ALA include language in future contracts that assures all vendors, conference sites, and others with whom the Association does business will have policies that complement ours.
- The Task Force compiled some additional recommendations for the Association that fall into six main areas:
  1. Conference Program Planning
  2. ALA actions for all Annual Conferences
  3. Working with the community for ALA host cities
  4. Association Priorities and Planning
  5. Membership and Participation
  6. Recruitment, Education, and Retention

The additional recommendations will be fully outlined in a report that will be shared with SRRT once it has been sent to Council. Furthermore, an implementation group will continue over the next three years to implement recommendations made by the Task Force. The implementation group will work with various committees, divisions, round tables, and ethnic caucuses across the association to ensure successful application.

As a final act, the Task Force is co-sponsoring the Opening General Session featuring Michael Eric Dyson on Friday, June 24, 4:00 p.m., Orange County Convention Center, Room Chapin Theater (W320). The Task Force is also involved in coordinating a school supply drive that will complement the Orange County Library Summer BreakSpot program. More information will be coming.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

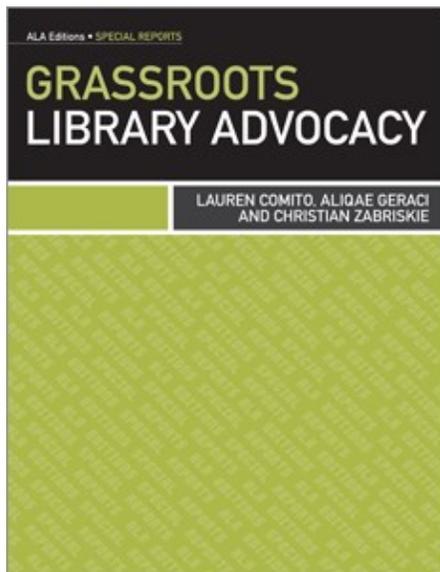
## **Book Review: Grassroots Library Advocacy**

**by Meaghan Hunt Wilson, SRRT Newsletter Reviews Editor, Special Projects Librarian at Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, OK**

**ALA Editions Special Reports: Grassroots Library Advocacy**

**By Lauren Comito, Aliqae Geraci, and Christian Zabriskie**

**ISBN 978-0-8389-1134-1**



If there's one motivation for reading *Grassroots Library Advocacy*, living through a \$1.3 billion dollar state budget crisis would certainly be it. Living in Oklahoma through a legislative session like we saw this year, I sought out all the readings I could to learn more about effective advocacy for library services in a time when everything seems to be on the chopping block. This slim ALA Editions volume is a quick read and a helpful orientation for new library advocates. Geared toward librarians as well as paraprofessional staff, friends, and other stakeholders, I'd recommend this book as a baseline for orienting one's self when it comes to communicating with legislators on the city, state, or federal level.

A key takeaway from this book is the importance of establishing your library's methodology for communicating with legislators and their staff. A helpful appendix provides templates for tracking elected officials and other

key contacts. Identifying who your library's elected officials are, who their staffers are, and how best to reach these individuals (both when in session and out), are important steps toward engaging your library with its legislators. The next level is to educate one's self about each legislator's voting record and how that relates to local library services.

Once you've identified who you are communicating with, determining what to communicate-- and when-- comes next. From establishing message and tone to leveraging press coverage, this book provides information for librarians who are unsure of where to start. For beginning advocates, it outlines strategies for print and social media campaigns. On the less conventional end of the advocacy spectrum, a section on "street art and theater" provides ideas for when a creative approach may work best.

I read this book while traveling home from ALA's National Library Legislative Day in April. Both the NLLD event (where this book's co-author Christian Zabriskie spoke) and the book asserted that advocacy efforts often cost little, but can have great impact. An invitation for your legislators to attend library events or visit for a tour can be a major opportunity both for the official to meet with constituents and for your library to show off its work.

Falling just under 50 pages (not including appendix and index), this book is far from an in-depth guide. But it is a useful start for libraries that are just beginning to dip their toes into legislative waters, and it's something you can digest in a lunch break or two. Read it yourself, share it with trustees and staff groups. The length, format, and language make a potentially intimidating topic very accessible.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **Interview: ALA ODLOS Staff on Merging the ALA Office For Diversity and the ALA Office For Literacy and Outreach Services**

**by Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow, Reference & Instruction Librarian, University of California, Riverside**

The following article is an edited version of a phone conversation between the author and staff members of the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services (ODLOS): Jody Gray, Director, Gwendolyn Prellwitz, Assistant Director, Kristin Lahurd, Literacy Officer, and John Amundsen, Program Officer for Outreach and Communications. The interview was conducted in early May 2016. This article is intended as a follow-up to the interview article featuring Mary Ghikas, ALA's Senior Associate Executive Director, on the topic of the merger of the ALA Office for Diversity and the ALA Office for Literacy & Outreach Services in the March 2016 SRRT Newsletter (<http://www.ala.org/rt/srrt-newsletter-issue-194-march-2016#15>).

**Melissa Cardenas-Dow (MICD): Thanks for agreeing to this phone conversation, Jody, Wendy, Kristin, and John. Let's start with some preliminary introductions. Please tell me a little bit about your roles at ALA. Let's start with Jody. Tell me about your position, title, and brief description of your role, things like that.**

Jody Gray (JG): I'm Jody Gray, Director of the Office for Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services. I have been in this role since November [2015]. I think that's about 6 or 7 months at this point. I came from the University of Minnesota where I had been for 12 years, doing diversity and outreach work.

John Amundsen (JA): John Amundsen. I'm the Program Officer for Outreach and Communications for the Office. I started off with OLOS [Office for Literacy & Outreach Services] in November 2009. I had a

communications background, but as we experienced changes in OLOS, I took on the role of junior Staff Liaison to SRRT, EMIERT, SustainRT, and GLBTRT. I do a lot of communications work like writing press releases and making sure the word gets out about the Office's initiatives. I also assist in conference planning events, meetings, and activities. I have a very wide range of duties.

Gwendolyn (Wendy) Prellwitz (WP): And this is Gwendolyn, Wendy. I started in the Office for Diversity [OFD] as a Communications Officer under Sandra Balderrama, the first Director of the Office. I moved on to working as a Program Officer, working on marketing and visibility for some of the major initiatives of the Office, such as Spectrum Scholarship, which pre-dates the Office for Diversity, and the Diversity Research Grant program, which began in 2002. Now I am Assistant Director and work primarily on the managing of the Spectrum Scholarship program and all of the grants that support and expand the Spectrum Scholarship program.

Kristin Lahurd (KL): And this is Kristin. I'm the Literacy Officer at ALA and I've been in this position for about two years now. My primary role is managing our literacy projects and partnerships. A good example of what that looks like is I represent ALA on the Board and the membership of the National Coalition for Literacy. In terms of our literacy projects, we have a couple of adult literacy and ongoing initiatives. One is the grant program that I manage called The American Dream Starts @ Your Library, which gives grants to libraries to expand their services to adult English language learners. The other is a project we have through IMLS [Institute of Museum and Library Services] and in partnership with an organization called ProLiteracy (<https://proliteracy.org/>), which is currently piloting an online course and resources with three libraries.

**MICD: Based on your own understanding and perspective of the merger of OFD and OLOS, and after reading my previous interview with Mary [Ghikas], where she talked about the rationale of the merger from the senior staff perspective, how did the merger happen?**

WP: I'm not entirely sure. I've pieced together the timeline of the merger. When Satia Orange retired as the Director of OLOS and Miguel Figueroa, who was then the Director of OFD, was asked to take on acting directorship of OLOS. Miguel was with us [the Offices] from 2009 to May 2012. I believe during the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim there was an effort from Mary [Ghikas] to engage many member groups, such as the Committee on Diversity and the OLOS Advisory Committee, in a conversation about making the situation permanent, with a shared budget and a shared director. Unfortunately, with the reality of annual conference for both members and ALA staff, with many conflicting activities and schedules, I wasn't at the Committee on Diversity meeting, so I don't have on-the-site history, a perspective on how members were engaged, and how the discussions were. I just know the conversations took place. It was probably around this same time, around the 2012 budget, that there was a move to budgetarily merge the two Offices.

**MICD: Now that the four of you have to deal with the reality of a merged budget and merged Offices, could you share your perspective on the implementation of these? What are you needing to do? What are your thoughts on moving forward now that the merger has happened?**

JG: I have a very different perspective because I came into this position after the merger was created. I can't say what the transition was like, but I can say that coming into this role I was aware that the decision had already been made. There was a real desire to figure out how the two Offices can work together as one. As a long-time active member of ALA, and a member of the American Indian Library Association [AILA] for over a decade, I was very much aware of a little bit of the history of the Offices and knew who people were. I worked with Wendy, Miguel, and Michelle [Harrell Washington]. My relationships with them were in these little boxes and I didn't really see until I got here that there is tremendous breadth in the work done by the Offices. I also saw that both Offices, OLOS and OFD, were not getting the support, especially the staff support. I mean, OFD had Wendy all by herself and that certainly isn't something sustainable. To have just one person doing the work of the entire OFD, that's really not great. So, one of the things that I've been thinking about when I came is answering the question of how we, the staff, support one another. To stop thinking of this place as two

Offices and start thinking as one Office, with a shared vision, shared goals, and start rethinking some of the way we do things, changing things up.

I know Mary talked about the overlap of people served by the two Offices, I can certainly see that, but they also have very distinct programs, ones that range from recruiting people into the profession to adult literacy and supporting small, rural communities. And of course we have the work of supporting the ethnic caucuses. So the work done here is really broad. That's going to be our challenge in the next year. Figuring out how do we maintain all of these relationships, should we be maintaining all of these relationships. In the configuration we have now, what do we change?

One of the changes we have done is the function of the OLOS Advisory Committee [now the ODLOS Advisory Committee]. They now function pretty much as a board with representatives from all the groups served by the two Offices. We're hoping that they can help us figure out the best way to serve their groups and have them all in one space where they can see how complex the work we do in ODLOS, with so many people with different priorities.

WP: I do see this in a positive light. There are many opportunities here. I've always thought the OFD was stronger because of its relationships with other ALA staff, but also the relationships it has with member groups, an awareness of them. I do think there have always been opportunities for clearer communication and more connectivity, especially when we think of these relationships OFD has nurtured, between individual members and their home within the Association. A lot of people find a home with OFD and OLOS. I think there's a lot of strength and potential gained from the merger. I do wish we had been more a part of the conversation, as the merger was being discussed in 2012, and I think there were actions that could have been better communicated with the membership, had them more engaged in the shape and direction. This might have put us a little bit more ahead, instead of having some years of transition that it felt like we were really strapped thin. That's from my perspective of having being in a one-person Office.

I'm excited about the things I see happening. Seeing the strength of various initiatives, such as the Diversity Member Initiated Group, and the momentum it has, I think what I see speaks to the successful potential of bringing different member groups together.

JA: I absolutely agree. I think in addition to bringing different member groups together creates even more energy behind us, the merger gives the Office the opportunity to take a look at the limited resources that we had as two Offices and as a combined entity. I think it is a net positive for the work that we do and the member engagement that we prioritize.

KL: I don't think I can add any more to this! I think they covered everything pretty well. As all three of my colleagues said, the opportunities for collaboration and strengthening our work, with investing in our member groups through the new configuration of the ODLOS Advisory group will help us work with them and help them serve our mission as one Office.

**MICD: It's not just a merger of two Offices, but really, a redirection. There's also the issue of the name change for the office. What's the status of that? Has it already moved through COO [ALA Committee on Organization]?**

JG: The office names don't have to go through COO. Technically, they are at the discretion of the Executive Director. However, we still wanted input from our members and to get buy-in before we made a final decision.

We had brought that conversation to the last ALA Midwinter Meeting, as one of my first duties as the Director of this Office. We're still having that conversation. Basically, we realized that the amount of people who are invested in this conversation is bigger than we first thought. We definitely approached all of the groups we had relationships with previously, but many of these groups have many individual members with overlapping

functions and presence. More conversation seems needed. While members are getting the opportunity to continue talking about the name change, we are focusing on how we are structuring the Office. Right now that's the priority, especially with Annual coming up. We're looking at how our committees are going to be working together, how our Office and our mission are serving the people and groups we work with.

The name is important. But it's not the thing that gets the work done. I think at this point we want to be getting the work done. It's great that the conversation about the name change is continuing, we just have to continue to work while it's happening and not wait for it to come to a conclusion or resolution. As of right now, we are the Office for Diversity, Literacy & Outreach Services [ODLOS] and we will be going to Annual with that name.

**MICD: It sounds like the name change is really just the tip of the iceberg. And what matters a lot is all the stuff that's under the waterline. The Office structure, the initiatives and programs, the relationships the Office has with various member groups and individual members, these are what matter more. That's what I am hearing. Am I getting this right?**

JG: I would say yes and no. I'd just add the caveat that the name is important. When I first came on board, the Office staff had a day-long retreat where we talked about how we were going to merge the two Offices together. And the biggest take-away. There was a desire for a name change. The way that the name is right now reflects a history that we didn't get the opportunity to be a part of. But that being said, the large membership of ALA needs the time to have more discussion about our name change. We were hoping to have the conversation about our restructuring and mission at the ALA Midwinter conference 2016, but the focus became about the name change and what the current names meant to membership. We had our own ideas and desires about our Office's name and came against the desires of many different individuals in ALA membership, what the different pieces of the current name means. That's what is playing out now. The name change is still important to us. At some point we have some say in what our name is, but we are not going to pause what we are doing until a resolution or conclusion to discussions happen.

**MICD: So it sounds like your the name of the Office is still on the table somewhere?**

JG: Yes.

**MICD: Circling back to our previous topic of what you all think about the merger of the two Offices, what challenges do you see ahead? Are they new because of the merger? Or are they the same as before the merger?**

JG: I think it's a little bit of both, some new challenges and some of the familiar challenges before the merger. For instance, we are really shifting away from the way we previously talked about our work and moving towards focusing on the social justice aspects as a priority of the Office. That's a challenge because not everybody has the same definition or the same process of doing social justice work. So one of the challenges in the Office is all of us staff getting on the same page regarding social justice. One of the ways we did to get around that is we all attended the White Privilege Conference, a social justice conference held every year for the last 17 years. We went as a staff to help us get on the same page around the type of work we want to do.

I think going forward, there are new challenges around the way we communicate with each other. I'm sure you know as a member of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, how there are so many different pieces that can run in conflict with each other that need to happen in order to make things more inclusive for people. Figuring out how to negotiate these differences and conflicts, and in different spaces, and setting priorities around these different issues--that's challenging.

But then there are pieces that we are continuing to struggle with, such as recruiting new people into the profession. I know there's a stronger desire for retaining people in the profession. We haven't really had the same amount of time to focus on this in the same way that we had with recruitment. And then we have

literacy, which is also a piece that has always been there. The merger has really brought renewed focus on it. Much like diversity, literacy touches every part of the Association. All librarianship has a piece, has something to say about literacy. We are really focusing on acting on literacy from access, from a social justice perspective. The intent is that we're not the Office that does the things involved with access and literacy, but we're the Office that can facilitate connections with other ALA Offices, to help communicate and figure out how members want to approach the work they are doing in literacy and access. We can give guidance in literacy and access, especially in terms of social justice.

JA: For the past couple of years, there has been a fair amount of transition. Transition in terms of leadership and transition in merging of the two Offices. Under Miguel Figueroa, there was a renewed emphasis on developing resources, particularly within the library outreach areas. Especially looking at identified areas of library outreach and building resources and toolkits, specific to outlying issues and key areas that are being addressed by various groups throughout the Association. These outreach areas include library services to adult nonreaders, to incarcerated people and ex-offenders, to the LGBT community, to people of color, the list goes on. There are a wide gamut of resources and resource needs. One big challenge is, particularly within the context of a professional Association where the membership volunteers are the content creators, how can we as an Office help our member volunteers succeed and develop these resources to promote service, to promote recruitment and retention. Another piece of that challenge too is, with the merger, we have adopted the social justice framework. How do we put these varied resources in conversation with the new social justice framework we have adopted?

WP: I'm in a place where I'm seeing more opportunities than challenges. Especially as Spectrum Scholarship is heading into its 20th anniversary, there's huge opportunity for us to harness the collective wisdom of that community and translate that into action in retention and organizational culture. Unlike in the past 15 years, there are colleagues to help form that action, so I feel that's a tremendous level of support that we haven't been so fortunate to have for some of our major programs and initiatives. This certainly calls for a lot of rethinking and reimagining. A lot of our programs have been operating on such a shoestring, we didn't have a whole lot of time or chance to think of what we could do differently, what could do better, what we could stop doing, what hadn't we been doing that's an essential, important piece to this work. So I'm really focused on this merger as a net positive. I also want to acknowledge that upon Jody coming in as the new Director, she immediately wanted us to set our collective vision. With each new director of the ALA Office for Diversity, very few visions have been fully implemented.

If you recall, one of the first things that the Task Force on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion did is take a look at diversity reports and recommendations from 1983, I think. In summary, one of the challenges, I think, is remembering our history, acknowledging the work that came before. So I think one of those persistent challenges is taking and finding that time to pause and reflect. Because I do think we are stronger when we find and acknowledge the ideas that have always floated around the Office.

KL: The only thing I would add, which circles back to what Jody has touched on, in terms of literacy--the Office's approach to literacy, and work around literacy, has always been about expanding access to literacy. Literacy as a human right, literacy as an issue of equity. That framework, that concept is not new. But talking about it in these ways, I think, are somewhat new for us. I think a challenge that we have at this point of going forward, particularly if literacy isn't going to be part of the name of the Office (which we don't yet know where we'll end up), how well we will be communicating how literacy fits into the work that we do around equity, diversity, and access. We see that connection really clearly, but our task and our challenge is to communicate that effectively.

**MICD: I'm sure I don't have to tell you that there have been some voices of concern. Especially the concern expressed that the merged Office still doesn't have adequate budget and staffing to address**

**diversity, literacy, and outreach services. The concern is that there are aspects of these three aspects (diversity, literacy, and outreach services) will fall through. Particularly, services to underserved populations, to people in poverty, to vulnerable populations. What comments do you have regarding these concerns?**

JG: I would agree. I do think we are understaffed and we don't have the right funding. As a long-time member of ALA and understanding that this is a member-driven organization, I didn't realize how much power I had, how many things I can influence, can create, and have these spaces. I think it has become the culture within the Association that the Offices do the work of every demand members have, when I know, in reality, there's no way that all of it could ever happen. No organization can function that well. So one of the things I want to get out there is the message that--members, this is your organization. If these things are of concern to you, yes, we will do everything we can within our Office, within our constraints, but we are stronger, have more impact when our members are the ones taking the lead. Because none of us in this room can be the experts in all of those areas. We really do need those voices. I think that's the one thing I have come to appreciate in the 6 months I have worked as Director. I wish I had known that before, as a member. I had so many ideas and I didn't think I could move forward with them without having to go through a bunch of hoops. The reality is if a member wanted to do something, we'll help figure out how to do it through our Office.

Even with member participation, we are definitely aware of our need for more staffing and budgetary support. Our Office has the most constituents of round tables, committees, and member groups, of all the ALA Offices, so one of my tasks as Director is to look at all of these and see how we can get more support. Once again, that's where we need members. That's where we get more money and more staffing, is when we get the members behind us, the Committees behind us, the Task Force behind us. We need those voices speaking loudly. The five of us in this Office, we can work our hardest, but we can never have the same kind of impact as we will with thousands of members behind us.

WP: Yes, we do need more resources. And there definitely have been times when I feel it has been more dire. I do appreciate Jody's perspective as a former member and now as a staff member. I think that's a very important story to tell. I do think we are very nimble and creative and flexible. Working with minimum resources breeds creativity...and a can-do attitude. There have been a lot of missed opportunities just because we haven't been able to always convey to members that though we can't do everything and be all things to all people, there's still an awful lot that we do to move things forward and we're skilled in doing so with the resources we do have. What I'm hoping to see more is, as we've seen with the Task Force on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, having anti-racism workshops at conferences. That type of work does require a commitment of resources, but it's not unreachable. Having a groundswell of members clamoring for programs and continuing education opportunities that ALA hasn't been offering is one of those powerful ways to get the resources for that work. I think that happens more effectively under a bigger umbrella than resourcing our Office. That's ALA making a commitment to do certain types of continuing education.

KL: Even though our reality is we are limited in staff and funds, we are deliberately moving away from siloing our work within ALA. The units in ALA are our partners and our colleagues. So are our members. The work we do is not restricted to our space. We are not the home of diversity, outreach, and literacy. These are the issues and work that the entire Association is charged with, so we are not alone in our work. We can really see the whole Association and the whole member-base as our resources and our partners in that.

WP: The thing that occurs to me too, in terms of the power of membership. I'd like to see some of the conversations had by Task Force on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion also happen in larger circles within the Association. We often talk about what does participation look like in the Association. In that context, resourcing our Office often means resourcing members who traditionally haven't had a voice in ALA with leadership opportunities to direct how ALA uses its resources. What types of professional development

funding? Looking at our appointment processes. What types of activities require a slight shift of resources to really increase participation and inclusion, bring different perspectives into the work that the entire organization is doing? I think these are some of the questions we are asking as an Office, trying to get these sorts of examinations gain more traction in order to create change.

I wanted to acknowledge that I believe there are a lot of members who volunteered above and beyond and have made their service to ALA a full-time job, particularly in our area. So I appreciate that labor, but I also feel like we should incentivize it as an Association.

JA: A lot of the others' comments echo my feelings with regards to the challenges that have been expressed, the opportunities that come with the merger. We have a unique opportunity to sit down and take a look at the different experiences we've all had with different member groups and come together as one Office. A part of it too is to make sure that our issue areas are in the radar of Association leadership and in the radar of membership.

**MICD: That's true. You have two fronts to do the work of the Office: ALA leadership and ALA membership. Those seem to be the two sides you always have to be communicating your services and needs. What do you all think of that?**

JG, WP, JA, KL: Sounds about right.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## **Essay: Socially Responsible Investments Increased to 20% of ALA Endowment by Mike Marlin, Director, Braille and Talking Book Library, California State Library, ALA Executive Board Member**

In recent years, SRRT has advocated for fossil fuel divestment from ALA's investment portfolio through General Membership and ALA Council resolutions that were narrowly defeated. Additionally, Sustainability and Social Responsibilities Round Table efforts to seek details of fossil fuel company investments in ALA's managed funds have continued as the concern grows among our members about curbing climate change, developing practical methods for achieving a sustainable planet, and questioning long term economic (let alone environmental) viability of fossil fuel investments. Since that time, the ALA Trustees have taken steps toward the increase of environmentally aware investments in ALA's endowment. During the February 2016 review process of the large cap core manager--The London Company--and after careful review of investment returns, the Trustees chose to replace The London Company with the Clearbridge Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) focused portfolio. This manager is the first independently managed Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) focused portfolio that the Trustees have found that offered returns competitive with any non-SRI standard portfolio.

ESG-focused investment with Clearbridge takes into account both inclusive and exclusive factors. Examples of the former include regulatory compliance, pollution prevention, workforce diversity, labor relations, and human rights and public policy engagement. Examples of the latter include screening for significant involvement in the manufacture of tobacco, firearms, and alcohol as well as provision of gambling services.

Because of fluctuation in the value of the endowment and its component parts, it is not possible to establish an exact percentage of the endowment that is invested in SRI. However, at this writing, with the addition of Clearbridge Manager to the existing Ariel fund, socially responsible fund investments comprise approximately

20% (up from 2%) of the current ALA total portfolio of \$38.5 million. SRI funds do not contain fossil fuel investments. And, as a reminder, the Trustees do not purchase individual stocks. SRRT, SustainRT, and other association members should know that although the recent Trustee actions are only an incremental step toward full divestment of fossil fuels, ALA trustees are aware of the mounting pressure in society at large and within the association to find fiscally stable investment alternatives as the world grapples with the transition to renewable, clean energy resources. In other words, when making investment decisions, ALA's Trustees will consider ALA core values, such as sustainability, with the caveat that such investments provide the best returns. We can be thankful for this step in a greener direction even as we continue to advocate for more sustainable investments going forward.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## Call for Editorial Board Members

Are you looking for a way to be more involved in the Social Responsibilities Round Table? Are you passionate about books, media and their role in social responsibility? Do you have excellent writing and editing skills? Are you good at meeting deadlines and encouraging others to meet them as well? If so, membership to the SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board might be just the volunteer position you're looking for!

SRRT Newsletter needs to fill five openings on the Editorial Board. Editorial Board memberships are finalized by the SRRT Action Council.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the SRRT Editorial Board, please send a copy of your resume/CV, a brief letter of inquiry outlining your qualifications and interest in the position, and a writing sample and/or examples of previous work to Melissa Cardenas-Dow, SRRT Newsletter Editor, at [micd.srrt.newsletter \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:micd.srrt.newsletter@gmail.com).

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## Call for Submissions

The SRRT newsletter is always looking for good articles, essays and letters to the editor. The next submission deadline is **September 2, 2016**.

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 Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow at [micd.srrt.newsletter \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:micd.srrt.newsletter@gmail.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 or media reviews should be sent to Meaghan Hunt-Wilson, the SRRT Newsletter Reviews Editor at [SRRReviews \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:SRRReviews@gmail.com), indicating "Reviews" in the subject line of your e-mail.

Reviews 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 reviews editor when appropriate.

[Return to Contents](#)

---

## Publication Information

SRRT Newsletter is published quarterly by the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association. ISSN: 0749-1670. Copyright : 2016 by the Social Responsibilities Round Table. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission.

Editor: Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow, [micd.srrt.newsletter \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:micd.srrt.newsletter@gmail.com).

Reviews Editor: Meaghan Hunt-Wilson, [SRRReviews \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:SRRReviews@gmail.com),

Editorial Board Members: Erik Sean Estep, Michael Gorman, Rebecca Martin, and Julie Winkelstein.

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ALA/SRRT. The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.

[Return to Contents](#)