

SRRT Newsletter - Issue 199, June 2017

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Letter from the Editor

by **Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow**



Greetings SRRT Newsletter readers!

ALA Annual 2017 is fast approaching and soon it will be upon us! As usual during this time of year, SRRT activities and programs during the conference are listed in this issue, as well as those of our friends and affiliates.

Several things are of special note in this issue:

- Proposed changes to the SRRT bylaws.
- SRRT-sponsored events with ALA affiliates and groups:
 - Bill McKibben program, co-sponsored with SustainRT, APALA, and AILA
 - Deepa Iyer program and workshop, both events co-sponsored with ALA-ODLOS, EMIERT, and APALA
 - Joint membership meeting and social for SRRT and SustainRT

I also want to point out two essays in this issue. The first is by Julie Winkelstein, HHPTF co-coordinator, and guest author Vikki Terrile. They provide us with a two-voice short piece on the concept of resilience, particularly as this idea holds great sway in issues of homelessness and poverty, among others. The authors ask questions we often overlook, especially when we think about homelessness and poverty as primarily, maybe only, as an individual's struggle to overcome.

The second essay is a re-publication of a letter written by Deepa Iyer, first published on the web platform Letters to the Revolution (<http://letterstotherevolution.com/>). In a time of great despair, when we may think resilience and toughness are what matter most, Deepa's letter reminds me that individual resilience matters very little without community and societal support.

Embodying social responsibility, as individuals, professional groups and institutions, requires focusing on the well-being and self-efficacy of others. The issues and concerns highlighted by SRRT are merely collective, macro-level matters that we are bringing to the conscious attention of our profession and ALA, our professional association.

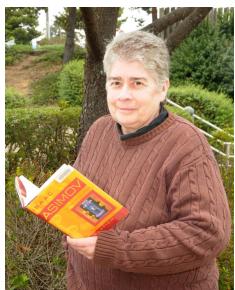
I look forward to meeting many of you, dear readers, at some of the events at ALA Annual 2017.

All the best,
Melissa I. Cardenas-Dow
SRRT Newsletter Editor

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SRRT Coordinator's Column

by Diedre Conkling, SRRT Coordinator, District Librarian, Lincoln County Library District, Newport, Oregon



The ALA 2017 Conference is almost here and there are some great SRRT programs and PLG programs planned.

Programs

- Bill McKibben: Imagining a World That Works — In Time to Prevent a World That Doesn't. The program is on **Saturday, June 24 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.** at McCormick Place, Room S102.
- Dismantling the Master's Bookshelves: Feminism for Libraries in the Real World. The program is on **Sunday, June 25 from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.** at McCormick Place, Room W175c.
- Deprofessionalization, Cutbacks, and Progressive Librarianship in the Trump Era. This program is on

Sunday, June 25 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at Swissotel, Room Lucerne III.

Meetings

Please attend any or all of these meetings to become more involved with SRRT.

- **All-Task Force Meeting**, which includes tables for each SRRT Task Force. Please come and join the discussions being held by each Task Force. You can even table hop and get an idea what several of the Task Forces are doing. The Task Forces are: Feminist Task Force (FTF), Hunger, Homelessness, & Poverty Task Force (HHPTF), International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF), Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force (MLKTF). The meeting is on **Friday, June 23 from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** at the Hyatt Regency McCormick, Room Clark/CC 22AB.
- **SRRT Action Council Meetings**. Everyone is welcome to attend and speak at SRRT Action Council (AC) meetings. We will have two AC meetings.
 1. On **Saturday, June 24 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.** at the Palmer House, Room Clark 07.
 2. On **Sunday, June 25 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.** at the Swissotel, Room Lucerne III.

Social and Membership Meeting

We really hope many of you will be able to attend the social. We are sharing the social with the Sustainability Round Table. There will be a short business meeting so that we may vote on changes to the SRRT By-Laws but the rest of the time is set aside for conversation, food, and drink. The social will be on **Saturday, June 24 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** at McCormick Place, Room W194b.

Revision of the Bylaws

Most of the changes being made in the Bylaws are housekeeping revisions which do not require a vote. These are things like capitalizations and changing the name of ODLOS from OLOS. The other changes are mostly changes that encompass what we are already doing, with a few additions. A complete copy of the suggestions for a revision of the Bylaws will be sent out in email and copies will be made available at the Social and Membership Meeting on **Saturday, June 24 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** at McCormick Place, Room W194b. Suggested revisions below are highlighted.

1. IV. Action Council, #3: add "and SRRT": All Action Council members must be members of ALA and SRRT.
2. IV. Action Council, #5, c.: Delete for one additional term. The reason for this change is because it is often difficult to get enough people to run for Action Council positions and this seemed to be an artificial limitation. If there is a SRRT Action Council person that individuals don't want to serve on Action Council, then it is easy to just not vote for the person.
3. IV. Action Council, #6, a.: This is a continuation of the change made in #5, c. To have the continuation make sense, we need to delete the words to a second term.
4. In recent years Action Council has been allowing a set amount of money for each Task Force that they can use without making a budget request. To put these change into the Bylaws a change need to be made to V. Finances of the Social Responsibilities Round Table. These changes are in section I.

There is also an update to the kinds of communication channels that can be used to provide a Task Force with more funds than the set amount.

"The second Action Council meeting of the Midwinter Conference shall be the budget meeting. Each Task Force will automatically receive an amount set by the SRRT Action Council each year for use that year. The funds do not carry over from year to year. A project group shall submit an itemized budget request in writing at this time or earlier. Supplemental budget requests may also be submitted to the Coordinator at a later date if necessary. The Coordinator will then consult Action Council members by phone, electronic meeting, mail, or email as necessary concerning these supplemental requests."

5. Also under V. Finances of the Social Responsibilities Round Table in #3 a section has been added to state that we will not be requesting dues from students or international SRRT members. We have a pretty healthy balance and this is a way to bring more people into SRRT: "No dues are required for student and international SRRT members."
6. We do want to know what each Task Force is doing but the reporting format in the Bylaws hasn't been used in many years. Instead, Task Forces have been submitting reports to the Newsletter. We just thought we would formalize this process in VI. Task Forces and project groups, #3:
"All Task Forces must submit a written annual report to the second meeting of Action Council during Annual Conference. These reports may be used by the Newsletter Editor as information on the Task Force for general dissemination should submit reports to the SRRT Newsletter. [We haven't really been doing this or been this formal. Reports are being sent in for the newsletter.]"

I look forward to seeing all of you at the ALA 2017 Conference.

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ALA Annual Conference 2017 Schedule



Friday, June 23, 2017

All Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventsbyte.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266418>)

7:30-9:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency McCormick

Clark/CC 22AB

Feminist Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventsbyte.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&>

PresentationID=266460)

7:30-9:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency McCormick

Clark/CC 22AB

Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266534>)

7:30-9:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency McCormick

Clark/CC 22AB

International Responsibilities Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266576>)

7:30-9:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency McCormick

Clark/CC 22AB

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266712>)

7:30-9:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency McCormick

Clark/CC 22AB

Saturday, June 24, 2017

Action Council Meeting I (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266451>)

8:30-11:30 a.m.

Palmer House

Clark 07

APALA President's Program: Rising Up: South Asian, Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities Reshape America (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=257826>)

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

McCormick Place

W184bc

Sponsors: ALA-ODLOS, APALA, EMIERT, SRRT

Bill McKibben: Imagining a World That Works — In Time to Prevent a World That Doesn't

(<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266349>)

1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

McCormick Place

S102

Sponsors: AILA, APALA, SRRT, SustainRT

SRRT and SustainRT Joint Membership Meeting and Social (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266461>)

5:00-7:00 p.m.

McCormick Place

W194b

Sunday, June 25, 2017

'Dismantling the Master's Bookshelves': Feminism for Libraries in the Real World
(<https://www.eventsbyte.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266377>)

8:30-10:30 a.m.
McCormick Place
W175c

Deprofessionalization, Cutbacks, and Progressive Librarianship in the Trump Era
(<https://www.eventsbyte.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=287271>)

1:00-2:30 p.m.
Swissotel
Lucerne III

Action Council Meeting II (<https://www.eventsbyte.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266450>)

3:00-4:00 p.m.
Swissotel
Lucerne III

Progressive Librarians Guild Meeting

4:30-5:30 p.m.
Swissotel
Lucerne III

Progressive Librarians Guild — Braverman Prize Dinner

6:30-8:30 p.m.
Big Bowl Chinese and Thai
60 East Ohio (one block west of Michigan Avenue)
312-951-1888

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Feminist Task Force News

by Sherre Harrington, Director and Liaison to Mathematics & Natural Science - Berry College Memorial Library, Mount Berry, Georgia

American Library Association Feminist Task Force



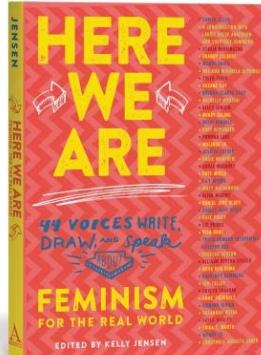
FTF PRESENTS!

DISMANTLING THE MASTER'S BOOKSHELVES

Feminism for Libraries in the Real World at ALA!

Sunday, June 25th from 8:30am - 10:00 am

FEATURING: BRANDY COLBERT, HENA KHAN, KELLY JENSEN, AND MORE!



Nominations are open for the 2018 Amelia Bloomer Project

The Amelia Bloomer Project accepts field nominations from members of the reading public. These suggestions will be passed on to committee members, who will read the books and determine whether or not they should be officially nominated for the list. The deadline for submissions is September 30, 2017. For more information, please visit the Amelia Bloomer Project website (<https://ameliablemmer.wordpress.com/field-nominations>).

We're excited about the FTF Program at ALA Annual

'Dismantling the Master's Bookshelves': Feminism for Libraries in the Real World

Sunday, June 25 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., McCormick Place, W175c

Audre Lorde famously noted over thirty years ago that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." Those opposed to systems of intersectional oppression are still seeking ways to effectively combat them. Lorde suggested, "In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay the groundwork for political action." Former librarian and editor of the new YA book *Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World*, Kelly Jensen, moderates a panel with contributors to *Here We Are* and others to discuss how library workers committed to feminist practices in their personal lives can work in practical ways to resist systems of oppression in their professional lives. The panel will focus on concrete strategies for achieving this goal.

Featuring Brandy Colbert, Hena Khan, Kelly Jensen, and more.

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Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force Essay

Resilience — What's in a Word?

by Julie Ann Winkelstein, HHPTF co-coordinator, postdoctoral researcher, University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Vikki Terrile, guest writer

Julie:

Resilience is one of the words I've been using to describe unaccompanied LGBTQ+ youth who are experiencing homelessness. I knew what I meant by it — it was my way of pointing out these young people are not to be pitied or considered victims. They're tough, because they have to be. But I recently listened to a presentation from the ACRL 2017 conference that made me think again. The presentation, "Resilience, Grit, and Other Lies: Academic Libraries and the Myth of Resiliency," (<https://player.vimeo.com/video/209899451>)

was presented by Angela Galvan, Jacob Berg, and Eamon Tewell. One of their points is that resilience is a way of placing focus on the individual. From their speaker notes: "At its core, resilience individualizes. It serves to reproduce an ideology wherein people are entirely responsible for themselves... Resilience doesn't ask 'How can we change this system to make it better?' It asks, 'How can you cope in order to maintain the system?'"

I sent a link to this talk to Vikki Terrile, a library colleague who, like me, works with young people and people experiencing homelessness. Since this was an issue she had also thought about, we started a conversation about it. And this article came out of that conversation.

Resilience is a quality that in of itself can be considered a good thing. After all, if we weren't resilient, many of us wouldn't have made it this far. We've survived challenging childhoods, economic hardships, loss, trauma, being considered on the margins of the dominant culture, and more. What would we do without resilience? But the other side of resilience is to ask ourselves: Why did we need to be resilient? Why do people experiencing homelessness and poverty need to be resilient? Why do we stress this quality, rather than stressing the need for a society that doesn't accept the inequities that create these life challenges? And are we doing a disservice by taking the focus away from oppression and inequality and focusing instead on the individuals who manage to survive and sometimes even thrive? By emphasizing the concepts of resilience and "grit," are we labeling people because of their lived experiences? Are we allowing their lives to be defined by how well they've survived, despite the odds, despite the hardships? Are we disconnecting ourselves from the harder question of our social responsibility and how we can work toward making resilience unnecessary? When we tell stories about the lives of others, where is our emphasis? On their personal story, because it inspires or moves us? Or are we telling their story so we can highlight the work that needs to be done?

When I first starting thinking about this, I thought to myself: Well, we have to come up with another term for this. Another term that can stand in for what it means to be that tough. But even as I thought that, I realized maybe there shouldn't be a term, because maybe we shouldn't even be talking about being brave, tough, persevering, beating the odds, whatever term we come up with. Maybe we should be saying: Where's the support? Where's the housing, the funds, the political will, the education, the advocacy? Because if we don't, then we're saying: Well, some people will make it no matter what and others won't — and what are we saying about those others? And why are we even talking about them, anyway?

Vikki:

Beyond how the notion of resilience is enacted in libraries (which is a reality so many of us face and will take more than a column to address), what specifically struck me about the ACRL presentation is their orienting question of "Who does this benefit?" When we focus on individuals' resilience (or lack thereof), instead of questioning why systems are oppressive and inequitable and how we can change them, this benefits the systems and those individuals whose power is situated within them. It does not benefit other individuals. It especially does not benefit individuals who cannot or do not demonstrate the resilience that is expected of them by the dominant culture; this lack of resilience is then noted as a character flaw in the individual so that they can be further blamed for their own oppression.

Focus on resilience and grit is a smokescreen that allows inequity to be perpetuated and turns individuals against each other; it casts those who have these qualities as being "better than" those who don't and then permits those who are resilient to judge others for not being so, or to play the game of whose oppression is worse. All of which allows the systemic causes of oppression and inequity to continue unquestioned and unchallenged, and limits any sense of unity and support for addressing these issues at their roots.

In education, resilience and grit are held up as something we should teach our kids (especially low-income children and children of color) so they can be successful regardless of their environment. It's viewed as

another magic bullet solution, one that draws attention away from concerns like: how the privatization of public education is impacting children's learning; how the scapegoating of teachers and the dismantling of unions are impacting children's learning; how the highest rates of childhood poverty in the industrialized world are impacting children's learning; how hunger and food instability are impacting children's learning.

With people who are living in poverty and/or homelessness, resilience and grit play out in conversations around those who are "deserving" and those who are not. It comes up in every NIMBY protest or when stably housed citizens argue "If I can afford a home, keep a job, not rely on the government, etc. why can't 'they'?" It is there whenever someone is described as "pulling themselves out of poverty" or "getting their life on track." None of which addresses how housing costs far outpace wages in many areas, how the social safety net is increasingly full of holes, how mental health issues are unrecognized and unaddressed, how inequitable access to health care creates terrible burdens.

Like Julie, I wonder what language we can use to recognize each other's strengths, language that won't be co-opted by oppressors, language that recognizes that "overcoming" doesn't always look the same for everyone, language that questions why so many are still having to overcome so much.

Final words: We hope we have contributed to a conversation that may already be happening in libraries across the U.S. That together, as members of SRRT and as concerned library staff, we are considering how we frame the lives of those we serve. We continue to serve well our library users but we also look beyond their needs. We look at our institutional attitudes, our role as advocates for societal changes that question the need for resilience and we support an ongoing dialogue that focuses our attention on systems and not only on individuals.

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International Responsibilities Task Force News

**by Al Kagan, African Studies Bibliographer and Professor of Library Administration
Emeritus — University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

The International Responsibilities Task Force is pleased to present a program at the annual meeting in Chicago with Bill McKibben, acclaimed author, environmentalist, and activist.

His books have been published worldwide in over 20 languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Right Livelihood Prize, which is sometimes called the "alternative Nobel." McKibben is co-founder and Senior Advisor at 350.org (<https://350.org/>), an international, grassroots climate movement that works in 188 countries around the globe to organize rallies and spearhead resistance to the Keystone Pipeline. This organization is also credited with beginning the fossil fuel divestment movement.

McKibben suggests that we conceptualize climate change as a threat on the order of World War III and respond accordingly. With this mindset we can make societal shifts similar to those experienced in the 1940s wartime era and move to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage. There is urgency to his message as climate change is happening more quickly than scientists anticipated. McKibben argues that the status quo and doubt are luxuries we cannot afford. The nonviolent war that McKibben proposes will save lives and has the potential to produce millions of jobs.

The program is co-sponsored by the Sustainability Round Table, Asian/Pacific American Librarians

Association, and the American Indian Library Association. The talk will be on **Saturday, June 24, 1:00-2:30 p.m.**, McCormick Place, room S102.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force News

by LaJuan Pringle, Library Manager — Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

There's not a lot of activity to report over the last few months. The Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force will meet on **Friday, June 23, 7:30 p.m.**, Hyatt Regency McCormick, Clark/CC 22AB, during the Annual Conference in Chicago. Plans are currently underway for the upcoming Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Celebration that will take place during the 2018 Midwinter Meeting in Denver.

The Task Force is also going to look at hosting some programs during the 2018 Annual Conference that focus and highlight equity, diversity, and inclusion. More details will be coming.

LaJuan Pringle (<mailto:lpringle@cmlibrary.org>)
Coordinator, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

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

Submitted by Deb Sica, GLBTRT Chair

The GLBTRT Executive Board welcomes all members to join in a very important discussion at this upcoming Annual Meeting. There have been times throughout GLBTRT history when we have changed our name to reflect progress and change in our community. We have traditionally used a range of acronyms to reflect evolution in our community and body politic. Recently, at this past Midwinter Executive Board Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, we started a discussion on this topic. That discussion continued over the RT listserv. Now, we will continue the conversation live and in person at the Annual GLBTRT Membership Meeting on **Saturday, June 24th from 11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.** at Palmer House, Honore Ballroom.

We are evolving and it is time to think about how we Dare to Speak Our Names. This discussion can be challenging. Coming up with a name that is short enough to be used easily in all manners of communication that also reflects our inclusive membership values is incredibly important to our future. In 2020, the RT will be having our Golden Jubilee and will be standing on 50 years of library history! At some point, the issue of the RT's name may be on the ballot so all members will have a voice. However, we thought we would get people thinking and pondering such a change now so we can continue the ongoing and respectful, well-researched discussion in as many membership intersections as possible. This process, if we as a RT choose to engage in it, is slow and will probably not have a resolution until near the 2020 Golden Jubilee event. There are substantial affiliated documents, ALA procedures, websites, branding, etc. that would need to reflect any

changes as well. But, we are due in time to get started!

Thanks to our fab Programming Committee and Past Chair, Peter Coyl, our programming lineup is impressive! Be sure to add them to your schedule!!

Saturday, June 24th from 8:00-10:00 a.m.:

Upstairs Inferno at McCormick Place, W181c

Saturday, June 24th from 8:30-10:30 a.m.:

Executive Board Meeting at Palmer House, Honore Ballroom

Saturday, June 24th from 10:30-11:30 a.m.:

Out and Proud: LGBTQ Literature at McCormick Place, W190a

Saturday, June 24th from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.:

IMPORTANT Membership Meeting — Name Change Discussion at Palmer House, Honore Ballroom

Saturday, June 24th from 3:00-4:00 p.m.:

Intersections and the Experience of GLBTQ Library Folks at McCormick Place, W178b

Sunday, June 25th from 1:00-2:30 p.m.:

GLBT Library Leaders on Queerness at Work: How Queer Identities Impact Leadership Roles, Professional Relationships, and Career Trajectories at McCormick Place, W180

Sunday, June 25th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.:

Annual Social at Columbia College Chicago's Library, 624 S. Michigan Avenue

Monday, June 26th from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.:

Stonewall Book Awards Program at McCormick Place, S102

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Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) News

Submitted by René Tanner, SustainRT Coordinator



[Libraries and Sustainable Thinking | American Libraries ...](#)

americanlibrariesmagazine.org

This is the first column in a multipart American Libraries series that explores the library profession's relationship to sustainability. The conversation about ...

Launch of Sustainability in Libraries series in American Libraries and Sustainability Programming at ALA Annual Conference

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich wrote a wonderful article titled, "Libraries and Sustainable Thinking: Convening communities and being part of the solution for a better world. (<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/libraries-and-sustainable-thinking/>)" She is the SustainRT Governance Committee Chair and a Member-at-Large. Her article launched the American Libraries series, Sustainability in Libraries, which was initiated by SustainRT. This is a multi-part series and there are future opportunities for additional articles. If you have an article idea related to sustainability in libraries, please contact Jodi Shaw (<mailto:jodishaw@icloud.com>), SustainRT In-coming Coordinator.

SustainRT has multiple programs and events planned for the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago

- Bill McKibben. Imagining a World that Works — In Time to Prevent a World that Doesn't (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266349>): **Saturday, June 24, 2017, 1-2:30 p.m.** at McCormick Place, S102.
- ALA Diversity & Outreach Fair at Annual Conference (<http://www.ala.org/offices/olos/divfair/diversityfair2017>). **Saturday, June 24th from 3-5 p.m.** in the Special Events area of the Exhibits Hall.
- SustainRT and SRRT Social Event: **Saturday, June 24, 2017, 5-7 p.m.**, at McCormick Place, W194b.
- Taking the LEED: Sustainable Building Projects @ Your Library (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=257933>): **Sunday, June 25, 2017, 8:30-10 a.m.** at McCormick Place, W185bc.
- Next Gen Library Planning: Strategic Library Planning for Sustainability & Resilience in Community (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=257912>): **Sunday, June 25, 2017, 10:30-11:30 a.m.** at McCormick Place, W185bc.
- SustainRT General Membership Meeting (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=266239>): **Sunday, June 25, 2017, 3-4 p.m.** at McCormick Place, W474b

If you're not a SustainRT member yet, you can add SustainRT to your ALA membership. (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.ala.org_membership_renew-2Dupdate&d=DwMFAw&c=AGbYxfJbXK67KfXyGqyv2Ejiz41FqQuZFk4A-1IxfAU&r=mhQ6-rEfo0HhHYle2d-3_4imZcSKu0aa1j0f4y9Mcy4&m=XHoePkK3aFFK9A38wb86aiyEgQsMheypmgAgxOyeaUY&s=C9RjG-D7W-yV52xfKvcMBEPF9Ab--mDYxX7T_6_ng5s&e=) We look forward to meeting you soon at ALA Annual Conference or through our listserv (<http://lists.ala.org/sympa/info/sustainrt-l>).

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Essay: Letter to the Revolution from Deepa Iyer

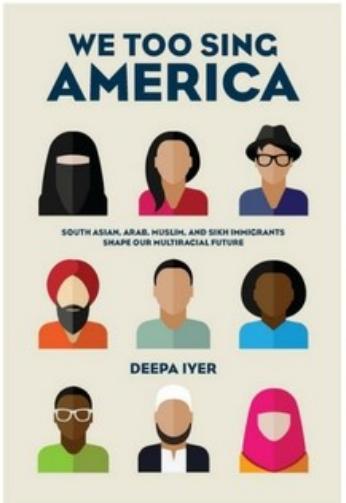
by Deepa Iyer, Senior Fellow, Center for Social Inclusion, Author We Too Sing America
[\(<http://thenewpress.com/books/we-too-sing-america>\)](http://thenewpress.com/books/we-too-sing-america)

This letter was published as part of **Letters to the Revolution** — an online platform where leading artists and activists from marginalized communities were asked to write letters of strength and focus in light of the new administration of the United States government. To read more letters like this one, please go to letterstotherevolution.com (<http://letterstotherevolution.com/>).

In its entirety, this letter is reprinted with permission from the author and the curators of Letters.

2017

ALA ANNUAL



2017 PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM:
SATURDAY, JUNE 24 | 10:30 AM
McCormick Place, W184bc

Rising Up: South Asian, Muslim, Arab and Sikh Communities Reshape America

Over the past 15 years, we have witnessed a rise in xenophobia, racial anxiety and Islamophobia in the United States. On the frontlines of this backlash are Muslim, Arab, Sikh and South Asian communities. Join us for a book talk with Deepa Iyer, author of the award-winning *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Muslim, Arab and Sikh Communities Shape Our Multiracial Future*, to discuss the implications of the domestic War on Terror and the power of storytelling as a means of resistance and solidarity. Book signing to follow.

WORKSHOP:
SUNDAY, JUNE 25 | 8:30 AM
McCormick Place, W183b

Solidarity in Action: Combating Xenophobia and Islamophobia

Current politics include a call for an Executive Order blocking citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries, refugees or otherwise, from entering the United States. While this nativism is not new, dating back to 9/11 and before, examples like this show how crucial xenophobia remains for American nationalism. Come hear award winning author/attorney/activist Deepa Iyer discuss the targeting of South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh Americans and the tools we can use to dismantle Islamophobia and Xenophobia, while supporting the communities that we serve.

A leading social justice advocate, Deepa Iyer is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Social Inclusion and the former Executive Director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT). She also served as a civil rights lawyer at the U.S. Department of Justice in the wake of 9/11, and was the Activist in Residence at the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland.

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To my younger South Asian sister-activist-warriors:

I see you.

You're outraged and determined.

You are ready to build this resistance, to be on the frontlines, to give voice to the struggle. Because this is personal. It is about our people, our families, our communities, ourselves. For 15 years, Muslim, South Asian and Arab communities have been in the midst of an unprecedented and relentless backlash. Our collective community history since 9/11 includes being subjected to hate violence while praying at a Sikh gurdwara (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html>), attending school (https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/during-a-school-year-of-terrorist-attacks-muslim-students-report-bullying/2016/06/14/1b066a44-3220-11e6-8758-d58e76e11b12_story.html) and spending time inside our own homes (https://www.ted.com/talks/suzanne_barakat_islamophobia_killed_my_brother_let_s_end_the_hate). It includes being spied on while participating in Muslim student association meetings and playing cricket and soccer at public parks in Brooklyn and Queens. It includes being required to register (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUaG7tb0lb8#action=share>) with immigration authorities and face detentions and deportations.

Even though our communities have been confronting and surviving backlash and criminalization in the 15 years since 9/11, our lives, identities and futures are at stake like never before. In the weeks since the electoral college made Trump the president of the United States, over 1,000 anti-bias incidents (<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/12/16/update-1094-bias-related-incidents-month-following-election>) have been reported and documented. As though this hostile environment were not enough, there is more coming down the road. Plans for a Muslim registry, the deportations of undocumented people, and the appointments of people who have been openly connected with White nationalist and anti-Muslim views are not wait-and-see possibilities. They are realities under the coming Trump Administration.

This is not just someone else's story. It is deeply personal to you and me. It hits close to home. When we talk about hate violence, we are talking about our younger sisters and brothers who might be subjected to bullying and assault in classrooms and on playgrounds, and about our uncles and aunties who worry that the mosques, gurdwaras and temples they helped to establish will be sites of vandalism and violence. When we talk about policies like the Muslim registry, we are not talking just about the legal violations but about the real fears of our friends who may have to line up at federal agencies to present themselves for interrogation. When we talk about surveillance, we are talking about our fathers and brothers who worry that going to the mosque can lead to entrapment charges. When we talk about deportations, we are talking about our cousins who came to America for a better life and found an intractable and inequitable immigration system.

And because this is personal, you are devoting your heart and soul and body to this moment and to the resistance. I see you, and I'm filled with appreciation and inspiration that you're out there – building, raising your voice, and staying woke and vigilant. And, I also see a past shade of myself in you.

When I was 28, the 9/11 attacks happened. I remember feeling shocked and confused and scared. In the 48 hours after, I also heard a very clear inner call to action, one that would shape the next 15 years of my life. In that time, I've learned more than a few lessons - derived from many, many mistakes and detours - about sustenance during times of crisis and struggle. This journey you have committed to is long, and it's normal and natural to become weary. Here are some markers to guide your way, drawn from my own personal experience and offered with humility and love.

Get Clear about Your Role.

It's natural to want to be involved with multiple efforts, organizations, and networks during this time, and to want to speak up about the range of threats coming our way. But this moment requires us to get focused and clear, not scattered and confused. Base your role in the movement by understanding what the needs are in our communities, and by engaging in a process of self-inquiry: What am I good at and what do I enjoy doing?

Who can I influence? What do I not know, and how can I seek out that knowledge? How can I remain connected to the communities I care deeply about in a real, authentic way, and not just from a distance? How and where can I be of service, from that place of skill and joy and connection?

For example, if you don't like to fundraise, then don't start an organization and become its director (also an ongoing note to self). On the other hand, if have the skills and enjoy making know-your-rights presentations to community members, then focus on conducting a series of information exchanges at a local place of worship. Are you interested in telling stories, documenting movement history, conveying and translating information, creating a safe space, facilitating conversations, or changing narratives? Being clear about how we will disrupt, build bridges, and resist is a critical question that each of us must answer in this moment.

Identify Your Safety Net.

On a personal level, self-critique has always been my strength – and my greatest weakness. There's a voice in my head that often whispers, "Should you be doing this? Is this your role? Maybe you should get out of the way." Or my favorite: "You didn't do that right." Sound familiar, maybe?

I've learned to manage my inner critic by validating its need to speak up and relying on my safety net – a small group of people who have known me for a while, and who won't simply "yes" me or pat me on the back or Facebook-like everything I say and do under the guise of being supportive. Instead, these are people who kindly look me in the eye and ask the tough questions about my role, about my intentions, and about my limits – and patiently, and without judgment, engage me. Find that group of four to five people who will provide you with soft landings when you fall, and who will be your gentle guides. And, do the same for someone else in your tribe of activists.

Lift each other up.

I know that we all agree with this value: sisters must look out for each other. But for some reason, social justice work, especially in the age of social media, can often feel like a high school environment. The culture of sniping, second-guessing, and sub-tweeting is toxic. I'm not immune from this culture either, and it takes tremendous discipline to stay away from engaging in it. Let's refrain from disparaging people and holding accountability sessions on social media – and rather to simply pick up the phone and have direct conversations with people (especially if we know them), and to give each other the benefit of the doubt. And more importantly, let's commit to lifting up our sisters every opportunity we can, whether it is to open doors for them, recommend them to others, and to mentor them. We can't be the backbone of a movement of resistance if we are not cultivating a practice of support and care for each other.

Shine On.

In the midst of the turmoil that exists in our nation today, we still have to sparkle. Every day. It's draining to be a woman of color right now, and to hold space for the different ways our identities are being threatened and attacked. It's natural to feel sad, anxious, worried, scared, and helpless. I've felt those emotions over and over since the election.

And that's why it is imperative to nurture the fullness of who we are as human beings. Being a social justice warrior 24/7 can prevent us from leading with a clear head and can contribute to burn-out quickly. Let's give each other permission and inspiration to glitter, shine and sparkle. As I wrote this letter, I was moved by Assata Shakur's Message to My Sistas (<http://www.assatashakur.org/sistas.htm>), in which she wrote to Black women: "Sisters, We have been the backbone of our communities, and we have got to be the backbone of our nation ... We don't have no time to play around."

No, we don't. In this struggle, let's lead with principled resistance, self-awareness, and sparkle.

In sisterhood and solidarity,

Deepa

About the author: A leading social justice advocate, Deepa Iyer is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Social Inclusion (<http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/>) and the former Executive Director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) (<http://saalt.org/>). She also served as a civil rights lawyer at the U.S. Department of Justice in the wake of 9/11, and was the Activist in Residence at the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland (<https://www.aast.umd.edu/>). She blogs at www.deepaiyer.com (<http://www.deepaiyer.com>) and tweets at @dviyer (<https://twitter.com/dviyer>). Deepa is the author of the award-winning book *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Muslim, Arab and Sikh Communities Shape Our Multiracial Future* (<http://thenewpress.com/books/we-too-sing-america>).

Join SRRT, APALA, ALA-ODLOS, and EMIERT in welcoming Deepa to the 2017 ALA Annual Conference during two programs:

- 2017 APALA President's Program: Rising Up: South Asian, Muslim, Arab and Sikh Communities Reshape America (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=257826>), **Saturday, June 24, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.**, McCormick Place W184bc. Book signing to follow.
- Solidarity in Action: Combating Xenophobia and Islamophobia (<https://www.eventscribe.com/2017/ALA-Annual/fsPopup.asp?Mode=presInfo&PresentationID=267945>), **Sunday, June 25, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**, McCormick Place W183b.

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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 **September 1, 2017**.

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[at]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[at]gmail.com), indicating "Reviews" in the subject line of your e-mail.

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