

MINUTES

SRRT Action Council
Saturday, February 5, 1994
Midwinter Meeting, Los Angeles

In Attendance:

Denise Botto, Charles Willett, Dotty Granger, Madeleine Tainton, Debra Gilchrist, Stephen Stillwell, Roland Hansen, Wendy Thomas, Raymond Markey, Theresa Tobin, Elizabeth Morrisett, Carol Barta, Dan Tsang, Chip Stewart, Chris Dodge, Melissa Riley, Al Kagan, Rosemary McAndrew, David Williams, Maria Jankowska, Elaine Harger, Deidre Conkling, Paul Hawkins

MINUTES of annual conference approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Denise Botto, SRRT representative to Literacy Council, would like to resign. Task Force chairs are asked to announce the opening to their members and ask for nominees for a replacement.

Roster updates should be submitted to either Stillwell or Gilchrist.

OLOS is sponsoring a hearing on library service to the poor on Monday.

OLPR is revising section 54 of the policy handbook. "Individual lifestyle" will be changed to "sexual orientation" among other changes. Stillwell has changes and encourages all to review.

First copy of the self study is out. Stillwell suggests we all review it.

SRRT tabled a proposed resolution at annual conference regarding the program ALSC has with the Boy Scouts. ALA's policy is to not affiliate with groups that discriminate. Stephen wrote them a letter requesting a meeting to discuss the issue. ALSC has responded and has expressed no interest in such a meeting, stating that their policy decisions are up to their policy board.

Israeli Censorship letters: Stillwell received a letter itemizing the geographic distribution of the 156 letters ALA received regarding ALA's statement against "Israeli censorship. 17 from Maine, 16 from California, 45 from New York were the three largest states. He has reviewed 51 of them: one was an inquiry, 8 were duplicates of letters to other Executive Board members; 4 were pro and 36 were against. 9 identified themselves as non members. At least 25% identified it as a Jewish issue which was not SRRT's intent. Stillwell explained that names were removed from some of the letters. He will suggest names be removed from remaining letters so he can view them all. He was asked to summarize this for the newsletter.

SRRT members are needed to run for Action Council. Task Force chairs are encouraged to solicit their membership for nominees. SRRT members are also needed to run for ALA Council.

Al Kagan asked that Sandy Berman's letter to Action Council members be added to the agenda.

ACTION

Library History Round Table requested SRRT co-sponsor their 1994 and 1995 programs. "Library Books and the Civil Rights Movement" for 94 and "Who's Afraid of Oscar Wilde: the Importance of Being Earnest about Gay and Lesbian Literature" in 95. Action Council recommended a representative be appointed to their program committees. Passed unanimously.

Carol Reid, Albany NY was nominated and approved as a member of the Editorial Board.

RESOLUTIONS

1. South Africa.

developed by Submitted by Kagan, 2nd by Harger. Kagan spoke in favor of the resolution, stating that it was *the policy* similar to a policy of the National Council of Churches regarding a code of conduct for businesses operating in South Africa. ALA Executive Board was discussing whether the association's divestment policy should change (see recent issue of American Libraries.) Their discussion was suspended since the issue was appropriate for Council, not Executive Board. International Relations Committee also has it on their agenda. EJ Josey was recommending reinvestment but with a socially responsible policy. EJ has reviewed this code and approves with SRRT this resolution to Council. Approved unanimously.

2. Internet

Submitted by Williams, seconded by Tobin. Williams spoke in favor of the resolution. Acknowledged how complicated this issue is. ALA has been saying all the right things but weak in terms of coalition building. If access to Internet is priced above a particular level it will be beyond the capabilities of many libraries, non profit organizations and individuals and will affect our professions ability to provide service. Our lobbyists are working inside the beltway to plead for equitable access but now grassroots mobilization is needed. Letters and other activities to raise public consciousness outside the library community are needed. ALA needs to be encouraged to turn up the steam on this issue. LITA should underscore it more sharply. Resolution should describe what a good infrastructure will look like. ALA is good at articulating issues and setting policy but where is the grassroots endeavor? SRRT should also form a Task Force that considers the issue.

Riley distributed a LITA brochure about the Internet. The brochure lacks teeth since it is only principles for access, not mechanics. We need to insure equal access to the conduits and to make connections free or very inexpensive to libraries as well as insure equal access to the content. Cyberspace is a national resource; we must reserve a large portion for free access.

Stillwell: the resolution is good but too long.

Williams requested a committee that will be charged with development of a new draft.

Morrisett: SRRT has an interest in access; committee should be supported.

Harger: what is stated in the resolves is not much different than brochure. Most will say equal access is an ALA concern but this resolution doesn't distinguish SRRT's position from what ALA itself would say. SRRT could call on the government to have a "NPR" for the information infrastructure. ALA seems to have accepted it's going to be a marketplace.

Conkling: there's a large rural community that still doesn't have any access.

Kagan: We should recommend to LITA that item #1 in the brochure specify free access to everyone through their local libraries.

Tobin: Core of resolution is encouraging grassroots organizing. If we encourage funding for access through all publicly funded libraries individuals will then become empowered.

Moved and seconded a substitute motion: That SRRT appoint an ad-hoc project group to 1.) talk to drafters of the LITA brochure and encourage them to include publicly funded libraries as free outlets and 2.) redraft a shorter version of the resolution. Project group members: Williams, Riley, Morrisset, Harger. Passed unanimously.

ROLE OF ACTION COUNCIL

Submitted by Kagan. Seconded by Hansen.

Kagan addressed SRRT's decentralization and the balance between Action Council and the Task Forces. The Task Forces determine the agenda without coordination. Resolution would help us focus on priorities and set an agenda. Action Council was recently consumed with Israeli censorship without setting it as a priority.

Botto: Our responses are so reactive because of short time frames.

Morrissett: SRRT's historical role was to open up ALA so there was a voice from below. Large focus on young energy. SRRT has suffered in past times because our talent goes to council, SRRT is dependent on new people through the task forces. That is how new issues reach us.

Williams: The resolution is a fine idea, but how would we establish priorities? Taskforce work usually falls to one or two members. Williams felt he was not given help from other Task Forces last year and felt he was left to pursue it on his own. Can't see how SRRT could have helped unless they provided collective leadership. It would be helpful for us to coordinate but unsure how we would implement.

Kagan: Orientation of Action council could be the focus of the Coordinator.

Tsang: No time to discuss priorities in each conference, but could pick themes and focus on them. Top issues could be addressed.

Stillwell: Membership survey was done a number of years ago and membership was fairly non-committal.

Harger: Resolution should include a proposal. Confused as to what happens as a result of this resolution.

Unknown: Our priority should be that SRRT is a place for radical action.

Botto: Trying to do too many steps in one resolution; should keep only first resolve.

Tobin: SRRT's major strengths are the philosophies of the Task Forces and centralizing it may

take energy away. May be wise to have at-large members come together and look at what their role is and how it differs from Taskforce members of Action Council.

Williams: Must also examine how SRRT relates to other units in ALA. Useful to poll the membership but shouldn't feel we have to march on lock step with the survey.

Hawkins: Membership survey is to add ideas not to subtract ideas.

Resolution Approved: 1 opposed, one abstention. Coordinator will appoint the subcommittee.

Submitted by Debra Gilchrist,
Action Council Secretary