Social Responsibilities Roundtable Action Council I Minutes
American Library Association Midwinter Conference
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
January 25, 2003

Attendance: Michael Santangelo, Secretary for SRRT and Chair--Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force; Mary Biblo, SRRT member and ALA Council member, Jane Iagold, SRRT Newsletter Editor; Elizabeth Piccard; Virginia (Ginnie) B. Moore, Chair--Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Exchange Task Force; Mark Rosenzweig, ALA Councilor at Large and IRFT Chair; Katia Roberto, Aureole Maria Johnstone, incoming SRRT Treasurer; Mark Hudson; Marie Jones, Chair--Alternatives in Publication Task Force; Tom Twiss; Jennifer Baltes, Chair--Feminist Task Force; Jim Kuhn, SRRT liaison to Intellectual Freedom Roundtable; Theresa Tobin; Deirdre Conklin; Carole J. McCollough, Chair--Coretta Scott King Award Task Force; Elaine Harger, IRFT Chair; Rory Litwin, SRRT Coordinator; Al Kagan, SRRT Representative on ALA Council and IFRT Chair; Nel Ward, SRRT Treasurer.

Introductions

Call for Announcements

Elaine Harger, ALA Councilor, requested to move discussion of ALA One Voice Policy right after discussion.

Mary Biblo urged SRRT members on ALA Council to cast their vote for Billy Beal to be on ALA Executive Board. Mary stated that he was the most progressive voice running and the Executive Board is in great need of progressive voices.

Minutes: Minutes from Action Council I for the ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia are not able to be located. At the time, there was not an official SRRT secretary. Elaine put forward a motion to accept minutes for the Atlanta Conference’s Action Council II meeting. Marie Jones seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Resolutions for ALA Council

Elaine and Ann Sparanese, ALA Councilor, announced they are putting together a resolution on the war in Iraq to present to ALA Council. They said they would have the resolution ready by Action Council II meeting. Elaine and Ann would be bringing the resolution to ALA Council before bringing it to SRRT.

Mark Rosenzweig and Tom Twiss passed out documents on the ALA discussion on destruction of Palestinian libraries. Rory called for motion to make this a SRRT document. Elaine voiced support for approving the documents and urged members to be prepared for ALA to rescind its original resolution on the destruction of Palestinian libraries. Elaine added that these documents will reinforce council members’ support for the resolution as well as restate to them the reasons they supported the resolution in the first place. A motion was forwarded to accept the documents as SRRT documents and was approved unanimously.

Theresa Tobin questioned whether there was any activity in Council around the USA Patriot Act resolution. Al Kagan, SRRT representative to ALA Council, said there was a resolution coming up at Midwinter to address the USA Patriot Act. Al reported that there were two contentious parts. The first being the choice of using the following: repeal or amend or change. Al said that
if the resolution brought to the floor of Council did not use the word repeal, members would request that the word be inserted on the floor. The other issue concerned whether the instructions for distribution ought to be written into the resolution or else ALA would do nothing with the resolution but let it sit. If the document is brought to the floor without instructions for distribution, then some members will try to amend the resolution from the floor. Rory questioned the SRRT members as to any questions or directions they would suggest for how Al should approach the resolution. Aureole Johnstone questioned why it was so difficult to get the word repeal into the resolution and Al commented that ALA needed more progressive councilors. Mark Rosenzweig commented that Al was trying to appear nice and not confrontational. Mark added that ALA might view the word repeal as unpatriotic and to send that message that ALA only disagrees with part of the USA Patriot Act. A. Johnstone commented on the length of time it was taking to put out this important resolution. Rory said the Council appeared to only want to deal with the parts that specifically addressed library concerns. Elaine said she recalled a recent email that suggested that any resolution against the USA Patriot Act use the full, official name of the act and not just the abbreviated form. She said representatives on the Council floor should consider this when resolution is presented. Mark Hudson recalled an email that dissected parts of the act, but he felt that we ought to send a message to repeal the spirit of the law. Any important aspects of the law could be re-legislated. Al said he was not concerned with what they call it in the resolution, and what was most important is that the resolution includes the word repeal and indicate distribution. The question was raised as to if what we see in the current revision better than ALA doing nothing. Mark said that he was not so sure if agreeing to this language would be better than doing nothing and that by accepting any other word but repeal would be endorsing the legitimacy of the act in the first place. Marie asked what would happen if SRRT’s position was to repeal the act and how would this affect Al’s voting. Al said there would be another meeting to draft the resolution by the Committee on Legislation on Sunday at 2pm in the Convention Center. Theresa Tobin stated that Bernie Saunders, Vermont member of the House of Representatives, was putting together a bill to repeal sections of the Act. Al said he heard Saunders was waiting to see what ALA was going to do before going forward. Jim Kuhn asked if there was mention of a severability clause. He defined a severability clause for the SRRT members as a clause that allows for the rest of an act to stand if part of it is ruled unconstitutional. Rory summarized that there were two questions in front of SRRT: 1) to call for repeal and 2) If the word repeal is not put in and the resolution only discussed certain parts of the USA Patriot Act, how ought Al to vote. Marie Jones put forward a motion for SRRT’s position to be for the repealing of the entire act. Jenny seconded the motion and the motion carried. Al asked for advice on how he ought to vote if the word repeal was not put into the resolution and the words amend and change was used. Theresa Tobin added that if SRRT voted no, we must explain this to our supporters. Mark R. suggested Al abstains if it came to that. Mark also discussed the problem of jurisdiction over the issue, as the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Committee on Legislation were debating who had authority over this issue. The Intellectual Freedom Committee wanted to put its language on the resolution, with a more “patriotic” sound and references to the “Founding Fathers”. Jim Kuhn corrected Mark and said he thought it was the Intellectual Freedom Round Table not the Intellectual Freedom Committee that was having the disagreement with the Committee on Legislation. Aureole questioned whether jurisdiction really mattered to SRRT and what was most important was that the word repeal appear in the resolution.

ALA’s One Voice Policy
SRRT members at Action Council I went on to discuss SRRT’s recent conflict with ALA’s “Speaking with One Voice Policy”. Jim Kuhn, SRRT’s liaison to the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, discussed IFRT’s recent interest in developing a new relationship with SRRT. He said the IFRT was concerned over SRRT’s trouble with this policy. He gave an outline of IFRT’s 6
concerns over ALA’s One Voice Policy: 1) Should not undermine council approved policies 2) The line should be gray between support and dissent of ALA policies 3) What does letterhead mean? 4) Need more policies and procedures to reduce confusion 5) Policies running ALA, a democratic institution, should be approved by Council 6) Boilerplate disclaimer language should be mandated to ALL divisions, sections, and roundtables. Jim said IFRT was waiting to hear from other groups as to their feelings on the policy. AI Kagan reminded the members that SRRT’s primary motive in the debate is the ability to disseminate anything we do on our own letterhead with the proper disclaimer language. Members raised questions about the ability to speak out about our own work in the sections, divisions, and roundtables. Jim Kuhn discussed Mary Ghikas, a lawyer for ALA, and a group she was forming to discuss this issue. Ginnie Moore said SRRT needed a member to be in this group, and Rory replied that he volunteered to be in it, but we needed more than one SRRT member in order to be effective. Elaine said she was interested to be in the group, but advised caution to the members. Elaine said the notion of having a procedural practice for dissent is dangerous. Elaine restated the goal on SRRT regarding this issue, to be unhindered in our abilities to communicate our decisions, and that disclaimer language should suffice. She went on to add that Mary Ghikas’ group ought to work to put disclaimer language back in the handbook. Rory said the initial discussion involved groups within ALA not doing political advocacy, and political advocacy was originally defined as not supporting specific political parties or political candidates. Jim Kuhn said most people would support a policy against advocacy for political parties or candidates. Miriam Crawford, SRRT member, said that there needs to be a distinction made between issues with which ALA has an official policy/statement versus issues for which ALA has never issued its position. SRRT often wants to speak out on issues for which ALA has never created a policy or statement. Elaine commented that this was an excellent distinction, but added there have been situations in which SRRT has been in trouble for issuing a statement in support of an ALA policy. She used the example of a letter SRRT wrote to the Boy Scouts of America over its policy on homosexuality. SRRT’s position was in keeping with ALA’s non-discrimination policy, yet SRRT was still censured. Mary Biblo said this has been an issue with SRRT for years, and that ALA has a zero tolerance policy for censorship outside of ALA, but a different policy of censorship inside ALA. Ginnie Moore said SRRT must make it known that we will not be censured. She said it was the right path to work with IFRT, to volunteer to be on Mary Ghikas’ committee, and to be a part of the discussion on making procedure on this issue. Mark R. said the idea of cooperation with other roundtables was a good one, yet SRRT does not need to find ourselves in a position to be a party to our own execution—to our own undoing. Al agreed and said if SRRT embarks on this process, we need to go in with our own bottomline—the complete freedom of speech and communication on our letterhead with the proper disclaimer language. Rory asked if Mary Ghikas is preparing a policy to bring to council. Jim Kuhn answered that asking the question in the new committee was the first step. Mark Rosenswieg reminded the group that one reason for ALA’s recent crusade on the issue is their fear of jeopardizing their 501©3 status, and fearful that anything sent out by a group like SRRT could be misinterpreted as official ALA policy. Rory gave the example of ACRL’s testimony to Congress over library fees, with ALA’s position being against fees. Rory asked is there were any motions on the issue in the past. Al answered that SRRT had a motion years ago saying that we think the policy is illegitimate and we will continue as we see fit.

ALA/APA Progress Report

Tom Wilding, ALA/APA representative, spoke to SRRT over the progress that has been made over ALA/APA since he last spoke to us in June 2002. Tom made some of the points in his report: transition team for ALA/APA is working with council to complete and revise bylaws to meet members’ concerns; the business plan has been completed for ALA/APA; ALA/APA website has been completed with financial policy layout; transition team still sets 5th year by when the
ALA/APA revenue stream will be able to pay back loan; ALA/APA has been chartered in Illinois, yet still has not applied for 510©6 statue, for it needs bylaws and a complete budget to do so; ALA/APA will officially go forward when bylaws and budget is approved by Council; there will be a revenue stream in the first year; pay equity will take longer to develop revenue stream; Mitch Freedman’s Better Pay Equity Task Force is over this summer and will more over to ALA/APA. Mark Hudson asked how seamless is the transition of Better Pay Equity into APA. Tom answered that Mitch was working with Carla Hayden to make the transition orderly. Aureole Johnstone said that initially the plan was that those members on the Better Pay Equity committee of ALA/APA would be appointed by Carla Hayden; she continued and asked whether the members on this committee will always be appointed or will they be elected. Tom W. answered appointed and reminded the SRRT members that there is no membership component to ALA/APA, so the members of the Better Pay Equity must be appointed. Mark R. commented that the ultimate fate of the Better Pay Equity relied on whether it generates a revenue stream. Tom W. said there was a reliance on all of ALA/APA developing a revenue stream, and there were 4 revenue streams, which would all be poured into one pot to fund all parts of ALA/APA. Tom said that ALA/APA could change anything in APA in regards to funding and revenue streams. Mark R. commented that it appeared that success for ALA/APA and the divisions in it was based upon being viable in a business sense, so if better salary component is not viable in a business sense, it can be removed from ALA/APA. Tom W. said Council is able to cancel any section not holding up. Al Kagan asked a question over the use of the term technical workers to describe librarians and talks about “training workers”; Al asked whether we were not professional workers and are we not educating people and not simply training them. Tom W. answered that the language was changed, and it no longer uses technical workers and uses continuing education instead of training. Jenna Freedman verified there was a correction made to the language. Al went on to ask how committee will do business with ALA/APA. Tom W. said by a 2/3 vote. Al reminded the members that meetings by email or conference calls were against ALA open meetings policy. Miriam Crawford raised concerns over creating a two-tier system for librarians: those with certification and those without. Rory asked Tom about the revenues streams projected from APA commissioned reports, and about whether the reports would be commissioned by ALA. Tom W. said reports could be commissioned by ALA, but most likely be commissioned by state library association chapters over the issue of pay equity in their area. Mark R. asked why they thought APA would provide a better alternative than another group out there. Tom W. said ALA/APA would have the expertise on library issues that would not necessarily be held at local levels. At this point, the discussion of ALA/APA ended and Tom Wilding left the meeting.

New Labor Issues Task Force
The members of SRRT next discussed the creation of a new task force concerning labor issues. Jenna Freedman stated to the Action Council and SRRT members that the Better Pay Equity Task Force ends at the end of Mitch Freedman’s tenure as President of ALA and she said she wanted to continue the work of the Unions Working Group of the Special Presidential Task Force. Jenna wanted to see a labor issues group on both levels, in ALA and in ALA/APA. Mark R. liked the idea and said it is very likely a necessary action for the salary component of ALA/APA would most probably die. Mark R. raised the point that there would be arguments with ALA over the advocacy nature of this task force. Jenna commented that she thought no one would be paying much attention to a Unions Working Group and she should continue until challenged. Marie Jones clarified that we are not taking over an APA committee, but creating a whole new SRRT committee. Mark R. said union issues are advocacy issues and advocacy issues are incongruent with 501©3 status. At this point, Rory discussed meeting he had with a Deborah Coldwell Stone at the Freedom to Read’s Lawyers for Libraries conference. They discussed a top ALA lawyer, who Rory discovered does not have a first amendment background yet has been advising ALA on
such issues. Jenna sent around a petition at this time of members who wished to be a part of the Labor Task Force.

SRRT History Report
Rory introduced the topic of the SRRT History Report, a project initiated by a friend of SRRT member Kathleen de la Pena McCook. The person is writing a history of SRRT, and was seeking to have a student researcher help with the project. She wanted to know if SRRT would give a stipend for a student researcher to go to the ALA Archives and to attend the Annual ALA Conference. Rory then asked Nel Ward, SRRT Treasurer, about using SRRT administration funds for this stipend. Nel said that there never was a budget submitted for SRRT administration and that it would be a good idea to submit a budget for SRRT administration in order to fund this stipend.

Treasurer’s Report
Members heard the Treasurer’s Report. Nel gave a history of her tenure as treasurer of SRRT and then went on to business. She went over the budget for SRRT, and discussed that, outside of the revenue generated for SRRT by the Coretta Scott King Award Breakfast, SRRT made only $1500 last year. She asked the Action Council to drop Task Force expenditures to $500 for the next year. She asked members to give Aureole Johnstone, the new treasurer for SRRT, their budgets by Monday. Marie Jones asked Nel as to when the fiscal year starts according to ALA, and Nel answered September 1. Al proposed the motion to drop task force expenditures to $500 for fiscal year 2003/2004. Mark R. seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Task Force Reports
Action Council and members heard the task force reports.

• Ginnie Moore, chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force, discussed the group’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Celebration happening at Midwinter and she went over plans for the Toronto Conference’s Multicultural Idea Exchange.

• Marie Jones, chair of Alternatives in Publication, presented an information sheet on AIP, discussed the Eubanks Award, and talked about the AIP’s Annual Free Speech Buffet. She said there were many independent publishers in Toronto. Marie then went on to talk about Alternative Voices, a catalog of essential books and media that most libraries do not carry. She also discussed the discovery of an AIP bank account from the past, and she is attempting to track down the person who opened this account and get the account numbers from them.

• Al Kagan went on to discuss the International Relations Roundtable. Al discussed the two handouts on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries. Al said IRTF will do a program on grassroots librarians and the War on Iraq or the War on Terrorism. He also may do a program on librarians who went to the West Bank and Iraq. IRTF is also working to enhance its web site. Tom Twiss, also a member of IRTF, said he was working on another page on alternative resources on Cuba or just Cuban libraries, on alternative resources on the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict. Tom wants to move his web site from his staff account at the University of Pittsburgh to a SRRT page. Al added that unlike when ALA is held in the United States, Cuban librarians will be allowed to enter Canada for the conference. The IRC received a grant to bring five Cubans to Toronto. Al said he wanted to have an event to host the Cubans, but he wanted to know if it should be SRRT wide or just IRTF.
At this point, Rory mentioned that we needed a motion to extend the meeting as we were over time. Al made a motion to extend the meeting ten minutes. Jenny Baltes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- Rory went back to the question raised by Al concerning the party for the Cuban librarians. Rory was curious of the logistics of the party, including: location, food, and music. Rory wanted IRFT to organize the event and SRRT administration would offer financial assistance. Nel added that they needed a number. Aureole suggested SRRT ask members of the Canadian Library Association to help out with financial assistance. She also suggested a cover charge. Nel proposed SRRT give $500, IRFT spend $500, there be a cover charge, and IRFT seek co-sponsors.

- Jenny Baltes, chair of the Feminist Task Force, passed out an information sheet on FTF’s scheduling and short term goals. Jenny said that FTF had moved the deadline for the Amelia Bloomer booklist to January 23rd. Mark R. talked about the Women in Prisons Book Project, and said he arranged for donations of forty boxes to this project. Jenny went on to discuss closing FTF’s listserv to members, but said FTF members had currently decided to keep it open.

- Carole McCollough, chair of the Coretta Scott King Award Task Force said that the Coretta Scott King Task Force was looking at making another publication relevant to the Coretta Scott King Award books, which would be similar to a popular discussion guide that the committee had published in the past. It would be a curriculum guide for the last ten years of CSK Award winners. She also talked about a panel CSK was co-sponsoring at Annual called “Creating Culturally Sensitive Books for Children.”

- Michael Santangelo, chair of the Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force, talked about the group’s plans for Annual. He said, although he was initially planning to cancel HHP’s program on services to the Homeless, he had decided to continue, as it was such a timely issue. He said the group needed better recruitment, as much of the work fell on his shoulders. He also said they needed people to help improve their web site. It was very outdated, but, at the moment, no other SRRT member volunteered to help.

- Marie Jones asked to make an addition to her report on AIP. She wanted to remind members that the 5th Edition of *Alternative Publications in North America* is out.

Nel reminded members at this time of program planning deadlines.

Al Kagan called a motion to adjourn. Jenny Baltes seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 12:43pm.