

Social Responsibilities Roundtable Action Council II Minutes
American Library Association Midwinter Conference
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
January 27, 2003

Attendance: Michael Santangelo, Secretary for SRRT and Chair--Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force; Mary Biblo, SRRT member and ALA Council member, Jane Ingold, SRRT Newsletter Editor; Virginia (Ginnie) B. Moore, Chair--Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Exchange Task Force; 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; Diedre 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; Jonathan Betz-Zall; Herb Biblo; Satia Orange, ALA Office of Literacy and Outreach Services; Deborah Mazzolini; Joel Tscherne; Rochelle Hartman; Brian Hasenstab; Alison Lewis; Dena Marger; Ann Spanese, ALA Councilor; J.Michael Malonconico; Giovanna Gossage; Kevin O'Keller; Sara Susan Palmer.

Introductions

SRRT Listserv

Listsers report was moved to the top of the agenda. Discussion focused on SRRT AC listserv, which currently serves 175 people. Al mentioned that he felt the listserv should be for registered members of SRRT. Satia Orange commented that this was very feasible, but SRRT ought to make sure a membership person maintains the list. Rory described his plan in which instead of automatic self-subscription, Katia, SRRT listserv monitor, would have the membership list and would check listserv subscription requests against the membership list. If someone does not pay dues to SRRT, they would be removed from the listserv. Theresa Tobin disagreed with this approach, claiming that the listserv was a strong tool for getting new people involved in SRRT. She used the Feminist Task Force's listserv as a good example of this approach, as it has been kept open and has encouraged people to join FTF. Alison Lewis discussed the similar controversy that came up with the PLG (Progressive Librarians' Guild) listserv, and how the listserv is now read only to non-members. Mark Hudson gave the opinion that the listserv manager ought to approve all new listserv subscriptions based on membership and nonmembers could be sponsored by members. He also suggested SRRT have a statement of purpose to post by nonmembers. Katia brought up the problem of a nonmember not knowing any SRRT member in order to get sponsorship. Rory reiterated that he like the idea set forth by PLG, in which membership was a requirement, and SRRT should set up a statement of purpose for members to sign. Herb Biblo responded that if the purpose of the listserv is to communicate information between members, than it is logically that it is membership based. Herb said that first SRRT should decide why it has the listserv. Dena Marger wanted to point out that SRRT was different from PLG, and thus needed different rules and policies. Dena did not believe the posting problem on SRRT's listserv was as big a problem as on PLG's listserv. Dena suggested we leave it as it is for now with an option to reconsider if we have a larger problem in the future. Rory believed that SRRT should be more proactive, for it could become a large problem. He used the example of the problems caused by Jack Stevens on the Office of Intellectual Freedom listserv, and reminded the members that Jack Stevens just joined the SRRT listserv. Theresa Tobin advised personal responses to this problem as opposed to an organizational approach; she felt it was still a mistake to limit the list as there is only 175 people on the list now, which is too small to cut people out. Marie Jones spoke in support of members only for posting and all others read only. She said

people might still join SRRT to be obnoxious, but we ought to just take collective action and not answer these people. Rory responded that the strategy in which everyone would not answer Jack Stevens would not work. At this point, Al Kagan made a motion to make the SRRT listserv open to members and read only for nonmembers. Katia Roberto seconded the motion. Rory called for discussion. He asked Katia if she would be willing to remain as moderator under the stipulations of the motion. She said she would. The motion carried with 4 voting in favor of the motion, 1 voting against the motion, and no one abstaining. A question was raised as to whether people would be notified if they were dropped from the listserv. Rory asked Katia to wait a month before carrying out the new policy. Al suggested Katia send out a message to people before dropping them from the listserv. Mark H. commented that the listserv is part of our organizational infrastructure, so we should not delay too much in dropping and adding people to the listserv. Herb said it was simple to send out a message that if you are not a dues paying member of SRRT, you will be dropped from the listserv. He also reminded SRRT that the membership list is already four months behind when it is released, so the person had four months to renew or to join. Katia asked how this policy will affect the SRRT Mem List. Rory said he, as coordinator of SRRT, is the manager of SRRT Mem list, and only the coordinator, the newsletter editor, and Satia Orange are allowed to post. He also reminded people that there were 700 to 800 people on the announcement list.

Satia's Report

Satia Orange of OLOS, gave her report to SRRT. Satia apologized for never getting a chance to get to all of her groups meetings, and that she is happy to be here. She acknowledged that she knows SRRT respects her position as staff liaison. She complimented SRRT on doing a good job of communicating through Rory. She said there have been many questions she could answer directly, but, some questions required her to talk to her supervisor Mary Ghikas. She made this point to remind SRRT that by not answering directly and quickly, she is not attempting to get away from answering, but her job entails that her answer is commiserate with ALA official policy. She advised people that she does not always answer questions directly to members of the roundtable, but as a staff liaison, sees it as her mission to speak through the coordinators of the respective roundtables. Jonathon Betz-Zall asked Satia how SRRT could be more supportive. Satia said the members were overwhelming supportive of her, and just a few would hurt her feelings and show her disrespect. If this happens, Rory gets the call.

SRRT Membership Dilemmas

Rory discussed the problems of membership in SRRT. Rory received the following figures from Fred regarding membership figures for SRRT: 2000: 1,522; 2001: 1,572; 2002: 1,541. Although our numbers appeared fairly stable, Rory stated that SRRT's membership was increasing at a slower rate than ALA's overall membership. Rory wished to update the current membership forum on the web site. He wanted to change link on the web site. He wanted the Task Force chairs to make membership forms available at all Task Force sessions at Annual. He asked that members also consider having a postcard insert in the SRRT newsletter. It would cost about \$600 to do so. He was not sure of the benefit of the last point. His last recommendation was to have an ad placed in *American Libraries* through OLOS Communications Officer, which would be free. Rory would set this up with Fred. Jonathan mentioned that the as should list accomplishments of SRRT.

Remaining Task Force Reports

Joel Tscherne discussed the happenings at the Task Force on the Environment. He said two people met yesterday and discussed a project called "Clean the water, Clean the air: resources for children, public, and academic libraries." He said it was an affiliation with North American

Council on Environmental Education. He mentioned the work of the Washington State SRRT, which, although a small group, has continued to do programs at State Library Conferences.

Budgets

Aureole Johnstone was stepping in for Nel. Aureole asked for a motion to approve all Task Force budgets. She first asked for any questions concerning task force budgets. Rory asked what were the budgets. Aureole answered that the International Relations Task Force was budgeted \$1500 for the party to honor Cuban librarians and \$200 for a program. The Task Force on the Environment was spending \$1000 on a guest honorarium. At this point, Aureole addressed some confusion task force members expressed over budgetary matters.

Responsibilities

Newsletter Report

Jane Ingold, editor of the SRRT newsletter, gave news on the development of the newsletter. Jane discussed with the members how it is now necessary for her to fill out a copyright form for every article that goes into the newsletter, and there will be a separate form for each newsletter from now on. Marie Jones, book review editor for the newsletter, asked for volunteers or suggestions for volunteers for book reviewing. Jane passed out complimentary copies of the books that needed to be reviewed. Mark H. asked whether newsletter was printed by us or by ALA. Jane answered that it was sent out by ALA. ALA typically uses a non-union shop, but for us they use a union shop. Rory brought up the point of printing fewer issues of the newsletter and concentrating on electronic form. He said most of our money goes to mailing and publishing the print version. He also asked if the members would like to see the unapproved minutes published in the newsletter. Theresa commented that we ought to wait for the approved minutes and that we do not need to publish the minutes in the newsletter, although we could put them on the SRRT web site. Joel asked how much we would save if we no longer put it out in print form. Rory answered all of it, since all the money budgeted for the newsletter goes toward printing it. Herb Biblo reminded members that we could lose half our members if only electronic. Dena Marger added we ought to keep printing four times a year, and reconsider only if we have another project for which we need funding. Mark H. stated that we had 1500 members, and the newsletter, especially in print form, was the only way we had to guarantee communication with all of them. Mark asked how many could and would download the print version. Rory responded that four times a year was a lot and it is important for us to save our money, for, even though SRRT does not have financial problems at the moment, we may have problems in the future. Rory offered the idea of doing two issues per year. Herb added that perhaps we could do double issues, so 4 issues and 2 mailings. Rory wants to leave this up to Jane's discretion. Marie Jones said it was more expensive to put out a larger issue. Theresa Tobin so no problem with the double issue as long as we kept same voluming system.

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Bylaws Revision

Rory discussed the creation last year of a committee to revise SRRT's bylaws. The members on the committee were Rory, Mark Rosenzweig, Elaine Harger, and Marie Jones. Rory said the committee never really got anywhere. Rory would like to keep going with the committee, but would like more members. He said there were much in the SRRT bylaws that no longer works and some policies that never worked in the first place. Rory does not want just his own draft to be the consideration for the bylaws revision, but would like real input from the members, especially those on the Bylaws Revision Committee. Marie Jones said that it might move the committee forward if Rory first offered a draft. Herb said we needed a new committee less committed to other things, and that SRRT needed to be cautious in revising its bylaws. He said to look at the bigger problems, and make it a minimalist committee. Alison Lewis asked if there was a mechanism written into the bylaws for amending the bylaws. Rory answered yes and read out the section concerning amendment in the SRRT bylaws. He reminded members that the

bylaws was a legal document, and the bylaws assume we have membership meetings. Alison asked if the bylaws were accessible. Rory said they were on the web site. Al discussed a conversation Rory and he had concerning one bylaw change that was voted on at Action Council, but never was taken to mail ballot: the adding of the position of SRRT Councilor. Rory said it is not official unless voted on at a membership meeting. Herb spoke to the history of the current standing bylaws, and said these bylaws were written when SRRT was a more vibrant group and SRRT membership meetings were very well attended. It was a more open process and these ideas need to be brought out at SRRT Membership Meetings. Al asked if it was easier to put out on a mail ballot. Rory said this point was not in the bylaws. Herb volunteered to be on Bylaws Revision Committee. Mark Hudson also volunteered to be on the committee. Rory asked that both these people be added to committee roster. Mark H. asked about scheduling membership meetings for Toronto. Theresa Tobin responded that sometimes membership meetings doubled as Action Council meetings.

Membership Committee—Health Insurance Benefits Task Force Report

SRRT member Mark Hudson reported on his involvement in a committee to help bring health insurance to librarians who are currently employed without benefits. Mark Hudson said he studied the issue and looked at other professional organizations. He said there were professional organizations that do help their members attain health insurance and said a resolution was brought to Council in which ALA would help members without health insurance get health insurance. It was well-received and brought back to membership committee. He said most health insurance through professional organizations was offered on a state level, and the committee saw a national program as not feasible for ALA. After studying the issue, the committee decided the only possibility was through state chapters. The committee found out that the cost, through a national program, would not be very different from people going out and getting insurance on their own in the market. Rory inquired about small state chapters getting together with other professional organizations to do something about the problem. Ann Sparanese said this was not practical and nothing could be gained on individual or small group levels. She suggested this would be a good opportunity to get ALA involved on a national level for national healthcare. Mark Hudson stated that at least these reports brought the seriousness of the issue to the organization. Rory and Ann both suggested that a task force submit a resolution to ALA Council on national healthcare. Ginnie Moore discussed an idea to work through the new ALA/APA, and gave the example of the United Federation of Teachers. The UFT started out as an organization and worked up to a union. In order to advocate for national health insurance, ALA/APA would be necessary in the effort.

Promotion of SRRT in the Organization

Rory discussed the issuance of a postcard notification of SRRT Council Candidates. Herb agreed and said it was vital that SRRT work harder to improve its image. He said SRRT is the only organization out there that can fight to make ALA a more progressive and democratic organization. He said it upset him that SRRT has long abandoned its effort to change the character of the ALA Council. He said there were no longer many petitions for people to run for Council, that the pool for the Executive Board was full of right wing conservatives, and, down the road, if SRRT does not change, ALA will be lost. Rory asked him to please write an article on this for the newsletter. Herb reminded SRRT that there was a great need for progressive councilors; it was done in the past. Now, ALA has to worry about every little thing and waters everything down. SRRT needs to re-assert its responsibility in this area. Marie mentioned that she was put on the ballot through the normal nominating process; she advised members to talk to people on nominating committee. Herb reminded people that SRRT worked to change the nominating and petition policy in the past when it was harder to get on the ballot.

SRRT Councilor's Report

Al reported that he is once again running for ALA Council as the SRRT representative. He said there was no new resolution concerning the previous Israeli/Palestinian resolution, but Al said he was ready with the information documents prepared by Mark Rosenzweig and Tom Twiss. Dena Marger brought up Mark's proposal on SRRT's position on Middle Eastern politics. Aureole Johnstone reported that Mitch Freedman made a report to the Executive Board restating the Palestinian resolution and stating the ALA is not anti-semitic. Rory requested that maybe we ought to not discuss the issue. Al agreed and said due to the fact that Mark R. was not at the meeting with the resolution, we ought to not discuss it further. Al discussed the resolution on the possible War on Iraq, which he, Ann Sparanese, and Elaine Harger were preparing for ALA Council. He said SRRT could endorse the resolution. Ann said Al would have to speak to the resolution, as SRRT will not be mentioned in the wording of the resolution. Al said the resolution could get to the newsletter regardless of what happens at Council. He said it had already been through the Resolutions Committee and Michael Gorman had seconded the motion to get more support. Ann hoped the resolution would be further supported by today's news from Hans Blix of the United Nations. Rory saw two issues in front of SRRT: 1) endorsement of Ann and Elaine's resolution and 2) making it a SRRT resolution if it does not pass Council. A motion for endorsement was called. Al moved the motion, Theresa seconded the motion, and Rory called for discussion. Rory stated in discussion that he thought it was better to pass our own resolution that does not go to Council as opposed to proposing to send a SRRT resolution to Council. Herb reminded SRRT of the One Voice Policy. Mark Hudson added that if ALA Council passed the resolution, SRRT does not need to distribute or pass our own.

At this point there was a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes. Al put forward the motion and Joel seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Joel Tscherne commented that if SRRT was to pass its own resolution against the possible war on Iraq, then we ought to use stronger wording. Theresa Tobin added that she did not wish to see SRRT be pre-constrained by One Voice Policy. Our attitude should not be "If you don't pass our resolution, we are going to send it out ourselves. She said SRRT should not pursue such a this then that position, but make its own stand regardless of what ALA does. Ann said she thought if Council passes this resolution, then speaking with One Voice is good and we do not need two resolutions. Aureole said she agreed with Joel that SRRT ought to use stronger language. Rory asked Joel for his own wording. At this moment, Joel read his own wording. Mark Hudson added that we ought to distribute to more places than listed on the Council resolution. Al said it is always possible to send the resolution to more agencies regardless of what is specified in the resolution. Joel Tscherne made a motion to amend the resolution with his new proposed wording. Al Kagan withdrew his original motion to use Ann and Elaine's resolution as a SRRT resolution. Marie Jones seconded Joel's new motion. Then there was discussion. Elaine mentioned that she wanted to see more on the materials of the peace movement. Mark Hudson proposed new changes to address Elaine's suggestion. Rory brought up question of distribution. Al once again stated that the resolution only needed to indicate the minimal number of specified agencies or persons for distribution. Five voted in favor of the resolution with no one opposed or abstaining. Motion passed.

Al Kagan proposed another motion to extend the meeting ten minutes. Elaine Harger seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Al Kagan stated that he had been to two more meetings on the USA Patriot Act: the Privacy Subcommittee and IFRT. He brought SRRT's concerns and won on the issue of distribution of the resolution. He said the draft of the proposed resolution was not comprehensive and instead

lists specific sections of the act with which ALA does not agree. He said the draft meets minimal requirements. He said the problem of using change/amend instead of repeal was still a sticking point. Al reported that ALA had been advised by a lawyer that the word repeal will make it harder for ALA's resolution to have an impact. In the Privacy Subcommittee there was no consideration of using repeal in the draft. Al said the IFRT version was going along with the ALA-IFC, Intellectual Freedom Committee, version with the attitude that the Washington Office knows best. Al said the Privacy Subcommittee was focusing exclusively on libraries and librarians, while he wanted to see ALA take a stand for all citizens. Al said he suggested inserting the word repeal instead of using repeal exclusively, as in "amend, change, or repeal." He said as of now, it stands that he will bring a motion to Council floor over the issue of using the word repeal. Al read out the section of the proposed draft to SRRT. Al said the point was brought up that the ACLU was advising libraries to put out signage warning library patrons about the USA Patriot Act. He said ALA does not like this, and is not working with the ACLU. Al went on to discuss Council's revision of policy 8.5; this resolution allows groups within ALA to use interest of funds of accounts for operating expenses. Aureole commented that some divisions and roundtables have already been doing this. Rory said this concerned not regular accounts but long term investment accounts. Al suggested this was something for the SRRT treasurer to look in to. Deidre Conklin suggested SRRT use this as part of an endowment fund.

Resolution Thanking Fred Stoss

Rory mentioned that the SRRT Action Council members had not gotten around to writing a resolution thanking Fred Stoss for his work as Coordinator for SRRT. Ann Sparanese suggested we vote to allow Rory to write a letter thanking Fred in lieu of a resolution. Joel Tscherne made the motion to allow Rory to send out a letter to Fred on SRRT's behalf and Al Kagan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ann Sparanese made some announcements to the members. She had fliers concerning fighting for our right to travel to Cuba and fliers promoting a new book by a United Nations observer on depleted uranium.

Michael Santangelo mentioned he had some copies of Laura Koltutsky's report as liaison to IFRT and the Freedom to Read Foundation.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm