

SRRT Newsletter

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of the American Library Association

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COORDINATOR'S MEMO

To: SRRT members

From: John Sheridan, Action Council
Coordinator

Remember how Jimmy Carter went to Camp David to think about America and then delivered his "malaise" speech? Well, going to Midwinter and visiting a meeting of each task force leads me to say there's no malaise in SRRT. There is not always smooth sailing or a huge attendance, but there are ideas, energy, and commitment. That's nice.

Several interesting SRRT-sponsored or co-sponsored programs for New York and San Francisco were discussed at Midwinter. The Peace Information Exchange Task Force will coordinate a SRRT exhibit in New York.

About 130 people attended a Presidential Candidates Forum sponsored by SRRT. Afterwards Action Council voted not to endorse any particular candidate this year.

Quite a bit of ALA business was conducted. A separate operating agreement for roundtables may be developed and ALA units may be charged to have their publications included in the comprehensive ALA list. Linda Pierce, a former Action Council Coordinator, continues to be influential on the newly formed Roundtables Coordinating Committee. Strategic Long Range Planning (SLRP)

continues to wend its inexorable course to lists of missions, goals, objectives, activities, resources, strategies, long ranges, plans, and anything else that can be written down on flip charts or overheads.

There are several documents produced by ALA which need some attention. If you are willing to read and suggest some Action Council response to the following documents, please let me know:

- 1) *Report of the Commission on Freedom and Equality of Access to Information* (The "Lacy Report")
- 2) *Equity at Issue: Library Services to the Nation's Major Minority Groups*
- 3) *ALA's Federal Legislation Policy*

Success stories are good to keep us going. See the article below for an example of one. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Other groups concerned with social responsibilities have made contact with SRRT. Pro-Peace, a cross-country march beginning this spring, asked SRRT for suggestions for a library to take along with them. SRRT encourages libraries anywhere along or near (or far away, for that matter) the route of march to provide visibility to this effort. Concerned Citizens against Nuclear War, the subject of a successful SRRT-sponsored resolution last year, would like a more regular liaison with SRRT. If you live in the Washington, D.C., area and could attend an occasional meeting,

please let me know. And Ernest Dane, following up on earlier activities, submitted a shorter bibliography on security in the nuclear age. Action Council strongly endorsed the effort to increase the visibility of this issue and to encourage library users to read and think more about it.

Carry it on.

* * * * *

COUNCIL ENDORSEMENTS

Action Council voted to endorse Gail P. Warner and Mary Biblo for ALA Council. The Feminist Task Force has endorsed the following candidates for Council: Gail P. Warner, Joan Collett, Dana Rooks, and Marva DeLoach. (The additional names were not brought before Action Council, so no decision not to endorse is implied.)

* * * * *

SUCCESS STORY

At a meeting of the Gay Task Force during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, Joe Gregg, Acquisitions Librarian at Northeastern Illinois University and co-director of Chicago's Gerber-Hart Library (the Midwest Lesbian & Gay Resource Center), reported the positive results he had received from his complaint to Blackwell/North America regarding the handling of homosexuality in the subject thesaurus of the firm's approval program service. Gregg reported he wrote to B/NA to object to references tying homosexuality to sexual deviation and sex crimes. "My letter was rather shrill, since I was very upset," Gregg stated, "and I really didn't know what reaction to expect, if any."

There was a reaction, however, in the form of a two-page letter from Dana L. Alessi, Division Sales Manager at

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Editor.....John Hostage
Editorial Board...Elizabeth Morrissett
Linda Pierce
John Sheridan

Deadline for next issue is April 15

B/NA's Kansas City office. Alessi apologized for the firm's "apparent lack of sensitivity," assured that steps had been taken to remove the objectionable references, and ended with the promised recommendation of a separate subject station for homosexuality in the next revision of the thesaurus. Gregg commented that the firm's prompt response and sincere concern gave support to their statement that they would have effected the change earlier, but in the fifteen years of the thesaurus's existence, he was the "first librarian to have commented on this unfortunate choice of terminology."

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EDITOR SOUGHT

The Social Responsibilities Roundtable is seeking a new editor for this newsletter. It's really not that hard, once you learn the ropes. The editor should be a

member of SRRT and becomes an ex officio member of Action Council. Of course, the current editor will help his successor during the transition. Anyone who is interested may contact the present editor for more information and should come to Action Council meetings at the New York conference in June to discuss it.

* * * * *

CORETTA SCOTT KING AWARD

Virginia Hamilton, author of *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* (Knopf), and Jerry Pinkney, illustrator of Valerie Flourney's *Patchwork Quilt* (Dial), will be the 1986 recipients of the Coretta Scott King awards for outstanding inspirational and educational contributions to literature for children and young adults published in 1985.

The People Could Fly is written in the many voices of the regions the black culture encompasses: Africa, Portugal, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, and America's Deep South. In themes that range from fanciful to humorous to gravely serious, there are variants of traditional tales and other stories uniquely a part of the black culture.

In patterns as colorful as the symbolic patchwork quilt, Jerry Pinkney has created a visual response to Valerie Flourney's *Patchwork Quilt*. With subtle touches of individuality in dress, physical features, and hairstyles and signs of comfortable domesticity, Pinkney has created a family that is believable and that exudes strength and unity through three generations.

To be cited for honorable mention are Virginia Hamilton for *Junius over Far* (Harper), Mildred Pitts Walter for *Trouble's Child* (Lothrop), and Leo and Diane Dillon, illustrators of Hamilton's *The People Could Fly*.

All recipients will be honored at the annual Awards Breakfast on Tuesday, July 1, at 7:30 a.m. during the 1986 ALA Conference in New York.

* * * * *

LIBRARY UNION TASK FORCE

LUTF now has a mailing list of 400 collective bargaining units representing library employees. Kathleen Prendergast is requesting that these local unions sponsor a library union activist to attend the preconference on pay equity in New York this summer. She is requesting that donations be made to the preconference through Margaret Myers at ALA. We encourage librarians also to request support from their locals to attend the pay equity preconference. Collective bargaining is one of the most effective mechanisms to achieve comparable worth for librarians, if the librarians understand the issues and are actively involved. If anyone needs some lobbying with the local union leadership on the value of the preconference, feel free to call either Kathleen at the Chicago Public Library or Helen Lewis at the University of Connecticut Library.

LUTF sponsored a program on sexual harrassment at the Chicago conference last summer. At the program, a survey was distributed to those attending. Seventy percent of those responding indicated that they had experienced sexual harrassment. This percentage is comparable to the general population. Although the sample was not random and the results certainly won't pass for hard statistical data, the results are not without significance. They do suggest that sexual harrassment is occurring in libraries and that sexual harrassment is a problem which warrants further study. Watch for the LUTF flyer at ALA New York which will list all of the union related programs and events. We are cosponsoring a program with SORT on negotiations and one with Task Force on Alternatives in Print on libraries in

Nicaragua as well as a really fun reception. All of the events right now are scheduled for Sunday, June 29. LUTF needs more members!!! LAMA has a discussion group on library unions and I'm sure *they* are not talking about ways to improve our contracts or our working conditions.

* * * * *

1985 GAY BOOK AWARD

"Words have been used to hurt: faggot, dyke, fairy, queer, pansy--we've heard them all. But words can also define and clarify and heal and empower. From the seemingly unlikely beginnings of the very words that have been used to hurt us, Judy Grahn has done a remarkable thing."

Judy Grahn's book *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds* (Beacon Press, 1984) received the Gay Book Award for 1985 at a Gay Task Force meeting during the ALA Annual Conference last July. The presentation was made by Christine Jenkins of the Gay Book Award Committee, who continued: "These words have led Judy Grahn to mythology, folklore, and history, both written and oral, from all over the world. ... We cannot prevent words and customs from being used against us by homophobes. But we can re-frame the insult by taking away its mystery and unknownness, which is a great part of its power. Judy Grahn holds up a mirror to gay culture, and we can see ourselves more clearly. She gives us back our words, and in doing so, she helps us reclaim our history."

Judy Grahn was presented with a lavender cape--"Your book opens with a fascinating discussion of the color lavender and its relationship to gay identity through the ages"--and a star-tipped wand "in recognition of the magical power of your words to unlock our past."

The Gay Book Award was established in 1971 by SRRT's Gay Task Force in order to recognize and honor books of exceptional merit relating to the gay/lesbian experience. Since then, sixteen titles have received awards. For a list of award winners and information about the Gay Book Award Committee and its guidelines, write to: GBA Committee, c/o ALA/SRRT Gay Task Force, Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

* * * * *

GAY TASK FORCE RESTRUCTURING

The Ad Hoc Structure Committee of the Gay Task Force is proposing a *structural* reorganization for adoption by the task force membership at the Annual Conference in New York in June. Discussion of the proposed structure will be held at the business meeting on Monday, June 30. A vote on acceptance of the proposed structure will be taken at the business meeting preceding the program on Tuesday, July 1. All task force members present at the Tuesday business meeting will be eligible to vote.

Should this proposal or a modified version be accepted by the vote to be taken on July 1, an ad hoc implementation committee will be formed to draw up a slate of officers and provide a mechanism to conduct an election.

For more information, contact Lila Wisotzki, the chair of the Structure Committee, at 3020 Barclay St., Baltimore, MD 21218.

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SRRT ACTION COUNCIL 1985-1986

The terms of elected members of Action Council expire at the end of Annual Conference in the year shown following each name. The newsletter editor and task force liaisons are members ex

officio. Nancy Gruber, whose term was to expire in 1986, has resigned from Action Council.

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and:

Dan Tsang
Free Library of Philadelphia
(215) 686-5363 (w)

MAIL:

P.O. Box 29627
Philadelphia, PA 19144
(215) 849-4612 (h)

Civil Rights

Kate Shackford
Council on Interracial Books for Children
1841 Broadway
New York, NY 10023

124 W. 93rd St., #3B
New York, NY 10025
(212) 666-7853

Coretta Scott King Award

David L. Searcy
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Atlanta-Fulton Public Library
457 Flat Shoals Ave., S.E.
Atlanta, GA 30316
(405) 525-8802

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17 Willow Dr.
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Homer Babbidge Library
University of Connecticut
U-5R, Reference Dept.
Storrs, CT 06268
(203) 486-2513

1 Eastwood Rd.
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Peace Information Exchange

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PRE-CONFERENCE

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WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS
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HOR D'OEUVRES & CASH BAR AT THE HOME OF KAY CASSELL
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This dinner is planned to raise funds to support a conference dealing with racism, scheduled in Berkeley to precede the 1987 ALA Conference.

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