

Social Responsibilities Round Table

OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

N E W S L E T T E R

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from the srrt coordinator:

As I write this, Midwinter is less than two weeks away but by the time you read this, Midwinter will be history. I anticipate that the most pressing issue facing SRRT before Midwinter will still be a topic of serious discussion this spring. This issue, of course, is the attacks SRRT has faced over the last several months, first with a letter from ALA President Ann Symons and the Executive Board, accusing SRRT of speaking on behalf of the Association, and second, a proposed resolution from an ALA Councilor, demanding that SRRT rewrite its mission to prevent us from communicating our positions outside of ALA. These accusations are unwarranted and baseless, but alas, serious. We need every SRRT member to be involved in this effort to preserve SRRT's ability to speak and communicate its opinions. Please get involved: join the SRRT listserv for the latest info on this issue, read about it in the newsletters to come and on our web site, or get in touch with me directly.

You should receive this newsletter right before the deadline for ALA elections. If you haven't voted already, please vote! One of the ways we can preserve the future of SRRT is to elect progressive people to ALA Council. Several SRRTers ran for ALA Council successfully last year, and we need to build on this momentum to get SRRT members on Council. Although this issue is going to press before we know who will be running for Council, we will post the names of SRRT candidates on our web site and the listserv and you can read the candidates' descriptions in the ballot mailing to look for other progressive people. This is incredibly important, and it is well worth the time spent to vote. Please! And, don't forget to vote for SRRT Action Council members-at-large, and... drum roll... our first SRRT Councilor!

Last, but not least, I want to thank SRRT members and supporters, Action Council, and Task Force chairs for all the work you do to keep the round table involved with and committed to issues of social responsibilities and librarianship. I have been particularly impressed by the dedication you have shown over the last few difficult months, and I am look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen SRRT.

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THE CONTINUING SAGA

Corporate Publishers Charge More (Surprise!)

Library Journal's Academic Newswire reports that "A study of agricultural journals by Cornell University adds to the growing stockpile of evidence that price increases by commercial publishers are growing at a rate far higher than those by association and society publishers. According to the report disseminated by a faculty task force in consultation with Cornell's Mann Library, the prices of commercially-published agricultural journals increased 77.8 percent between 1988 and 1994 on a price-per-page basis, while journals published by associations and societies increased by 33.3 percent.

The task force report recommends that faculty groups be apprised of the situation, that they be made aware of the implications of publishing or editing high-priced journals, and that they reassess their relationships to their servicing libraries."

Gordon & Breach Sued (Surprise!)

Library Journal's Academic Newswire reports also reports that "Oral arguments were heard January 11 in the appeal of the August decision that found in favor of the American Institute of Physics (AIP) and the American Physical Society (APS) in a lawsuit filed by Gordon & Breach (G&B) in 1993. ALA, ARL, and SLA have filed an amicus brief in the appeal in support of AIP/APS who were originally sued by G&B for publishing a study by the late Henry Barschall, a physicist at the University of Wisconsin, comparing physics journals by price and value. G&B claimed that the study fell under the realm of commercial speech and that the results of the study—that journals published by AIP and APS were the most cost-effective and that those published by G&B were ranked low on cost-effectiveness—were a case of 'false advertisement.' Federal Judge Leonard Sand rejected G&B's claims in August, saying not only that Barschall's study was reliable, but also that academic journals are protected under the First Amendment no matter what the content."

Academic Journals are Too Expensive (Surprise!)

Library Journal's Academic Newswire, in consistent fashion, also reports that "The scholarly publish-

ing community, including librarians faculty, scholars, librarians and STM publishers alike, is watching Michael Rosenzweig very closely. The University of Arizona biologist has drawn the attention of academe due to his decision to leave the prominent scholarly journal he founded, *Evolutionary Ecology*, to start a lower-priced alternative. He made the move based on principle: He believes the journal's publishers have made the original too expensive for libraries and the scientific community to afford. According to Rosenzweig, *Evolutionary Ecology*, launched in 1987, has been averaging a 19 percent annual price increase. SPARC, the ARL initiative that aims to increase competition in scholarly publishing, will help create a marketplace for Rosenzweig's new journal, *Evolutionary Ecology Research (EER)*, by guaranteeing a subscription base of libraries for the new publication. EER is available now, with a free sample available on the Internet at <http://www.evolutionary-ecology.com>."

Public Domain? What Public Domain?

CARL S. KAPLAN in the October 30, 1998 New York Times reports that in February 1998, the editor of a Web site dedicated to republishing classic works of literature online will pull the plug on his operation. Eric Eldred's action is a protest against a law that adds 20 years to the existing copyright protection of books, films, songs and other intellectual property. That means, for example, that copyrights on old books that were scheduled to lapse next year, putting the works in the public domain, will now last until 2019. The law disturbs the loose-knit group of book lovers like Eldred who have been making classic texts available online since the days before the Web. They fear the law will have a devastating impact on their shared goal of creating a decentralized digital library of books in the public domain, available to students, scholars and fans around the world at no cost.

"If everything is private property forever, which is the way things are going, then there can't be a growing, global, free public library," NYT reports Eldred as saying. Michael S. Hart, director of Project Gutenberg, one of the largest online free book sites with about 1,700 public-domain texts posted by volunteers, figures that the new law will essentially prevent about one million books from entering the public domain over the next 20 years.

Gentle Reader:

You will note, perhaps, that throughout this issue of the SRRT Newsletter we have reprinted news items from several different online sources. We especially recommend these services:

Library Juice: <http://www.libr.org/Juice/>

The Scout Report: <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

LJ Academic Newswire: <http://www.bookwire.com/ljdigital/>

-- Ken and Jessamyn, Newsletter Co-Editors

Get Outta The Library

Living Library is a 2 year project that aims at making the act of reading and writing an everyday activity for poor children and their teachers. This would mean fewer failures in elementary school and more children learning about their reality and how to change it. These libraries are being implanted in Community Centers in charge of children and adolescents living in the poor districts on the fringe of the big cities, where huge slums and acute social problems are concentrated. To achieve its objective the Project team provides personal development for the community teachers by preparing them to work with books and reading activities in the context of poverty and deprivation of their institutions. Each library is unique, taking into account the needs and the culture of the community where it is located.

The Project is supported by a grant from Citibank in partnership with the Abrinq Foundation for the Childrens Rights (1995 - 1997 and 1998 until 2000).

From the mid 40's to the 70's the big cities in the south of Brazil expanded due to internal migrations. The poorest settlers were brushed-off to the outskirts of these cities and there lives today a great mass of unqualified workers crammed in huge slums. Some of these slums have no water supply and none have sewage systems. In these poor districts we find the highest rates of illiteracy and elementary school failures. There, also, can be found the worst schools and most doubtful health services, despite all the improvements conquered by organized inhabitants during the 80's.

During those years, with the intensification of social problems, many non-governmental institutions were created and many existing Community Centers boosted their activities to provide informal education for children and adolescents after school hours. Most families send their children to these institutions to take them off the streets. There they receive food, several types of care and the help of an adult for their homework, since they are typically children that fail in elementary school.

These non-governmental institutions work with little or no materials, and untrained professionals seldom identified as teachers - they are called volunteers, entertainers or nannies. They want help, they want training in order to provide high standart educational support that can really change the life of these children. One disadvantage of these teachers and children is the fact that books (mainly good ones) and written materials are absent in their homes and working places.

The Living Library project has been created to meet this need for good books, information and professional training. The Living Library Project is based on the idea that reading and writing are meaningful only when they become

means for children to learn more about their reality and change their lives and their environment.

Some 1995 results

From September to December 1995 Forty-four institutions took part in the selective process. Among those 10 were chosen to receive the library : 2 in Brasilia and 8 in Sao Paulo city Fourteen community teachers went through a 44 hour training program The first 10 libraries received 4,000 books, directly benefiting 2,500 children and adolescents.

The first 10 libraries were implanted and are open to the community. They attend institutions that look after street children from slums in the outskirts, children living in tenements downtown, children living in shelters (who have no parents or are temporarily separated from them), and children from poor villages (previous construction camps), as is the case of Vila Planalto in Brasilia, Brazil's capital.

The Project will affect decisively these children as it changes their relationship between children who come from literate families and those coming from homes deprived of contact with books or written materials. It will teach them not only to read and to value books but also to read their environment, to look at their reality using concepts they can obtain from books with the community teachers help.

The Project affects community teachers in many ways: They are trained and given new knowledge for working with children, using books as a tool for educational purposes. They are led to understand how books change people and reality itself. Finaly, they learn to introduce new subjects with which to teach children and impart knowledge needed for success in elementary school.

Perspective 1998 -2000

110 libraries in 2 years
240 teachers trained by the program
an estimated 32,000 children and adolescents reached
by the Project
24,000 books sent to 80 community centers

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Reprinted from UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations Clearinghouse Page:
<http://firewall.unesco.org/most/welcome.htm>

MLs Need Not Apply

The ALA Office for Accreditation has been informed by the University of California, Berkeley that it does NOT plan to seek ALA accreditation for its master's program in information science. It may reevaluate that decision in 5 years. The previous ALA accreditation of UC Berkeley ended in 1994.

Urban Library Journal - Call for Papers

Urban Library Journal, a refereed journal of research and discussion dealing with all aspects of urban libraries and librarianship, welcomes articles dealing with academic, research, public, school, and special libraries in an urban setting. Urban Library Journal, formerly known as Urban Academic Librarian, also invites submissions in broader areas such as public higher education, urban studies, multiculturalism, library and educational services to immigrants, preservation of public higher education, and universal access to World Wide Web resources. Topics for columns and special issues will also be entertained. Urban Library Journal will publish two issues annually. Manuscripts, editorial correspondence, and comments should be addressed to

Dr. Michael Adams
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 New York, NY 10036-8003
 212-642-2878; madams@pobox.gsuc.cuny.edu.

mai-list: Discussion list for MAI and Libraries

The British Columbia Library Association announces a new listserv, mai-list, entirely devoted to the topic of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and its effects on libraries around the world. The list will provide an international forum for discussion of the issues surrounding the MAI, as well as a support network for action against the treaty. Please send your name, email address and library affiliation to bcla@interchange.ubc.ca and we will add you to the list. A welcome message and list commands will be sent to you shortly thereafter.

Leave the Library — Zimbabwe version

Next summer, you could change lives as an Inform the World Volunteer Librarian in rural Africa. Instead of battling with your computer catalog, you could use your professional skills to help rural librarians in English-speaking Zimbabwe.

For example, you might teach a class on book repair, help implement a simple cataloguing system, peddle a bicycle-mounted book box to a remote village, or lead a donkey driven "book mobile" to a group of eager children. If this sounds like the adventure you have been looking for, join us for this exciting service project and help make the information poor a little bit richer. The World Library Partnership (WLP) in the USA and the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme (RLRDP) in Zimbabwe are pleased to announce the 1999 Inform the World Librarian Volunteer Program. The RLRDP has established a network of over 100 rural libraries in Zimbabwe and has a waiting list of 4,000 communities that want libraries. The trip will last approximately 4 weeks in late June through mid July 1999.

The World Library Partnership
 (919)479-0163
wendell@acpub.duke.edu
<http://rtpnet.org/~wlp>

Know Some Notable American Women?

Radcliffe College and the Harvard University Press announce the launching of preparations for the next volume of Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary. Volume V of Notable American Women will include essays on approximately 500-600 women who will have died between January 1, 1976, and January 1, 2000, with an expected publication date 2003. This volume will follow the criteria for selection used in Notable American Women: The Modern Period (1980): 1) the subject's influence on her times or field; 2) ability; 3) innovative or pioneering work; 4) relevance of her career for the history of women. They are actively soliciting suggestions of possible subjects for an extensive database, especially nominations reflecting the contributions of underdocumented groups, regions, or specialties. If you wish to nominate a subject (or subjects), please supply a short synopsis of her career and its importance, as well as basic bibliographic sources, both secondary and archival (if known).

Please address all communication to:
 Susan Ware, Editor
 Notable American Women: Volume Five
 The Schlesinger Library
 Radcliffe College
 10 Garden Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 617-496-0564; notable@radcliffe.edu
<http://www.radcliffe.edu/schles/new/index.htm>

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual

TASK FORCE REPORTS

The GLBTF is busy maintaining a swift pace in providing a strong educative position in the profession and for the communities we serve. Our External Relations Committee prepared a strong retort to the discriminatory letters by Garretson and Burch in the Sept. 1998 issue of *American Libraries* (Vol. 29, No. 8). Additionally, the external Relations Committee will send condolences to Matthew Shepard's family in lieu of his brutal death. In answer to this biased hate crime, the GLBTF will be preparing a bibliography oriented toward educating people about hate crimes as well as peaceful co-existence. Our Book Awards Chair, Faye Chadwell will submit an article for the June/July Intellectual Freedom issue of *American Libraries*.

The GLBTF announced its intention to investigate Round Table status before the Action Council last Annual ('98). This announcement was met with surprise and support. The GLBTF now invites SRRT participation in the Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate Round Table Status. This ad hoc committee was approved by the Task Force at last Annual's GLBTF Steering Committee II. Please contact the co-chairs of the task force if you are interested in participating on this committee. The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee will be held during the SRRT All task Force meeting Saturday morning Jan. 30th 1999 at the Midwinter conference.

As usual, the GLBTF is in the midst of planning a full slate of events for the annual conference. Plans for the Third annual Book Awards Breakfast and the Program (slated as a program on Gay Archives) are being firmed up. Each event should be better than ever. If you're interested in helping with these or other of our initiatives, contact us.

Don't forget that it is the goal of the Book Awards Committee to announce our Book Award winners at Midwinter. We hope you sent in your Nominations! Hold on to your Hats!

Michael J. Miller, MLS, MS
mjm83@columbia.edu
 Co-Chair - ALA/SRRT/GLBTF

Alternatives In Print

The Alternatives In Print Task Force is working on three programs for the summer conference. Their descriptions follow:

ALMOST BANNED IDEAS

As academic institutions abandon liberal education and

scholarly learning to become production centers for industrial recruiting and research, libraries follow their lead. As maximizing profits becomes media conglomerates' sole concern, the content of publications suffers. Most American libraries are not the "cornerstones of intellectual freedom" they would like to be. Instead they are often channels of distribution for a limited set of ideas that serve the interests of the same corporate entities that dominate publishing, marketing, and the production of selection tools. A panel will discuss alternative ideas and materials seldom found in school, public or academic libraries, as well as ways of finding and selecting them. Also featured: SRRT/AIP's Almost Banned Book Awards of 1999. Speakers not yet chosen.

WORDS ON THE STREET: NEWSPAPERS FROM THE HOMELESS:

Street newspapers, produced by homeless people and their advocates, are a feature in many cities in North America and Europe. The present group of publications has its roots in earlier titles such as HOBOW NEWS from the 1920s. These newspapers are little collected by libraries or used by librarians in planning services to this most needy and challenging community. Three national experts will give us the context, remind us of our duty to serve the homeless, and talk about how it can be done. Speakers: Norma Fay Green, speaking on "Homeless in Print: A brief history of street newspapers;" Chris Dodge, speaking on "Homeless in the Library: Street newspapers, their audience(s), and how libraries serve and fail to serve the homeless;" Lee Stringer (invited), author of *Grand Central Winter*.

EROTICA IN LIBRARIES

Sexy stories and pictures in the stacks? Given that erotica and all types of sexually explicit materials are available now via library computers, isn't it time to address this neglected subject in public libraries? If erotica is widely available in chain bookstores like Tower and Borders, isn't it true that erotic fiction and pictures now fit within the "community values" of at least some communities?

In this session, we move beyond contentious debates about whether or not libraries SHOULD collect erotica, to a critical examination of what erotica a library COULD collect. The main focus will be on bibliographic selection along a number of different dimensions. Options will be discussed for various levels of explicitness: PG, R, and X. We will also address different genres and formats, including for example poetry, romance, SF, photography, art, graphic novels, and periodicals. Different sexual subject areas will also be covered: "vanilla" heterosexual, lesbian, gay, vampire, SM, anything goes, as well as factors like literary quality, audience, and trends (such as the current fad for anthologies and

...continued from prior page

“classic porn” novels like those of Henry Miller). Finally, panelists will share tips on developing selection criteria, finding reviews, and developing relationships with publishers.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

THE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM BUFFET, our traditional summer “Gala event,” is also on tap for the conference. Don’t miss it!

Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty

Preliminary Announcement of Annual Pre-Conference: OLOS/SRRT Task Force on Service to Poor & Homeless People

REALITY CHECK FOR LIBRARIES: Making a Difference in Services to Poor and Homeless People

Friday, June 25, 1999 9:00AM to 5:00PM

An interactive session focusing on the implementation of the ALA Poor People’s Policy, emphasizing the incorporation of effective local library administrative policies and positive impact on library collections, programs and services. Take home valuable information about what works in local libraries and resources to support legislative and funding concerns. Hear firsthand from poor and homeless people and other experts on the topic.

ALA members: \$125
Nonmembers: \$160

ONLINE RESOURCES

Advocacy Groups Online

A web site with topical and alphabetic links to national advocacy groups (i.e. interest groups or lobbyists). Policy.com has something like this, but this site has more than just descriptions and links. Also includes contact information for each group (e-mail, phone, fax, address) as it is provided in the websites.

<http://www.creighton.edu/~kcfont/advocacy.html>

United Nations Human Rights Website — Treaty Bodies Database

<http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf>

This database was created “to meet the growing interest in the committees established to monitor the implementation of the principal international human rights treaties (also referred as ‘treaty monitoring bodies’ or ‘treaty bodies’)” such as the Human Rights

Committee, the Committee Against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Users may search the database by keyword and view results by relevance or date or browse by a variety of parameters, such as country, date, language, treaty, reporting status, or status of ratification. Documents may be in English, French, or Spanish.

From the Scout Report <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

Human Rights Watch World Report 1999

<http://www.hrw.org/hrw/worldreport99/>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has just released its ninth annual review of human rights around the world in advance of Human Rights Day, December 10, 1998, the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The report covers events and developments in 68 countries from December 1997 through early November 1998. The report is generally well-written, offering excellent overviews of the conditions of human rights on regional and selected national levels. Users in the US may be particularly interested in the detailed critique of American policies on human rights both internationally and within its own borders. The Report also provides information on selected campaigns and thematic concerns, such as arms, and the rights of women and children.

From the Scout Report <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

A-INFOS News Service

“In the struggle for a free society, we distribute news and articles in several languages, covering a wide range of areas. These include workplace, environmental and anti-imperialist struggles as well as the fight against racism, sexism and homophobia.”

URL: <http://www.ainfos.ca/>

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>

Located at Stanford University, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project is producing what will become the definitive collection of the great civil rights leader’s writings. These include a number of full-text primary documents (including the “I Have a Dream” speech and the “I’ve Been To The Mountaintop” sermon), a general biography, a chronology of King’s life, a recommended reading section, and scholarly articles produced by Project staff members (under construction). The Project plans to continually add new documents to the site as they are digitized.

From the Scout Report <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

ONLINE RESOURCES

Morris, Anne and Hilary Dyer.
Human Aspects of Library Automation

2nd Ed. Gower: Brookfield, Vermont. 1998.
 (ISBN 0-566-07504-0)

From how and why people have difficulties with computers to the steps good managers take in acquiring a new computer system, Morris and Dyer provide a wide-ranging discussion of essentially all facets of human computer interface design. While they ground their book in a library setting, the issues they cover apply to all human computer interaction situations, not just library automation. They cite hundreds of technical sources but manage to bring this mass of current information on the subject together in an understandable way.

Most of the book deals with design issues—workstations, software, furniture, even jobs—and how to accommodate the most users in the best ways law and physical limitations allow. It ends with chapters on dealing with stress and training staff and the public to use new systems. Appendices follow detailing web sites (many in the U.S.) and addresses (mostly European) from which to find helpful products and detailed information on many of the book's topics.

The book frequently discusses what the law requires with respect to workplace design. Morris and Dyer, being British, discuss legal issues almost entirely from the perspective of British and European Community laws. This isn't necessarily a bad thing since those laws are typically more strict than comparable U.S. laws. Following their suggestions will allow a legal safety cushion while treating employees better than we here require.

This is a superb book, well written and appropriate for its audience. It should be on the desk of every library director and, especially those beginning to plan new or upgraded computer systems.

Jon McConnel
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Martin, Lowell A.
**Enrichment: A History of the Public Library
 in the United States in the Twentieth Century.**

Scarecrow Press: Lanham Maryland. 1998.

Upon picking up *Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the Twentieth Century* and noting its slim 200 pages, a reader hopes that the author is a knowledgeable scholar and a skilled wordsmith who can quickly focus this broad topic and delve into solid details. Unfortunately, Lowell A. Martin has written a history of the Public Library that is unfocused, poorly edited, wordy without

being detailed, chronologically unsound, and lifeless. The book is so un-engaging and poorly organized that a lay reader will surely put it down and a librarian may well be insulted. In fact, *Enrichment's* only use may just be the chapter notes and bibliography: here one can browse the author's sources for a better treatment of a subject.

Martin takes on too much from the beginning. In the introduction, he promises to "describe the relationship between economic growth and the public library and the limitations on library response in times of recession and depression." He also aims to produce a social history that will "show the public library as a natural outgrowth of America in the making." Martin succeeds at doing neither of these. The main focus of the book, if it can be said to have one, is the public library's development and history of the often conflicting roles of informing, educating, and providing entertainment to its users. Even this thread gets lost in the loosely followed chronological arrangement.

Martin takes on the whole century by breaking it into seven chronological chunks to address the salient features of the library. Straightforward enough, yes? No. Each of these seven chapters starts with a dreadful, mainstream, often irrelevant historic "overview". Martin throws in president's names, major policy/economic trends, popular books and songs, jumps to an overview of the public library during this period, and never makes any coherent ties, observations or conclusions. Examples are vague, dates omitted, and thoughts jump ahead to the next decade. At times, this is not even a history. For example, In Chapter 5: *Recovery and Uncertainty, 1946-1959*, a six-page entry on *Building Collections* is just an introduction to general collection development issues, with no historical examples, dates, or conclusions.

The book contains a few coherent sentences, and sometimes even whole paragraphs of promise. In the chapter *The Innovative Years, 1918-1929*, the three-page section on *Children's Service* starts out with an upbeat assertion that *Children's services* are the backbone of the public library to this day, owing largely to their development by strong leaders in the 1920's. One crosses her fingers and hopes for a fleshed out tale of the development of children's services and colorful stories of the librarians who created these services. Unfortunately, the reader gets mired in badly constructed sentences that are mere irrelevant lists instead of true description. Details of the leaders in children's services are reduced to lackluster lines such as "Special credit goes to Augusta Baker of the New York Public Library for encouraging the development and promotion of storytelling."

Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the Twentieth Century is a dreadful jumbled mess. Skip it.

Anne Gruel

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Views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of ALA/SRRT. The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.

Next deadline 4/15/99

<http://www.jessamyn.com/srrt>

SRRTAC-L

The SRRT listserv SRRTAC-L is open to all SRRT members and is a low-traffic [less than five messages a day unless there's a hot topic brewing] way of keeping up with SRRT's issues and discussions in-between conferences. Help decide SRRT's future directions and join in some lively debates. If you would like to join the SRRT listserv, send the following message to listproc@ala.org

subscribe SRRTAC-L [your first name] [your last name]

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