

A Brief History of the *SRRT Newsletter*
by Myka Kennedy Stephens
SRRT Newsletter Editor, 2008-present

May 1969: First issue of the *SRRT Newsletter* is published by the SRRT Clearinghouse

“An SRRT Newsletter is, I believe, a must in the future. It will not only be a means to disseminate information about working groups, but more importantly, will serve as a stimulus to action. Concerned librarians now have a formal, national organization through which to express their concern... [W]e want to show all of those librarians who deplore even just one social injustice that they can do something as a librarian about it. A newsletter, which has full coverage of activities and broad circulation, can show them.” –Joan K. Marshall, issue 1, page 1

Feb 1970: First editorial appears (issue 4); relates an incident at an Illinois SRRT meeting and discusses rights and repression of dissent.

1970 Annual Conference: SRRT’s Action Council is formed and the SRRT Clearinghouse is given a more defined role as “an elected and volunteer group of individuals formed to facilitate action and information communication” (issue 10, page 1)

“This is the third national newsletter prepared by Clearinghouse. Its more journalistic tone is perhaps indicative of the direction we should move in the future... Besides the urging for a more journalistic and analytical bent, many people have felt that Clearinghouse and the SRRT Newsletter could provide the quick access to information lacking in the traditional library media.” –Unknown, issue 12, page 3 (Feb. 1971)

November 1971: First letter to the editor published (issue 16)

“I would like to see the pages of the Newsletter used more effectively, to represent the diversity of views among these members, to stir up an active exchange of opinion, and I hope to get space for such letters.” –Miriam I. Crawford, SRRT Clearinghouse Coordinator, issue 16, page 13

1971-1973: SRRT Clearinghouse rotates editorship among its members. No one person is editor of more than two sequential issues; letters to the editor continue to appear frequently

1973 Annual Conference: Newly elected Clearinghouse members decide to let one person remain editor for a one-year trial period to achieve greater continuity and consistency.

“...[T]he newsletter can become an even better catalyst than before and assume some new, potentially valuable tasks: like publishing fuller documentation on key events and issues than the orthodox library press ..., noting relevant ‘things to get’ that other-wise might pass unnoted in the literature, extending coverage to include pertinent developments in Canada and overseas, establishing fruitful links with like-minded persons and groups elsewhere in A.L.A., other professions, and the ‘real world,’ and providing an uninhibited forum for ideas, complaints, plans, and dreams.” –(Sandy Berman) in a few points on “editorial policy,” issue 29, page 1 (Feb. 1974)

January 1974: First review published (issue 29)

August 1974-May 1975: Reviews become a regular part of the newsletter under the editorship of Sandy Berman (issues 32-35)

January 1976: Reviews continue in an abbreviated format under heading “Sourcebook;” editor Linda Katz wished to greatly reduce the number of reviews due to similar material made available through the review magazine “Booklegger” (issue 37); format changes to utilize 11 x 17 page spread for inside pages

1979: SRRT Newsletter staff members are listed separately from SRRT Clearinghouse; Newsletter appears to be separating itself from Clearinghouse administration

1981: Newsletter publication is standardized to four issues per year, although month of publication varies

September 1981: Newsletter returns to a standard 8 ½ x 11 page format for all pages and the amount of content is greatly reduced; letters to the editor all but disappear despite a direct invitation to send them; sourcebook looks more like a bibliography and no longer offers short reviews; longer reviews that appeared often are also infrequent or absent; opinion-based articles and editorials appear occasionally

June 1983: Start of quarterly publication schedule—March/June/September/December

September 1983: First notation of the SRRT Newsletter Editor assisted by an Editorial Board of three people

March 1984: Budgetary constraints dictate newsletter length to 8 pages for each issue (alternate issues had been 12 pages long); editor has final decision over how much space is allocated to each task force

1985: Reviews begin to come back after editor publishes a list of available books to review

June 1989: Celebrating SRRT's 20th anniversary, Action Council members Sandy Berman and Elliott Shore address the newsletter as their first action item for "SRRT: A New Agenda (Or: Back To Our Roots?)"

"Expand the SRRT Newsletter, including more Task Force and conference program reports, reviews, Action Council news and documents, short issue-essays, and editorials" (issue 92, page 4)

September 1992: First book reviews editor appointed (issue 105, page 9)

December 1994: Assistant editor appointed; this is a new position to complement editor, book reviews editor, and three-member editorial board (issue 114)

December 1996: Book reviews editor position eliminated and reviews are no longer a prominent part of the newsletter after reaching a "cooperative arrangement" with *Counterpoise*, the new SRRT review journal, to pass on all review copies to that journal with the opportunity to reprint or excerpt reviews in the newsletter (issue 122, page 10)

December 1997: First attempt at electronic publishing (issue 126); a separate HTML formatted newsletter lasts for four issues

also: co-editors are listed alone without editorial board members

June 1998: Book reviews editor position reinstated; reviews reappear in the October 1998 issue (#129)

May 2001: Call for editorial board members issued, but no announcement about appointments follows; book reviews and mention of book reviews editor are absent (issue 135)

September 2001: First appearance of official Action Council meeting minutes; before this, only summaries of the meetings were included in the newsletter (issue 136)

September 2002: Reappearance of reviews and appointment of new book reviews editor (issues 140-141)

June 2003: Action Council votes to change publication schedule to two double issues per year (issue 142, page 1)

March 2009: Newsletter ceases print publication and returns to quarterly publication schedule (issue 166)