By Nancy Bolt

One of the reasons I joined IFLA in the first place was because I knew every August I would be able to go to a country which I might not have gone to otherwise. I had never been particularly interested in traveling to South America, focusing more on Europe. Now I'm hooked on South America. Argentina is a marvelous country with tasty food, tango dancing everywhere, whales in Patagonia, and great crafts.

I'm on the Government Libraries Standing Committee so much of my time was taken up with that responsibility. I'm chair of a new committee to develop Guidelines for Government Libraries. The Committee is made up of people from seven countries. We use English because that is the only language the 3 Americans know. All of the other committee members are bi- tri- or quad- lingual. Determining the "official" language of the guidelines and then translating the meaning, not just the words, of the guidelines into multiple languages will be challenging. In fact, just talking to each other is challenging.

We have defined a government library as:

> *Any library that is created by government to serve government with the primary audience being government although the actual audience served may be broader than only government.*

We selected 15 areas as the preliminary topics of the guidelines. They are:

Government typologies
Functions related to the political authority
Cooperation
Functions for users
Access to information
Preservation and permanent access
Common management practices
Advocacy for role of libraries
Protecting privacy
Organization across department lines

Meeting needs of staff
Dissemination of government information
Staffing and personnel
Marketing, PR
Financial, technology, and material resources

We are hoping to have first draft to present in Oslo. The Government Libraries Section Program was on Information Literacy in Government. One of the most impressive papers was by Anne Kauhanen-Simanainen from Helsinki, Finland. She discussed the obligation of government to help people understand the government information that is distributed and also the needs of government staff for information. For example, she says "*Information literacy skills can be seen as a multiple extension which relates to the total information acquisition, filtering, interpretation, production, communication and legal and ethnical process irrespective of the technical or media form. In addition, information literacy can be viewed laterally in the different areas of information: literacy skills relating to different areas of science, to statistics, finance, advertising, politics, religions, etc.*"

She goes on to say "*Information held by the government can be used for the inclusion or exclusion of citizens. Government can, by disseminating information, prevent exclusion. A person able to access information should be neither dependent on personal networks nor at the mercy of authorities.*"

Another exciting program had to do with the relationship between Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and libraries. Several people shared the frustration of getting information from and about NGO's. NGO's often produce important and needed information but do not disseminate

Karen J. Starr

2004 Annual Conference – Orlando

1. As per discussions initiated in the fall of 2003 with Nancy Bolt, the chair-elect position assumed responsibility for committee appointments. The spreadsheet documenting the 13 committees and some 89 members with contact information and terms was handed off in early 2004 to Nancy Bolt, Jeannette Pierce, and Delin Guerra. Final assignment of committee appointments to the role of the chair-elect is subject to completion of the revision of the Officer's Manual currently in process. A review of roles and responsibilities of the executive board members will help define priorities and support effective use of the time of the chair and chair-elect in coordinating the activities of the round table.

2. Attended the Friday meeting of the IRC, IRRT, and divisional IRC's representatives during ALA in Orlando along with the chair-elect. The discussion focused on the planning process for ALA and the input of those groups in ALA that participate in international activities. The IRRT executive committee meeting agenda on Sunday was modified to include time for the members of the executive committee to review the current ALA international planning document and to identify up to 10 priorities of the round table which will be considered during the ALA planning meeting in September. These priorities will be forwarded to the IRO by July 15.

3. Worked with the past-chair and chair-elect to raise money for the reception on the Monday evening of the Annual Conference. A total of $13,750 was donated. These vendors are recognized in *Leads*, on the IRRT website, and at least one of them will be included in the receiving line which will start the reception.

4. Membership committee's charge to address membership fees as an action item was successfully completed with the spring ALA elections when membership voted to raise fees. Free membership for the international library community was also approved and has the potential of increasing membership in IRRT, which may impact total membership and therefore result in the possibility of the round table having its own representative on ALA Council.

New/pending items:

- The program committee still needs to address the action item of identifying international programs held during the ALA annual conference and ensuring the program's presence on the IRO/IRRT webpage and in other venues for distribution during the conference.
- Final revision of the officer's manual remains to be completed. The incoming chair will convene an ad hoc committee to complete that process by ALA midwinter 2005 including the current chair, past-chair, previous past-chair, and chair-elect with vetting by current players in the round table who are or have been active in the round table's work.
- Review the current status and usage of ALAWORLD and incorporate information about the listserv in IRRT documentation. Explore the potential of an identified listowner to work with ALA staff in managing the listserv.
- Implement the virtual committee membership process pilot project as per the motion in the minutes of ALA Midwinter in San Diego approved by the Executive Committee and documented in those minutes.
- Include the approval of the bylaws changes at the membership meeting to be held prior to the IRRT program on Monday afternoon of the annual conference in Orlando.
- Address the concerns of the previous visitor's center committee and ensure that newly appointed members will implement the ongoing presence of the visitor's center during the annual conference.
- Address the need for the publications committee to complete the two activities approved as motions during the ALA Midwinter meeting in

Do you want to play a significant role in promoting international librarianship and the activities of the International Relations Round Table? You can do so by volunteering to serve a two-year term as the editor of IRRT's official publication International Leads (IL). The position will begin in January 2005 after the Midwinter Conference in Boston.

IL Editor Description:

The Editor of International Leads is responsible for the official organ of the International Relations Round Table, in conjunction with the IRRT Publications Committee and the IRRT Executive Board.

The purpose of IL is to disseminate information about international librarianship and the activities of the Round Table. IL seeks to support Round Table and Association objectives by bringing IRRT's members news and articles that help them understand and react to recent developments in international librarianship.

Because IL is the official publication of the IRRT, the editor has a particular responsibility to convey to IRRT members and other readers full and accurate information on the activities, purpose and goals of the Round Table.

IL is published quarterly, edited by a member volunteer and printed through the production facilities of ALA's Publishing Services Department.

The IL Editor will serve a two-year term, renewable once. The term begins at the end of the ALA Midwinter Conference

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ALA activities at IFLA Conference in Buenos Aires
ALA was pleased to see a very good turnout at the IFLA
Conference in Buenos Aires, the first to ever be held in
South America. Three thousand delegates attended the
conference, including over 1,000 from Latin American and
Caribbean countries. Argentina had the largest delegation
with over 600 delegates. Over 350 delegates from the
United States participated. Many of these delegates serve
as ALA representatives to IFLA Section Standing
Committees.
ALA took an active role in this year's IFLA Conference in
Buenos Aires. ALA assisted with publicizing the
conference and organized the Fellowship for the America's
program, sponsored by the IFLA 2001 National Organizing
Committee. This year, 40 librarians from 23 countries in the
Americas received fellowships.
ALA organized two programs at the conference, which
were held on the last day of the conference. The
*Campaign for the World's Libraries/La Campaña para las
Bibliotecas del Mundo* program highlighted the
promotional activities and plans of Mexico, Brazil, Australia
and Uruguay. ALA will be working with IFLA to enhance
the Campaign website this fall to include these
presentations to help others in their promotional efforts.
ALA President Carol Brey-Casiano followed up with a
wonderful bilingual (Spanish-English) presentation on
Library Advocacy - Promoción de bibliotecas.
ALA's booth in the exhibit hall received a lot of visitors and
1,000 *en tu biblioteca* buttons were passed out to
delegates to promote the value of libraries.

Paul Bartos   Lisa Ahlstedt
Brooke Becker

By Helen Lam

Information Technology and Digital Libraries in Hong Kong: Post 1997

As a library professional who had worked in Hong Kong decades ago, I looked forward to returning and seeing family and friends and was curious about changes in libraries that happened since 1997 when the city became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) within China after 155 years of British government. I wanted to learn how Hong Kong libraries had been affected by the change in status and also by the technological revolution that began in 1996 with an international conference, "Hong Kong's Information Networks", sponsored by the Hong Kong Library Association.

In April 2004, the author visited Hong Kong and interviewed librarians from Hong Kong Central Library, the University of Hong Kong (HKU), and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), about their digitization projects.

The opening of the Hong Kong Central Library in May 2001 revealed a custom made Multimedia Information System (MMIS), developed by IBM and the ICO (a software system integrator and developer), that allows patrons to retrieve digitized images and play video and audio files from a single search interface. Searching is flexible and advanced and allows, in addition to text searching, image searching by color average, color histogram, and color layout. The project won several awards for its innovation in IT design.

In 1997 the new government of Hong Kong allocated HK$51 million to the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the University of Hong Kong to promote IT education and to conduct research on networking, multi-media technology, Internet applications, etc. The intention was to transform Hong Kong into an information technology society, thus securing its position in Asia as a leader in technology.

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) has one of the most extensive digital collections in Hong Kong, with new resources added on a continual basis. In 1997, HKU became an active member of the newly formed Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance (PRDLA) that promotes global sharing of online information through multilingual servers. One of HKU's digital collection contributions to the PRDLA's digital Pacific Explorations Archive is 'Hong Kong & the West until 1860,' a collection of maps, sketches and information on early settlers and foreign visitors in early Hong Kong.

Other multi-media digital collections include: 'Beijing Historical Geography Database', 'e-Video' (containing miscellaneous television programs, lectures, seminars and conferences, etc.), 'Hong Kong Tourism Board Collection', 'Historical Laws of Hong Kong Online', 'Hong Kong Government Reports Online (1879-1941)', 'Hong Kong Listed Company Papers Online', 'Hong Kong Newspaper Clippings Online,' 'Hong Kong Stock Market Archives and Artifacts Collection,' and 'Sun Yat-sen in Hong Kong'. Taking search technology a step further, in September 2003, HKUL launched its 'Library Without Walls' program. From anywhere in Hong Kong, using a wireless-LAN enabled Palm handheld, students can search the catalog of two million books and journals, send e-forms, or read their SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) messages.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, opened in 1991, has already established a library that is on the cutting edge of technology. HKUST was the first Hong Kong university to use an online library catalog and made it available on a wireless network in 2001. A year before HKUST opened, the university collaborated with Innovative Interfaces, Inc., to enhance support of Chinese characters.

HKUST, one of 277 academic institutions worldwide using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) interoperability framework, has digitized scholarly materials such as journal articles, conference papers, and technical reports. Once scanned, the materials are indexed and searchable in OAIster, a system created by the University of Michigan Digital Library Production Services.

Hong Kong Central Library
Photo by Helen Lam
Photo by Helen Lam

By Nancy Bolt

books to the shelves. In 1998, the library implemented an online catalog system that now contains 500,000 records. The library's comparative law section houses periodicals in several foreign languages and includes a large section of U.S. law reviews and journals. The library staff is proud of its foreign language journals and their value to the understanding of the law in other countries. The staff in this section reads and speaks several languages. At the end of our tour, we thanked the library staff for its hospitality and the conference volunteer, an Argentine school teacher who brought six of us, from six different nations, to the library via train. We could tell that our library colleagues in Buenos Aires took pride in hosting IFLA 2004 in their home city.

Reference Libarians at the Argentina Supreme Court Central Library
Photo by Sha Li Zhang

Reference Shelves at the Argentina Supreme Court Central Library
Photo by Sha Li Zhang

International Relations Office
  American Library Association
  50 East Huron Street
  Chicago, IL 60611 USA

Postage