

International Leads

A Publication of the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association

Volume 21

June 2007

Number 2

Sister libraries collaborate across borders

By Heleni Pedersoli and Patricia Herron

At the 2005 ALA Annual Conference, the Association of College Research Libraries (ACRL) Board of Directors endorsed a declaration encouraging institutions to explore sister library partnerships and to build relationships with libraries in other cultures that can help us learn how to understand and better serve our own communities. Camila Alire, then ACRL president, made sister libraries one of the special projects of her tenure. The board charged the ACRL International Relations Committee (IRC) with raising awareness within the ACRL community of the benefits of working with sister libraries.

To further the cross-border agreement ACRL signed with the National Council of Higher Education Libraries of Mexico (CONPAB-IES) in 2003. The initial focus of the agreement was to find U.S. libraries to partner with Mexican libraries.

The partnership and collaboration with the Tecnológico de Monterrey began when a group of UM librarians decided to use their own professional development funds to develop a mini-conference in Monterrey in April 2005. Two days were well spent meeting the Tec counterparts and presenting papers on user education topics.

Librarians at the University of Maryland have embraced the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues in Mexico, thus taking advantage of the ACRL seed grant



Librarians from both the University of Maryland and the Tecnológico de Monterrey introduce their partnership at Maryland's McKeldin Library in April 2006.

awarded in 2006 to the University of Maryland and Tecnológico de Monterrey to continue building the partnership and exchanging ideas and personnel.

In April 2006, the UM Libraries hosted an important conference on library user education, LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange), and the UM librarians invited the librarians from the Tec to travel to Maryland to attend the conference, visit the campus and its libraries, and formally introduce the partnership to the library faculty at

Maryland. Two of the librarians from the Tec received funding and were able to make the trip: Cecilia Barragán, who was then coordinator of user education at the library of the main campus of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, and Eloísa Puente, who is a business information specialist and the manager of the EGADE Library. (EGADE is the Tec's Graduate Business School.)

The Tec librarians and the Sister Libraries program were introduced at a

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The Annual Conference is right around the corner. I always feel a sense of excitement about attending IRRT programs and this year, again, we have excellent sessions planned, including the IRRT orientation and, of course, the famous IRRT reception, which will take place this year at LC. Just be sure to purchase your tickets in advance since they will not be sold at the door.

Part of the thrill of being part of IRRT is hearing from our international members about their libraries, programs, and ideas. This year, I asked Mary Adwoa Arkorful, the senior assistant librarian and head of the cataloguing department at the University of Education, Winneba, in Ghana, about her reasons for belonging to ALA and IRRT. I wanted to share her thoughts with you.

Mary replied: "Being an ALA member, I have been exposed to a floodgate of information and knowledge on and about the library profession which is so unique an experience that it is difficult to quantify. I always make sure that I have enough time before logging into the ALA website; the information available to surf through is enormous. I'm very proud to be in Ghana and be a member of an international library professional

association."

When asked about IRRT, she said: "The benefits of being a member of IRRT is that I know what's happening in other parts of the world in librarianship and use that knowledge to solve issues at home. It also brings the world closer to me, regardless of distance."

Finally, I asked Mary what IRRT should do to be of service to its international members. She suggested that IRRT organize online courses that would be free for its members.

The IRRT poster sessions are another great way to get a quick overview of what is happening in other parts of the world. Out of curiosity, I looked at the IRRT poster sessions for

Librarian travels to Bangladesh to facilitate workshop aimed at advancing higher education

By Paula Smith

Driven by a sense of adventure and desire for discovery, I clicked on the “send” button in response to an email requesting a librarian to facilitate a workshop in Bangladesh. The workshop, held May 20-26, 2006, and sponsored by the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, was part of a larger initiative to assist private and public universities in improving their governance and management practices. Ten participants from public, private, and religious universities, representing various administrative positions, were chosen from a competitive pool of applicants to develop case studies about a critical issue within their academic institutions. At the culmination of the project, these case studies would serve as a focal point for developing policy papers to advance higher education in Bangladesh. A cursory glance at the email was all I needed to decide that this was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, slightly smaller than Iowa with a population that is seven times the size

Grant sends librarian to Nashville for LITA Forum

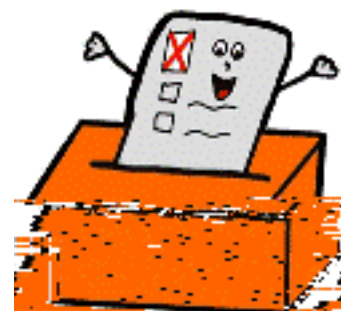
By Frank Soodeen

It was in the period October 26 -29, 2006, that a fairly large group of librarians and information technology professionals from various institutions across the United States descended upon Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the LITA Forum. Hosted by the Library Information Technology Association, an arm of the American Library Association, the LITA Forum provides an excellent opportunity for learning and networking for those whose work involves new and leading-edge

Bangladesh

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on leadership, university governance,
and student affairs during the first three



Winston Tabb, dean of University Libraries at Johns Hopkins University, is this year's recipient of the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee's John Ames/Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award.

OCLC/Forest Press donated the cash award of \$1,000, which it is given to an individual for significant

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