

International Leads

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

Volume 21

September 2007

Number 3

On May 25th of each year, El Salvador celebrates “El Día del Bibliotecario” (Day of the Librarian) with a week of cultural activities and professional events for library workers. I was fortunate to receive an invitation to present at the conference from Ana Martha Ramirez, president of the country’s professional association, ABES-Asociación de Bibliotecarios de El Salvador.

El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America, bordered by Guatemala, Honduras, and the Pacific Ocean. El Salvador is also the most densely populated country in Central America, with a population of about 7 million in a land area comparable to the state of Massachusetts. The 1992 Peace Accords marked the official end to a devastating 12-year civil war. The country is also subject to frequent and sometimes destructive hurricanes and earthquakes.

My relationship with El Salvador goes back to 1998, when I arrived in the country as a Peace Corps volunteer. I served three years as a volunteer and then stayed in the country for most of the next five years in various jobs. Although none of these jobs were library positions, I had made contacts within ABES and attended many of their meetings. I also completed my MLIS online. In August 2006, I returned to the U.S. and accepted a position as an academic librarian at the University of South Florida – St.

Petersburg, but my ties with El Salvador remained. So, when the opportunity arose to present and share with my Salvadoran colleagues, I was more than ready to accept.

The theme for this year’s 18th annual professional event was “Bibliotecas y Cultura de Paz” (Libraries and a Culture of Peace). ABES and other local organizations and professionals had put together a very full week of presentations, workshops, forums, and other professional events. The

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Message from the Editor

Welcome to the first issue of International Leads under new editorship! It is my pleasure to take over the reins from Heath Martin, who has successfully edited IL for the last few years. I look forward to working with IRRT membership and leadership to bring you the best publication possible.

As the new editor, I believe it is a good time to review the purpose of IL and its role in communication to the membership. Currently, IL is a quarterly publication. Many members have pointed out that this frequency has some downsides, particularly concerning breaking news and current events. At the Executive Board meeting at ALA Annual, the idea of a blog for IRRT was proposed and discussed. Joan Weeks, the new IRRT Chair, introduces the IRRT blog in her column in this issue. The blog will allow membership to communicate with each other quickly on matters of importance, instead of waiting for publication of IL.

In my opinion, the IRRT blog ought to work hand in hand with IL - each has a niche to fill. To this end, I will be working with IRRT leadership and

the Publications Committee to redesign IL and offer more current information through other communication tools, like the blog.

I want to redesign IL to better serve the membership's need for in-depth information on pertinent topics in international librarianship. I envision IL as a quarterly publication that delves deeper into specific topics related to libraries and librarians in a globalized world as well as keeping membership abreast of news and events. Each issue of IL will include an in-depth report about a significant issue or activity in international librarianship, a profile of an international partnership, and announcements of upcoming professional events of interest to IRRT members, as well as the Chair's Report and other newsworthy items.

To this end, if you have suggestions for topics that you would like to see addressed, or that you have addressed yourself and would like to share with the membership, please drop me a line at our newly established e-mail address: intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

~ Rebecca Miller Banner

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International Leads (ISSN 0892-4546) is published quarterly by the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association in March, June, September, and December. The first issue was published in 1957. IL contains news about international library activities, the international work of ALA and other organizations, and people and publications in the field. IL is indexed by *Library Literature* and *Library and Information Science Abstracts* (LISA) and is sent free to all members of IRRT (dues \$15); non-ALA members can subscribe for \$12 per year by writing to International Relations Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Materials for IL should be sent to *International Leads* Editor, **Rebecca Miller Banner**, School of Library & Information Science, 502 King Library, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506, USA, e-mail: intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com

Call for Submission

Do you have news about...

International library activities?

People in international librarianship?

Upcoming international conferences?

International partnerships between libraries?

Then why not submit it to *International Leads*?
Send your news to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com
for consideration.

Message from the IRRT Chair

By Joan Weeks

I just want to give a couple of reflections on the Annual conference and then look ahead to some new ventures for IRRT in the year ahead in my first message from the chair.

Not only did the Washington conference set ALA records, it also broke IRRT records for attendance and participation thanks to the hard work and dedication of so many of our members. Everyone got off to a great start with the pre-conference program, "Adult Literacy: Foundation for a Digital" The orientation for international librarians and International Visitors Center provided the record setting number of international librarians with conference tips, problem solving, logistics and an abundance of hospitality. The Poster Session captured the attention of many attendees with the diversity and quality of the presentations, while the chair's program on "International Library Partnerships: Walking side by side" and the International Sustainable Library Development Interest Groups program on "Opportunities to Participate in Global Library Development" provided participants with valuable information and follow-up opportunities.

As I looked out over the view of New Orleans from the World Trade Center at the 2006 International Reception, I had a sudden inspiration that it would be an amazing experience for everyone if the 2007 International Reception could be held at the Library of Congress with tours of the Area Studies collections. There are so many people to thank for making the tours and the reception in the Montpellier Room at the Library of Congress a reality. On the Library side, I want to thank Drs. Mary Jane Deeb, Chief of the African and Middle East Division and Angel Batiste,

African Specialist for co-sponsoring the International Reception with IRRT, and Jane Gilchrist and her special events staff for the arrangements. From the IRRT side, International Reception Committee under the leadership of Kurt Cumiskey did a wonderful job with very complex logistics and Michael Dowling and Delin Guerra from the ALA International Relations Office provided invaluable support both behind the scenes and at the reception. We also want to thank our corporate sponsors this year: Blackwell Book Services, OCLC Web

captured the moment when she said, "I feel like I am in a dream."

Looking ahead, it is time to implement the strategic goals and objectives that Susan Schnuer, immediate past chair and the Executive Board laid out in the planning session during mid-winter in Seattle and prioritized at Annual in D.C. One of the overarching goals is to increase participation of all members around the globe in IRRT in this process. With the new technology tools available to us, we hope to achieve more active engagement via blogs, wikis and hopefully at some point web conferencing. Several of the strategic goals and objectives lend themselves to the blog forum.

The Horner Library Staff Exchange Project is an exchange of library staff between Fujian Province, China, and Oregon, for the purpose of sharing professional knowledge about library and information science. It was established through a generous gift from the late Dr. Layton Horner to the Oregon State Library, and continues through a partnership between the Oregon State Library and OLA's International Relations Round Table. Our international partners are the Fujian Provincial Library and the Fujian Library Association. Fujian is Oregon's sister province in China and the Fujian Provincial Library maintains a sister library relationship with the Oregon State Library.

Professor Rosalind Wang was a Social Sciences Librarian at the Portland State University Library for 18 years, until her retirement in 2002. In 1987 she accepted an invitation to conduct several workshops in Fuzhou, Fujian, China. During that time, library directors and librarians of Fujian requested her assistance to bridge and establish the sister library relationship between the Oregon State Library and the Fujian Provincial Library. Carrying this mission back to Oregon, Rosalind worked on this project with the Oregon-Fujian Book Exchange Committee, chaired by Frances Lau. On July 20, 1989, an agreement for the sister library relationship was signed by both the Oregon State and Fujian Provincial Libraries.

Under the leadership of the State Librarian, Jim Schepcke, a number of books were collected from various Oregon libraries and shipped to Fujian Province. In October 1993, a special Book Donation Ceremony was held in Salem, while Rosalind simultaneously attended an official

Acceptance of Book Donation Ceremony in Fuzhou. In addition, she was able to persuade the Director of the Fujian Culture Department who supervised the operation of the Fujian

Library to accept the donation of books from the State of Oregon. The Fujian Provincial Library is now a sister library of the Oregon State Library.

Status of the Round Table

By Sha Li Zhang

The 2007 ALA Annual Conference held in Washington, D.C. marked the end of my two-term tenure as IRRT Secretary/Treasurer, from July 2003 to June 2007. It was a privilege to be elected by IRRT members to serve on this post. I want to express my genuine appreciation to all who supported my work in this capacity. During my tenure, I worked closely with four IRRT chairs, Karen Starr, Nancy Bolt, Jeannette Pierce, and Susan Schnuer. I also worked with numerous IRRT committee chairs, liaisons, and representatives on issues relevant to the roundtable.

Most importantly, it has been gratifying to see the rapid growth of our membership. Most of this growth has come from ALA international members. The roundtable passed a proposal from its Membership Committee to offer a free membership to ALA international members in the spring 2004 election. Since then, the membership has increased rapidly, from 799 in 2003 to 1,861 in 2007 (see Chart 1). The increased membership enabled the roundtable to elect its own roundtable councilor in the 2006 election to the ALA Council. The IRRT councilor will represent the membership's voice on international issues.

The IRRT members also voted for a raise in membership fees from \$10 to \$15 in the spring 2004 election. With this dues increase, the available fund balance for the roundtable increased from \$9,250 in August 2003 to \$17,203 in August 2007. The additional funds have enabled the roundtable to do more for its members than before (see Chart 2).

With increased interest in global library issues among ALA members, the IRRT Executive Board is working on strategies to aggressively recruit more U.S. librarians into its membership and to address long-term funding issues. I encourage all members to support the IRRT Strategic Goals refined at the 2007 ALA Conference. Ongoing support

from all members, domestically and internationally, will be very critical to sustain the continuing growth of the roundtable and its programs and services to ALA members on international issues and interests.

Sha Li Zhang is the out-going IRRT Secretary/Treasurer

Chart 1: IRRT Membership Growth, 2003-2007

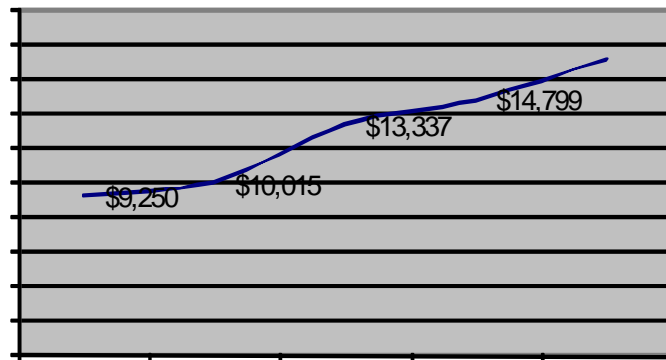


Chart 2: IRRT Budget Growth, 2003-2007

First Lubuto Library opens in Lusaka, Zambia

Jane Meyers of the Lubuto Library Project announces the opening of the first Lubuto Library in Lusaka, Zambia. The term "Lubuto" signifies knowledge, enlightenment, and light in the Bemba language spoken in

Sister Libraries Wiki

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